

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

**Date:** October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Bowers Conference Room  
Room 417, Rembert C. Dennis Building  
10:00 am  
(Members attending via WebEx)

**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, Dent Adams – Wireless Rep. FTC, Ben Spearman – Wireline Rep. Comporium, 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 – RFA SC Wireless 911 Program Coordinator.

- I. Chairman Blackwell called the meeting to order at 10:00am.
- II. Chairman Blackwell presented the September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 meeting minutes to the members and asked if any member had edits or questions. Neil Baxley made a motion to approve the minutes. Jack Maguire seconded the motion. All members voted aye in favor, and Chairman Blackwell declared the minutes approved as written. (*See attached*)
- III. ESInet Implementation Update
  - A. Michael Ball presented the committee with project updates for the groups that were slated for implementation through the end of calendar year 2021.
  - B. Group 1 Project Updates: Migrations are moving forward as scheduled. There are currently 4 PSAPs on the ESInet (West Columbia, Barnwell, Allendale, and Batesburg-Leesville). Bamberg County will be the final PSAP to go live in 2021 on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - C. Group 1.5 Updates: Abbeville County has been added to group 1.5 due to CPE support concerns. During a site visit, it was discovered that their system was old and on a monthly contract for support. Abbeville chose the hosted Solacom CPE solution offered through the state contract and, as a result, RFA was able to accommodate an earlier migration date and faster onboarding process. Comtech and Solacom are ready to ship equipment to Pickens County PSAPs and will begin once group 1 migrations have been completed. GIS/MSAG/ALI data comparisons and modifications continue. Migration dates for all other PSAPs in group 1.5 remain unchanged.
  - D. Group 2 Project Updates: Oconee County's backup PSAP facility will be completed in time to go live with the primary PSAP and has been added back to the group 2 migration schedule. Comtech site visits have been completed. Data collection is beginning soon, and circuit surveys continue. Migration dates for group 2 remain

unchanged apart from the Oconee County backup PSAP being added back on the schedule. Anderson County's backup PSAP migration date remains undetermined until their site/equipment is completed.

- E. Issues Found: During the migration process with the first four PSAP's to go live, issues arose related to old equipment (network components, recording systems, etc.), out of date data (MSAG, ESN, & GIS records), non-standard settings/configurations (ALI displays, transfer capabilities, etc.), and limited system access/support (recording systems, CPE systems, CAD systems, etc.).
- F. Next Steps: Complete migrations of group 1 PSAPs. Continue early coordination with future PSAPs. This process will begin once Bamberg County's migration is completed and continue throughout the remainder of 2021. Begin preparations for 2022 PSAP migrations. Mr. Ball presented the committee members with the list of planned migrations for calendar year 2022 and asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chairman Blackwell thanked Mr. Ball for his work and continued with the next item on the agenda.

#### IV. Federal NG911 Grant Proposed Appropriations - Jim Lake, Charleston County

- A. Jim Lake presented the committee with research he compiled outlining the history and proposed legislation for federal NG911 grant appropriations.
- B. In October 2018, Congress required the National 911 Program Office to provide a report on the estimated costs of nationwide NG911. The National 911 Program Office conducted a study and returned to Congress with an estimated cost between \$9.7 - \$12 billion for nationwide NG911 deployment. In April 2020, House Democrats proposed that any future coronavirus rescue legislation include NG911 development support funding at \$12 billion. In March 2021, House Democrats proposed the LIFT America Act which would provide \$15 billion for NG911 support funding. However, the legislation was not supported within the 911 community regarding language that allowed the Federal Government to decide what was considered an eligible expense rather than the states.
- C. In September 2021, Senators Amy Klobuchar and Catherine Cortez Masto introduced legislation to provide a \$10 billion federal grant program to upgrade NG911 centers across the nation. Their bill is identical to legislation approved on the same day by the House Energy and Commerce Committee to be included as part of the Build Back Better Act.
- D. The summary of the Budget Reconciliation Act proposes appropriations of \$10 billion for NG911 implementation, operating and maintaining NG911, planning and implementation activities, as well as administrative expenses associated with implementation. Eligibility requirements outlined require that an entity must not engage in 911 diversion. They must use funds to support the deployment of NG911 and must establish or commit to establish a sustainable funding mechanism. The legislation also requires an entity must designate a point of contact to coordinate the

implementation of NG911, and the entity's plan for NG911 must meet minimum standards for interoperability, reliability, data processing and storage, and cybersecurity. In addition to the proposed \$10 billion, there is an additional \$80 million to establish the NG911 Cybersecurity Center and \$20 million to establish a 16-member Public Safety Next Generation 9-1-1 Advisory Board. Language in the new proposed legislation appears to avoid the controversial language that was included in the LIFT America Act proposal and has the support of the 911 community.

- E. Mr. Lake concluded his presentation by noting that he was following the legislation daily and believes there is enough support for the legislation to pass. Chairman Blackwell recognized that the information provided by Mr. Lake was in correlation with the Coastal Cooperative's ESInet reimbursement request. Mr. Lake agreed and suggested a "wait and see" approach regarding the potential for federal funding before asking the committee to decide on the Coastal Cooperative's reimbursement request.

