

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Date: August 16th, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
SC Educational Television / Idea Lab

Subject: Minutes of the South Carolina 911 Advisory Committee Meeting

Attendees: *Committee Members* – Mike Flynn – PSAP Rep. Spartanburg County, Neil Baxley – PSAP Rep. Beaufort County, Mitch Fulmore – PSAP Rep. Florence County, Rick Blackwell – PSAP Rep. Greenville County, Terrance Ford – Wireless Rep. AT&T Melony Burgess – Wireless Rep. FTC, Jack Maguire – Consumer Rep., Misty Wise – SC 811 (RFA Appointment), David Morrison – RFA SC 911 Program Manager, Adam DeMars – GIS Expert/RFA, Ken Roper – Pickens County (SC Association of Counties). *Staff* – Paul Athey – RFA Division Director, Michael Ball – RFA SC NG911 Program Manager, Amy Simpson – E911 Program Coordinator, and Kathryn Kelley.

Note: Meeting information and log-in instructions are posted on the RFA website, and in the Rembert Dennis Building.

- I. Chairman Blackwell called the meeting to order at 10:000 a.m. Roll call was taken for the record; ten committee members were in attendance.
- II. Chairman Blackwell presented the July 19th, 2022, meeting minutes and asked if any members had edits or questions. Jack Maguire motioned to approve the minutes; Melony Burgess seconded the motion and all members voted aye. Chairman Blackwell declared the minutes approved as written. (*See minutes*)
- III. ESInet Implementation Update
 - Michael Ball provided an update, and the following items were presented:
 - Implementation Issues Encountered / Implementation Successes
 - SC ESInet – 2022 Network Statistics
 - Group 2 migrations are complete.
 - Planned 2022 migration dates for the remainder of the calendar year, and a map view of the Network Status Dashboard were reviewed.
 - SC ESInet – Last Routing Option (LRO)
 - Previous LRO – Barnwell County: 4 positions
 - Current LRO – Oconee County: 14 positions (Primary), 4 Positions (Backup)
 - Considering LRO – Anderson County: 22 Positions (Primary), 16 Positions (Backup)

IV. Future ESInet Reimbursements

- David Morrison initiated the conversation. Proposed amendments to the reimbursement policy were emailed to the committee members on July 29th, 2022, asking for their feedback.
 - Proposed Reimbursement Policy Change
 - - Any costs related to contracts or agreements for ESInet and/or NG core services renewed or extended after January 1, 2023, without prior approval from both the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee and the RFA Board.
 - Neil Baxley spoke on behalf of the Coastal Cooperative ESInet group and raised the following concerns regarding the proposed changes to the reimbursement policy:
 - System Interoperability / Infrastructure Redundancy
 - Mutual Aid Relationships / Hurricane Activity
 - Coastal Region serves ¼ of the state’s population plus 32 million tourists during the summer months.
 - Future concerns RFA will mandate other equipment (911 Phone System/CPE, CAD, Recording System, etc.)
 - Mike Flynn echoed Mr. Baxley’s concerns, however he acknowledged:
 - RFA is responsible for managing the fund in a fiscally responsible way that ensures every PSAP in the state meets the requirements for NextGen 911 standards.
 - He expressed appreciation for the years of work RFA staff put towards developing a plan that is in the best interest of all South Carolina citizens.
 - David Morrison noted from the state’s perspective, according to the statute, the RFA Board is ultimately responsible for the administration of the wireless 911 fund and the strategic plan.
 - Michael Ball reminded the committee that in comparison, both IP networks have the same capabilities. The state ESInet initiative involves the IP Network Structure and NG911 core services only. RFA rejects the notion that the State ESInet with core services is a “cheap system with less features”.
 - Paul Athey addressed the committee adding the following:
 - He gave an example of a PSAP whose contract date with their existing vendor was inadvertently extended after the state ESInet equipment was ordered and they were slated to migrate over.
 - The RFA Board have tasked RFA staff with:
 - Ensuring every PSAP in the state is part of a fully functioning NextGen ESInet and core services.
 - Ensure the 911 fund can acquire the technology by operating in the most fiscally responsible way while continuing to supplement PSAP costs.
 - The strategic plan presented three options to choose from based on the information collected. All three options were explored, and a fiscal analysis was performed.

