

Note: These minutes are a draft and are not to be considered official until approved at the next meeting.

**Poweshiek County 911
Board Meeting Minutes for January 7, 2025**

This meeting was held in person and via ZOOM

Members Present: Rusty Massengale-Malcom, Brian Paul- EMA, Ron Wyatt-New Sharon, Matt Maschmann-Sheriff, Gary Sears-Gilman, Jason Roudabush-Poweshiek County

Via ZOOM: Curtis Bolen-Montezuma, Kurt Hall-Brooklyn

Members Absent: Barnes City, Chelsea, Sully, Searsboro, Belle Plaine Victor, Hartwick, Deep River, Grinnell

Guests: Stacen Gross – SGC Consulting Services, LLC

Call to order and Roll Call

Massengale called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. - Members present as listed above.

Approval of Agenda

Motioned by Paul to approve the agenda as presented, second by Sears. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from October 22, 2024, Meeting

Motioned by Maschmann to approve the minutes as presented, second by Sears. Motion carried.

Business Items

Recorder Purchase Update

Massengale provided a copy of an updated quote from Racom for \$36,980. Paul questioned whether the board has already approved this in a previous meeting. Massengale said that the board did and Paul said that he has the board approved the \$36,980 for the recorder as well as the 3-year maintenance contract covering parts, software and labor for \$14,850. Gross said that while he and Disney were working on the current budget that this was discussed because the current recorder was approximately seven years old and typically recorders get replaced every five to seven years and the county would need an interface with the new Harris radios purchased for the new system. Massengale said that brings the total up to \$51,840.

Gross said for budgeting purposes that when we talked about it that we've been carrying that \$50,000 line item that originally was in the budget for a consultant if needed for the new radio project and that we are pretty well wrapping that up so he suggested using the \$50,000 line item for the recorder, however, he thinks that the radio chargers taken out of that line item which is okay, there is still enough in the budget to cover the recorder as well.

Disney asked what the agreement is with Racom regarding the purchase/exchange of the shelter and cabinets owned by the 911 Board and no longer needed at the old tower sites, how it is going to be handled/documentated and if the 911 Board will actually owe the total amount mentioned to Racom with the exchange being made. Massengale received an email from Vos at Racom stating that they are having a meeting on the 13th and will know more then, but right now they are using \$50,000 as the value for the shelter at Malcom, and will be offering \$2,000 allowance for the other two cabinets located at Deep River and Holiday Lake. Paul asked if Vos will be taking the costs of the shed and cabinets off of the project or will Racom be providing the 911 Board with a check. Massengale said that he believes that they will be writing a check to keep everything straight, and back to us. Paul said he was just asking because the project is technically the counties and the shelter and cabinets are property of the 911 Boards. Massengale said that it will be kept separate. Roudabush said that the board has already made the final payment for the radio project.

Massengale said that he also asked Vos for the costs of decommissioning the Malcom and other two sites. The costs are \$17,650 for Malcom, Deep River and Holiday Lake would be \$9,650 each bringing the total for decommissioning to \$36,950 not counting the credit for the shed. Disney asked what would happen with the LP tank and the \$200 annual cost that Criswell just billed the board for the first time for to monitor the LP tank. Massengale will verify with Criswell, but believes that the \$200 monitoring costs are for the new tower sites. Disney stated that if it is going a new fee that will be reoccurring that it just needs to be noted for budgeting purposes, as well as paying future invoices. Massengale will verify and get back with Disney. Massengale said that if everything works out the way he has it figured with the sheds and recorder and everything, that the board will need to come up with about \$20,000 for decommissioning the old sites. Gross stated so basically you are taking the cost of the shelter and cabinets off the total cost of the recorder and decommissioning costs? Massengale said that was correct and for budgeting purposes we'd need to figure around \$20,000. Gross said it would be nice if it could be done before July this year.