## V. Fiscal Update

- A. Paul Athey, Division Director with RFA, provided the committee with the Annual Report on the Fiscal Model. He advised the committee as a precursor that the information he was providing did not include any potential additional funding sources such as the federal funding Mr. Lake outlined in the previous agenda item.
- B. The fiscal model was updated in February 2021 with actual data from calendar year 2020. Based on that estimate, RFA anticipated an ending fund balance for 2021 of approximately \$33.1 million. In order to maintain a fund balance within the target range for operating reserve, recommendations were made which included increasing the wireless fee to \$0.64 in 2024, and reducing cost reimbursement percentages to 70% in 2025 and 65% in 2030.
- C. Mr. Athey then gave a brief review of the fiscal model, stating it had originated with the fiscal sub-committee Chaired by Katie Morgan in 2016 and showing progression through year 2031 with revised estimates based on actual YTD and projected data.
- D. Based on that data, RFA is anticipating beginning calendar year 2022 with a higher fund balance of approximately \$41.3 million. This is primarily due to collections trending higher than projected by 3.7% and cost reimbursements falling substantially below forecast as a result of adjusted timelines with both the State and Coastal ESInet implementations. As a result, costs included in 2021 projections won't likely be incurred until 2022 when project milestones are reached. Consequently, the updated fiscal model allows RFA the option to reduce the reimbursement percentage only once to 70% in 2027, provided the wireless fee is increased to \$0.64 in 2024.
- F. Mr. Athey outlined several factors that could impact the fiscal model. These factors include a variation in fund activity for the remainder of 2021, revisions or additions to reimbursement policies, developments related to the statewide NG911 project (adjustments in the PSAP deployment schedule or level of participation with the hosted

call handling solution), and finally, the potential for additional federal grants with substantially higher funding (pending Congressional action). Mr. Athey concluded his presentation asking if the committee members had any questions.

- G. Chairman Blackwell asked if the additional collections were a result of more wireless cell phone usage. Mr. Athey responded that he suspects its likely more of a timing issue with respect to when the funds make their way from the vendors to DOR to the Treasurer's Office and into the 911 account. Another unpredictable factor is when the pre-paid revenue is deposited. Jack Maguire asked if any SC Legislators were involved in the NG911 federal grant proposed appropriations. Mr. Lake answered that Rep. Joe Wilson is part of the 911 caucus that supports the legislation.

#### VI. Wireless 911 Fee for 2022

- A. David Morrison informed the committee that per SC Code of Laws section 23-47-50 (F), it is the duty of RFA and the 911 Advisory Committee to annually calculate the wireless 911 fee for the following year. The fee is calculated by using the amount of wireline surcharge fees collected throughout the state divided by the number of subscribers to determine the average amount paid across the state. The current wireless 911 fee in SC is \$0.62.
- B. The statutory cap remained at \$0.67 for 2022. Based on the updated fiscal model provided previously by Mr. Athey, RFA is recommending the 911 Advisory Committee advise the RFA Board keep the wireless fee at \$0.62 for 2022. Jack Maguire made the motion, Ken Roper seconded the motion. Chairman Blackwell asked for any discussion on the matter.
- C. Mike Flynn asked if RFA staff were preparing the RFA Board for an increase in the statutory cap to \$0.67 in 2024. David Morrison answered the fiscal model suggests an increase of \$0.64 in 2024. Chairman Blackwell asked if any committee members opposed the motion, hearing none he declared the motion passed.

#### VII. ESInet Reimbursement Request for Coastal Cooperative

- A. Based on Mr. Lake's presentation on proposed federal grant appropriations, Chairman Blackwell asked if there was a motion from the committee to table the request made by the Coastal Cooperative to increase their ESInet reimbursement rate from 80% to 100%. Dent Adams made the motion to table the request made by the Coastal Cooperative, Mitch Fulmore seconded the motion. Chairman Blackwell asked for any discussion or opposition to the motion. Hearing none, the motion to table the discussion was passed.

#### VIII. Coastal ESInet Participation

- A. Sam Gaither addressed the committee stating that he felt it was appropriate to table this discussion along with the Coastal Cooperatives request for the same reasons until more information regarding the potential for federal fund grants is known. Adam DeMars

made the motion to table the request, Mike Flynn seconded the motion. Chairman Blackwell asked for any discussion or opposition to the motion. Hearing none, the motion to table the discussion was passed.

IX. Other Items and Questions

A. Jack Maguire complimented the people responsible for the coordination and implementation of the NG911 ESInet throughout the state on a job well done.

X. Adjournment

A. Jack Maguire made the motion to adjourn. Dent Adams seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:51am.

Attachments: Agenda, Meeting Materials

Public Notice of this meeting was posted at: <http://rfa.sc.gov/e911>

These minutes were approved on 11/16/21.

Amy Simpson 