- Raising the statutory cap was necessary to pursue a statewide backbone infrastructure with regional ESInets; RFA asked for the increase and that notion was rejected.
- RFA ultimately chose the best path to best serve all citizens of South Carolina.

Jack Maguire added that the 911 Advisory committee as a body is an advisory committee. Ultimately, the decision lies with the RFA Board. He then made the motion that Chairman Blackwell appoint a sub-committee comprised of members from the Coastal Cooperative group and PSAP members across the state to come up with a compromise.

There was further discussion among the committee members regarding the position of the Coastal Cooperative ESInet group; some suggested potentially revisiting the strategic plan and exploring additional regional ESInet options across the state, the potential financial impact on the fund balance, and the likely result of a reduction of the reimbursement rate across the entire state earlier than had previously been projected, etc.

The consensus of the committee was to consider putting together a cohesive panel to do a comprehensive review of the strategic plan. Jack Maguire withdrew his motion.

V. Operational Workgroup

- David Morrison opened the operational workgroup discussion stating the idea of forming an operational subcommittee was mentioned during a previous meeting for the following purposes:
 - To monitor and offer guidance to the 911 Advisory Committee and RFA staff throughout the process of navigating the different directions the State and Coastal ESInets were taking.
 - To evaluate and define the role of the 911 Advisory Committee moving forward.
 - Misty Wise suggested this agenda item be tabled since it was discussed during the previous agenda item, and the agenda item was tabled.

VI. Other Items / Discussion

- Sam Gaither – Berkeley County raised the following operational budget concerns:
 - Wireline vs Wireless funds; specifically, a 20% difference in the ESInet reimbursement rate from the wireless fund whereas if a PSAP chose to go with the state ESInet plan, their costs were covered upfront at 100%.
 - Unfairness in the current and proposed amendment to the reimbursement policy forcing PSAPs in the Coastal ESInet to make up that 20% difference using other funding sources.
 - Officials at the county level should be charged with making the final decisions on the services it provides for its citizens.
 - Other states have a higher statutory cap and can provide more options to their citizens.
- Jim Lake added that he, along with many others in attendance at the meeting, were present during town hall discussions throughout the state and involved in different subcommittees during the strategic planning process.

- The Coastal Cooperative formed as a result in following best practices to serve their citizens, which were outlined in the strategic plan which was approved by the 911 Advisory Committee and the RFA Board.
- Local control has been discarded as a result of government spending.
- Mr. Lake reiterated Mr. Gaither’s position regarding the additional 20% difference in costs the Coastal Cooperative must pay and expressed concern over the additional potential decrease in the overall reimbursement rate.
- Mr. Lake encouraged the committee to continue this discussion and take other opinions under consideration (i.e. removing items from the reimbursement list such as dispatch chairs, etc.)
- Mr. Athey responded with the following:
 - RFA’s understanding of the Coastal Cooperative moving forward with their regional ESInet, as well as other singular PSAP ESInet early adopters, was due to the extended time necessary to update the 911 statute. RFA also believe the Coastal Cooperative and other PSAPs would be joining the state ESInet if/when that legislation was passed and after their contract period ended.
 - Removing certain items from the approved reimbursable items list along with the additional potential for lowering the overall reimbursement rate in the near future would have a significant effect on smaller PSAPs with less means to provide services to their citizens due to their smaller tax base and population size, which was the sole purpose for conducting the strategic plan.

There was further discussion surrounding the difference of opinions from both the Coastal Cooperative and RFA perspectives. The State’s position continued that the purpose of the strategic plan and the responsibility of the RFA Board is to make decisions that are in the best interest of all the citizens of South Carolina in a fiscally responsible manner.


- Chairman Blackwell mentioned the upcoming APCO/NENA conference adding there would be a session on “Virtual Call Taking” that he wanted to share with the community and encouraged attendance.

VII. Adjournment

Jack Maguire motioned to adjourn the meeting; Neil Baxley seconded the motion and all members voted aye to adjourn the meeting at 11:54am.

Public Notice of this meeting was posted at: <http://rfa.sc.gov/boards-committees/911> and in the Rembert Dennis Building.

These Minutes were approved on November 15th, 2022.



 Amy Simpson