Massengale asked if there were any questions or comments? Roudabush said that the County has a little money left over from the radio system, and suggested that the 911 Board submit what they paid for the chargers for the radios and maybe the cost of the recorder to the board of supervisors for consideration of reimbursement or paying. He then asked about the costs that Montezuma and Deep River Fire Department paid out of their budgets when they asked to get pagers ahead of schedule and after it was explained said that might not work then, but that the chargers and recorder might be appropriate and considered. Massengale said that would be awesome and help the 911 Board out a lot and get us ahead with paying the maintenance part. Roudabush said just put something together and get on the agenda with it. Massengale said together would be about \$70,000. Roudabush said that they both could be considered part of the project and a way to expend the remainder of the funds.

Paul asked if Roudabush could say how much money was left over. Roudabush said that they won't know until everything is completely processed and the difference is because they got the grant for the sirens, and that it is roughly in there somewhere but that they are going to take some of it and pay it towards the bond but the that if there are some little odds and ends that can be cleaned up that they might as well. Paul said that he went to a meeting today, and it's kind of off the topic but that part of the radio project, and talked with the County Conservation Board about putting a siren out at Diamond Lake. Roudabush asked if Paul got a grant for that. Paul said it was not included and wasn't wanted initially, because the director at Diamond Lake didn't want to make the campers angry when it gets tested at 10:00 a.m. the first Saturday of the month, but after meeting with the board today that they are all on board with it. Roudabush said that he could submit the costs for that as well and maybe it can be considered at the same time as the other two costs. Paul said that they cost approximately \$35,000. Roudabush said at the very worst is that they will say no, but doesn't hurt to ask. Brian said then he could write that into the grant application. Roundabush said try the grant first and if that doesn't work then submit it to the board. Roudabush said that if he could get the grant for it that would be great. Paul stated that he is trying to get five more sirens put up; three in Grinnell, one in Brooklyn and one in Montezuma. The one in Brooklyn would be located at the water tower where the old one was, and that while the placements looked good on paper, they found spots due to the lay of the land that just can't hear them. The one in Montezuma would be placed by the county shop and new subdivision. The three in Grinnell would be by Ahrens Park and cover the new subdivision north of there, the historical part of downtown and central park, and the other by the county fairground covering the industrial park and subdivision to the east of there.

The grant has been submitted for those five sirens and is just waiting approval, so Paul said what he would do is probably ask the county to pay for the siren at Diamond Lake and go ahead and get it installed. If the project gets approved for the grant and then he might be able to get reimbursed for the sixth one. He said it was kind of a long way around but that it might work. The \$35,000 includes a battery back-up and he learned today that the lake is split and part of it gets service from MidAmerican and part of it gets electric from Montezuma. Since Montezuma has a backup generator if it is located in that area then the battery backup wouldn't be needed, and then costs a little less. Paul will get the numbers together and get on the agenda with the Board of Supervisors.

Budget Workshop

Gross, consultant for the 911 Board, walked through the draft budget packet that he prepared and that was emailed out to the board prior to the meeting. He stated that the bulk of the revenue that is generated comes from the wireless funds, and they continue to grow. The landline revenues have stabilized. We are currently halfway through the current budget year and are on target with a little over half of the budget remaining.

Gross stated that he and Disney were on the phone for quite a while working on the draft budget, and that there was mention of some software and different things that the board may want to consider moving forward. We start by putting the typical expenditures and adjust them accordingly and then go from there.

With the new radio system and this board paying for the annual maintenance, you will see the \$150,000 maintenance fee starting in December of 2025. Gross explained that back when we were paying all of the 911 costs for calls to be linked, and because we had three telephone prefixes, that we had the biggest bill that he has ever seen. Those costs have gradually been falling as the State has taken some of that onto their shoulders. There was some FCC things happen in August – September that might let the rest of those charges go away. The FCC gave a direct order to any wireless carrier or phone company that they have to deliver 911 with no cost recovery. Iowa 34A states that we are going to give them cost recovery, but he's hearing that 34A may get revised and take away cost recovery, which means that we would no longer have any of those telephone bills. We all know that the telephone companies will lobby against it because they like the income, but we have gone from \$80,000 per year to \$30,000 - \$40,000 a year currently, which is good.

