

RIVERCOM ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

RIVERCOM 911

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Wenatchee City Council Chambers, 129 South Chelan Avenue, Wenatchee, WA 98801

MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Present: Dale Snyder, Commissioner, Douglas County; Keith Huffaker, Councilmember, City of Wenatchee; Mick Lamar, Chief, Lake Wenatchee Fire & Rescue

Excused Absences: Wayne Barnhart, Councilmember, City of East Wenatchee (Chair), Keith Goehner, Commissioner, Chelan County (Vice-Chair)

Ex-Officio Members Present: Tom Robbins, Chief, Wenatchee Police Department; Keith Vradenberg, Mayor, City of Entiat

RIVERCOM Staff Present: Jim Fosse, Director; Criselia Grupp, Administrative Services Manager; Jerry Corder, IT Manager; Josh Humphrey, Radio Systems Technical Manager; Staci Engler, Confidential Administrative Assistant; Lynn Palmer, GIS Analyst

Guests Present: Dee Gutierrez, Jim Brown

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Both Chairman Barnhart and Vice-Chairman Goehner were absent; it was agreed that Boardmember Snyder serve as Chair pro tem for the meeting. Boardmember Snyder called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS – Boardmember Snyder welcomed those present and attendees introduced themselves.
- III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – The agenda was approved as presented.
- IV. STANDING AGENDA
 - A. Consent Agenda
 - i. RIVERCOM Administrative Board Meeting Minutes, August 12, 2015
 - ii. Payroll and Benefits for August 2015 in the amount of \$291,026.62
 - iii. September 2015 Vouchers in the amount of \$121,018.68 for payment on September 9, 2015:

a. Maintenance and Operations Account (Control #0573-0636)	\$ 28,703.95
b. General Communications Tax Account (Control #0637-0639)	\$ 1,051.50
c. Communications Tax Capital Projects Account (Control #0640-0646)	\$ 91,263.23

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; Huffaker, second by Lamar.

Resolution: Motion carried.

V. BOARD CHAIR REPORT - There was no report.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Fosse reported on the following items:

A. General Items

1. Director Fosse reported on the Frontier Communications fiber-cut that took place over August 13-14, 2015 and was scheduled to start at about 11:00 PM. As the time of the cut-over grew closer, it became evident that a storm would roll through the area starting at about midnight. Although Director Fosse was in contact with Frontier Communications and expressed concern about the timing of the cut-over and the pending storm, Frontier decided to press forward anyway. During the cut-over, people residing in impacted areas would have toll-isolated service only and would not be able to dial outside of their prefix area. To ensure that people living in the towns of Chelan, Manson, Waterville, Mansfield, and Bridgeport were not completely without 911 service, RIVERCOM placed Emergency Services Dispatchers in five (5) areas to manually handle calls to 911. Even at best, this mode of dispatch is severely limited; Dispatchers can only take one incoming call at a time and they do not have access to normal resources. As it turned out, the fiber-cut was completed at about 1:45 AM and the ensuing storm which resulted in the Leavenworth and Chelan fires did not start until about 5:00 AM. Not only was the window of time to complete the cut-over too short, Director Fosse said that it was obvious that Frontier did not understand or appreciate the role that 911 Dispatchers play in a fire or other disastrous event. Director Fosse said that it is his intent to sit down with the Regional Manager for Frontier Communications to discuss the situation, to explain the needs of the dispatch center, and to request that they work more closely with us in future when conducting cut-overs.

Director Fosse also plans to speak with Frontier Communications about their phone system set-up and ways the system could be more resilient and robust. Right now, Frontier maintains only a single communications pathway from Chelan to Wenatchee and does not have an alternate pathway in place. The fires in Chelan took out a Frontier Communications switch and multiple feeds to the switch. This resulted in the greater Chelan area being without phone coverage from the time the switch was destroyed on Friday to Monday when it was restored. Other phone services were also unavailable due to cell tower failures and power outages. Director Fosse stated that he was concerned about the ability of communications companies to maintain functionality during significant and major events. In one situation, a communications site went down twice; once when the site was damaged by fire and then when the company operating the site neglected to monitor the fuel for a generator that was running a mobile radio at the site. Although these companies reassure customers that they are ready to respond in the event of an emergency, recent events would seem to indicate otherwise.