The \$50,000 for a consultant for the radio project is no longer needed and will go away now.

Gross mentioned the \$20,000 per year for new radios, of which \$10,000 per year is available per department when adding additional vehicles to their fleet and believes that should remain in there. The cost of radios has increased so we may want to bolster that line item. Massengale said we should be good for a little while with everyone just getting new radios.

The projected revenues look good. We have a carry over, plus the surcharges, cost recovery from the residential markers and whomever is doing the investing for the county is doing good as we are making very good interest on our account.

Gross confirmed that the \$150,000 annual maintenance fee to Racom includes the dispatch consoles, and that there are no other maintenance fees coming that need to be added. Disney mentioned that she has not received an invoice for land rental in Searsboro this year and that Massengale didn't mention the cost of that site for decommissioning. Massengale said he forgot about that one and will have to get a hold of Vos to get the additional costs. Disney said hopefully he can get the amount in time to so Paul can have the total decommissioning costs when presenting it to the Board of Supervisors.

The budget as prepared is basically the reoccurring items, along with the \$20,000 for new radios which should be a safe amount since the radios are all new. Gross asked if there was anything such as software, or equipment that the board had in mind to purchase, that from a financial point of view we are doing good. He shared the five-year projection and said once the budget is finalized it will get uploaded to the state system, published, have the budget hearing and approved and submitted to the state no later than March 15, 2025.

Paul stated that Deep River might be buying a new fire truck, so that line item that covers the \$10,000 per department annually, might get used in the new budget. Gross said that there could be additional unused funds available in a few of the other line items should something come up. Paul suggested that the board consider bumping the new radio line item up an additional \$10,000. He said that he knows that the Sheriff is planning on adding a couple of additional people which means additional patrol cars, so maybe even bumping it to \$40,000 or \$50,000 wouldn't hurt. Gross said line item 53 could be increased to \$50,000 which would change the total expenditures to \$345,100. Massengale asked if Hall could hear everyone okay and was checking with those on ZOOM knowing it can be hard to hear.

Motioned by Paul to publish the proposed budget for FY26 as submitted and amended to \$345,100.00, second by Maschmann. Motion carried.

Discussion

Paul said that he, Deputy Meyer and Duane Vos from Racom have had a discussion about future projects now that this one has been wrapped up. Looking to improve the system even more, the Pheonix G2 Learning System was brought up. It is an automated dispatch that is primarily designed for Fire and EMS. As soon as information is typed into the CAD system in Dispatch, it automatically sends that page out to the appropriate departments and tells them what the emergency is. So basically, an address and call type will be sent with a Sirius type automated voice so that responders can get going. Once they are going the dispatcher can give them an update. Paul said it is a very good system that is used all over the country and that he had experience with it in the department he worked at in Colorado. He shared a video clip from the website showing how it is used. Using this system allows dispatchers to continue to gather information from the caller, and saves anywhere from 30 seconds to a minute for the responders to get on their way according to Paul. He said the paged information is more consistent and accurate. Massengale said that is sounds like it would benefit the paid departments who have people sitting there. Paul said it benefits those departments with volunteers too, because they can roll 30 seconds quicker as well going to the station. Massengale said he meant as far as the billboard that the video was showing being used. Paul said yes, that he and Deputy Meyer had it figured that every station would get an ATX which is basically the part that ties Dispatch into every station, plus one scrolling ticker board which gives the address and call type. It does migrate with the current software that dispatch is using, as well as "I am Responding".

It is a modular system so you can add on, so if Grinnell wants something else like speakers that go into their rooms with a light that comes on to wake them up, and can be added on. What they had talked about the ATX and Ticker Board for each department and each unit getting the box that relays the call information the price came to a total of about \$175,000. The Dispatch side was between \$60,000 and \$75,000 which brought the total project to \$250,000. Again, if anyone wanted to add on, they can do so, but they would pay for the additions.

Disney asked what the maintenance costs would be. Paul said that they are 10% of the cost of the system, so it would be \$25,000. Massengale asked if that was programming and includes everything that is needed. Paul said yes, he would assume. Disney asked if there would be additional upgrades needed. Paul advised that it is a one and done thing, that there are systems that have been around for ten plus years. Most of the updates are just software updates and that he assumes that there would be a cost for those unless they are included in the maintenance fees.

Wyatt said that Mahaska County tried this about five years ago, but it fell apart. Paul said that there are several departments in Iowa that use it, most of them being paid departments; Johnson County, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines. Gross asked if Grinnell is the only department that has full-time/paid people in Poweshiek County. Paul said, yes but Montezuma has one full-time/paid person, as well as Brooklyn Ambulance. The comment was made that "I am Responding" gets you the information when you are not at the station.

Massengale asked what the total cost was again, and Paul said \$250,000 total but those costs were probably a few months old, so it could be \$275,000 or so by now maybe. Gross asked what the costs would be to interface it with the current CAD software. Paul didn't have that information. Gross said that there is other stuff out there that does the same type of things. Paul shared a list of the Iowa users off of the company's website, most all of them being large metropolitan agencies. Massengale asked if it could page the deputies on law enforcement calls. Paul said no, but they would hear the call over the radio if they are monitoring the radio, it is basically for fire and EMS. Maschmann said the benefit that he sees for law enforcement is dispatch. He watches the call takers when the caller is frantic and when trying to calm them down enough to get the information, that alone can take a minute or two before they can even stop to send a page. He said that if you know there is an accident, but you don't know who or the details, just getting that information out is helpful so that the dispatcher can stay on with the caller and try and get additional information while the automated system gets units headed that way.

Massengale asked if this product is through Racom. Paul said yes, that they are a vendor for Phoenix G2. Gross said that there are other things out there, and maybe it is a thing that you put this in Grinnell and something else in the other departments. A benefit to getting the information over your phone is that you can keep the text in case you didn't hear it correctly or need to check the address again, etc. Wyatt said that if you put their pagers next to the phone, they go off about at the same time, so they are very good.

Paul said it is something to think about and consider. The department he worked for in Colorado loved it and some of the features. Each person had their own bedroom at the fire station so depending on what truck you were on; you can set it so that you wouldn't get woken up if it wasn't a call that you needed to respond to. There are a lot of different things you can do with it. Massengale asked if he can get some updated figures. Paul said yes, and that he could also ask for someone to come do a presentation for the board. Massengale said to start there and asked if there are any grants available to help with the costs. Paul said it isn't an infrastructure project, so it might be harder to find a grant that will fit.

Maschmann said that the Sheriff's Office purchased FTO training mainly because of having two new deputies starting, but that they are also going to use it for the dispatchers. They've always had an issue with employees getting trained differently depending on who was training them and now they will all get trained the same. He said that they have three new dispatchers in training now and hopefully another one within a month. Then they will be fully staffed again for the first time in probable fifteen years which is amazing. All of the information is stored in the cloud, and if you ever have to terminate anyone, they can retrieve it for you. It is a good program and probably 80 departments already using it. He was wondering since they have already purchased it, if the 911 Board would consider helping with the annual maintenance since they will be using it primarily for the dispatchers. Massengale asked for the name of it. Maschmann said it is called PowerTime and is through the same company that they use for work scheduling and timesheets. It is going to be used by both the deputies and dispatch so he would pay half and asking if the 911 Board would consider the other half. Gross said so basically \$1800 which could be taken out of the training line item.

Maschmann said that in the twenty years that he has worked for the Sheriff's Office that there has never been any mandatory training or continuing education classes. If a deputy put in for training that they usually were allowed to go, but nothing was mandatory. He hopes to change that because staying current and trained is important. It's easy to get stuck in a rut and everyone needs to continue to learn he said.

Massengale said if Paul will get updated prices and bring more information back that will be good. He thanked the newest board member, Ron Wyatt who's representing New Sharon for attending this evening, and Stacy Gross for all of his help.

Next Meeting: February 18, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m. – Poweshiek County Public Safety Building

Maschmann motioned to adjourn at 7:52 p.m., second by Sears. Motion carried.