B. Radio Site Report

1. RIVERCOM did not suffer an outage due to the fires at the Goat Mountain radio site, situated up between the towns of Chelan and Pateros, but it was at times at an elevated risk of being burned over by the fire. At one point the site was running on a generator using back-up battery power, however, it was not going to be long before the batteries failed. Radio Systems Technical Manager Humphrey contacted Washington State Patrol (WSP) and they agreed to run power from their shelter to the RIVERCOM shelter as RIVERCOM was not able to get up to the site to refuel the generator. WSP was very accommodating and greatly assisted RIVERCOM by keeping communications facilities and equipment running during this extreme fire event. They also sent their technicians up ahead of the fire front on two occasions in an effort to protect the site. Other communications sites that were located further up the hill were burned to the ground.
2. The Grouse Mountain radio site was also at risk during recent fire events. The Forest Service brushed-out around the site and was able to keep the fire at bay. No damage was sustained at the site.

Boardmember Snyder commented on what appears to be a lack of knowledge and inability of State mobilization leaders to identify existing communication sites and other vital resources within local and regional areas that need to be protected during fire incidents. A short discussion took place about the importance and need for State mobilization personnel to work more closely with key local personnel within respective communities.

Boardmember Lamar further suggested that it might be worthwhile to brush-out around other radio sites for increased fire protection. Director Fosse added that the newer sites are being installed with fire protection clearance areas and rock surrounds.

C. Staffing Report

1. Two (2) Emergency Services Dispatcher trainees continue their training on the dispatch floor with Certified Training Officers. They are scheduled to be fully released from training in early October.
2. Three (3) individuals completed in-house Training Academy on September 3, 2015 for Emergency Services Dispatcher positions. They will now move into training with a Certified Training Officer on the dispatch floor.
3. One (1) Emergency Services Dispatcher position remains vacant. RIVERCOM will be working to fill the remaining vacancy. ESD interviews were conducted on August 26, 2015.

D. State E911 Office Report

1. The State E911 Office meetings scheduled for September have been cancelled due to EOC operations for fires in the State. RIVERCOM staff plans to attend the upcoming State E911/APCO Fall Forum in October.

VII. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial reports were provided to the Board for review.

2015 Annual Budget, YTD for Month Ending August 31, 2015			
	Amount Collected	Total Expenditures	% of Budget
Revenue Sources:			
Agency Assessments	1,715,617		67.77%
Local E911 Excise Tax	688,083		66.85%
Site Leases	10,676		66.72%
Outside Revenue and Grants	332,300		89.38%
Outside Revenue and Grants – Capital Projects	298,673		85.11%
E911/NG911 Reserve Account Interest	137		91.31%
	3,045,486		70.82%
Expenditures:			
Maintenance and Operations Account		2,379,129	55.50%
Capital Projects Account		320,059	87.69%
Equipment Replacement Account		11,841	51.71%
		2,711,029	57.99%

2015 Communications Tax Account, YTD for Month Ending August 31, 2015			
	Amount Collected	Total Expenditures	% of Budget
Capital Improvement Project: Radio Site Expansion			
Revenue Sources:			
Communications Tax Revenue	1,656,309		75.30%
	1,656,309		75.30%
Expenditures:			
Communications Tax Account		1,099,484	38.60%
		1,099,484	38.60%

VIII. OPERATIONS REPORT – There was no report.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Boardmember Lamar reported on the RIVERCOM Operations Group (ROG) meeting that took place yesterday, September 8, 2015. He will be organizing a committee to discuss and research CAD system needs and improvements. The project, however, has been tabled due to the recent focus on local and regional fire suppression efforts. The immediate plan is to establish a committee, participate in a CAD demonstration, and then move forward from there.

X. OLD BUSINESS – There was no old business.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Director Fosse reported that he and Administrative Services Manager Grupp have met with all Boardmembers, with the exception of Commissioner Goehner who was unavailable, as well as Karen Goodwin and Jim Brown from the Pre-Budget Committee to review the 2016 Preliminary Annual Budget. Boardmember Snyder asked if there was any comment or questions regarding the 2016 Annual Budget. Jim Brown of the Pre-Budget Committee was present and had no further comments.

Boardmember Lamar said he appreciated the budget review and wanted to bring up an issue regarding the User Agency billable incident counts used to calculate annual agency assessments, and specifically, the percentage of billable calls for private ambulance companies providing Emergency Medical Services (EMS) used to calculate the assessment. As it stands, the billable rate is applied to only 25% of the calls generated by private ambulance companies providing 911 emergency medical response in RIVERCOM's service area.

Historically, Ballard Ambulance and Lifeline Ambulance both made agreements with RIVERCOM that, based on their call volume, they would only pay an agency assessment to RIVERCOM based on 25% of their total calls. This amount was implemented in 2004 with the understanding that it would be up for review at a later date. Boardmember Huffaker pointed out that the agreement was a verbal one and that the agreement is not in writing; he further noted that many changes have taken place in the ten plus years since the arrangement was made in 2004. He added that specifics regarding a follow-up review to the original agreement are also not detailed in writing, only that it would be reviewed in the future.

Boardmember Lamar recommended that the Board consider increasing the applicable incident count by which the private ambulance company's annual agency assessments are applied. He based the recommendation on the following: 1) The work that goes into 911 dispatcher tone-outs and short reports for emergency medical calls requires the same amount of work that goes into any other dispatch service for emergency medical service agencies who otherwise pay the full assessment amount (such as Cascade Ambulance, Lake Chelan Community Hospital, and Waterville Ambulance); 2) the call volume for private emergency medical service companies is actually two (2) to three (3) times higher than that of other ambulance services that are paying full cost; and 3) RIVERCOM now provides a Medical Program Director (MPD) program. Boardmember Lamar said that a rate increase is needed to better and more accurately reflect the work that RIVERCOM actually provides with respect to private ambulance companies and to better equalize the playing field between public agencies and private companies. Boardmembers Huffaker and Snyder were in agreement.

Boardmember Snyder asked RIVERCOM staff to collect and prepare historical data on EMS calls before the next meeting, so that any changes could potentially be implemented for the 2016 Budget. It was agreed that Boardmembers Huffaker and Lamar will coordinate with RIVERCOM to review the statistics.

There were no other comments or questions regarding the 2016 Preliminary Annual Budget. The final Budget will be presented to the Board for final approval and adoption at the October 14, 2015 Board meeting.

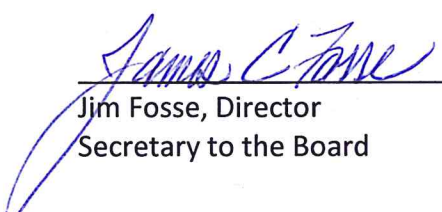
XII. GOOD OF THE ORDER – There were no items.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:37 AM. The next Board session is scheduled for October 14, 2015. The October meeting will be conducted at RIVERCOM 911.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,
Staci Engler
Confidential Administrative Assistant
RIVERCOM 911

ATTEST:



Jim Fosse, Director
Secretary to the Board

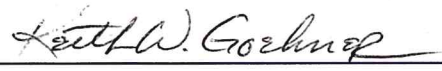
10-14-15

Date

RIVERCOM 911 Administrative Board Members:



Wayne Barnhart, Chairman, Council Member, City of East Wenatchee



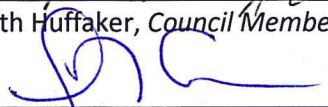
Keith Goehner, Vice-Chairman, Commissioner, Chelan County



Dale Snyder, Commissioner, Douglas County



Keith Huffaker, Council Member, City of Wenatchee



Mick Lamar, Chief, Lake Wenatchee Fire & Rescue,
RIVERCOM 911 Operations Group