

**Dakota 911
Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes: September 6th, 2023**

Members Present: Tom Lawell – Apple Valley; Matt Smith – Dakota County; Lynn Gorski – Farmington; Dan Wietecha – Hastings; Justin Miller – Lakeville; Logan Martin – Rosemount; Ryan Garcia – South St. Paul

Members Absent: Gregg Lindberg – Burnsville; Dianne Miller – Eagan; Kris Wilson – Inver Grove Heights; Cheryl Jacobson – Mendota Heights; Nathan Burkett – West St. Paul

Alternates Present: Sarah Alig - Eagan

Others Present: Heidi Hieserich, Brent Anderson, Jen Hildebrandt – Dakota 911; Dain Olson – Dakota 911 Legal Counsel, David McKnight – Dakota County

1. Call to Order

Recognizing a quorum, Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 3:07 pm.

2. Roll Call

Members in attendance are noted above.

3. Approve Agenda

Discussion: No discussion.

Action: Motion by Miller (Lakeville) to approve the agenda. Second by Gorski (Farmington). Motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

4. Consent Agenda – Executive Committee Chair

- a. Approve minutes from the May 3rd, 2023 regular meeting
- b. Approve April, May, and June, 2023 paid claims
- c. Recommend approval of June 2023 unaudited financial report
- d. Receive executed contracts & agreements
- e. Receive operations committee meeting minutes
- f. Recommend approval of Memorandums of Agreement

Discussion: No discussion.

Action: Motion by Smith (Dakota County) to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Second by Miller (Lakeville). Motion passed.

REGULAR AGENDA

Action Items

5. Executive Director Evaluation Committee Formation

Discussion:

Martin (Rosemount) reminded the group that there had been no performance evaluation in 2022 due to Folie's retirement announcement. Martin then asked the group if the desire was to move forward on the current schedule and administer a performance evaluation for Director Hieserich or delay it for one year.

Smith (Dakota County) asked if Director Hieserich was on any sort of probationary period. Hieserich (Dakota 911) confirmed that she was subject to a 1-year probationary period. Martin (Rosemount) noted that the same logic used in the past could be applied to Hieserich's current anniversary, which was January 23rd. Martin then noted that the performance evaluation would be administered by a work group made up of the Executive Committee Chair and Vice-chair, along with a third participant. Gorski (Farmington) offered to participate. Martin recapped that the workgroup would be made up of himself, Administrator Wietecha, and Administrator Gorski.

Action: Motion by Alig (Eagan) to move forward with a performance evaluation for Director Hieserich, based on her anniversary date. Second by Smith (Dakota County). Motion passed.

Information Updates/Discussion Items

6. Executive Director Report

Discussion:

911 call handling system – Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that the system migration that was scheduled for late August had to be rescheduled due to technical issues outside of Dakota 911 and the vendor's control. Hieserich explained that there were network issues with MNIT and the backup 911 circuit that would delay the migration to sometime in November.

Encryption of law enforcement radios – Hieserich (Dakota 911) reported that this consortium-wide effort was on track to go live the morning of September 20th. Hieserich reminded that fire departments who didn't have encryption configurable radios, or keys in place for encryption, would lose encrypted channel access. Hieserich noted that all groups were aware and were working on what their agency-specific plans were. Wietecha (Hastings) inquired who and how many were lagging in capable radios, and if it was extensive. Anderson (Dakota 911) noted that currently, none of the fire departments had programmed radios. Anderson clarified that Burnsville and Eagan had encryption capable radios that had not yet been programmed as priority was being given to the law enforcement groups. Anderson continued, stating that Apple Valley was waiting for their radios, and others had no timeline yet. Anderson noted that Dakota 911 was one participant in the effort being led by Dakota County Radio Services. Hieserich (Dakota 911) added that there were a couple of leadership radios that were programmed for encryption.

Metro Region CAD-to-CAD – Hieserich (Dakota 911) informed members that the workgroup evaluating vendor responses to a MESB RFP was close to a decision when Minnesota Emergency Communication Network (ECN) announced a project to pursue a

statewide solution. Hieserich noted that the Metro Region group paused their effort to see what the Statewide effort entailed and if it would satisfy the Metro Region needs. Hieserich noted that the metro region effort would likely be delayed well into 2024, but there was value in waiting as the state would pick up the majority of the cost with a statewide solution.

Microsoft 365 – Hieserich (Dakota 911) reported that currently, only Dakota 911 leadership had Microsoft 365. Hieserich commented that a goal was to get the full team onboard starting in September to support better communication and information sharing among all staff.

Admin Non-emergency Phone Line Outages – Hieserich (Dakota 911) reminded the group of a communication sent out late July notifying members of a series of non-emergency phone line outages due to fiber cuts with Frontier. Hieserich explained how without the administrative phone lines, Dakota 911 can't receive alarm calls, receive inbound non-emergency calls, or make outbound calls. Hieserich assured the group that improvement efforts are a priority. Hieserich stated that Frontier had already implemented a new PSAP support team to help resolve concerns and issues, and that Dakota 911 is working with both Frontier and a local consultant to improve system resilience. Hieserich explained that one likely improvement will be a move to an IP call delivery system opposed to the current PRI technology, and members will likely see some positive cost impacts from that. Hieserich stated that she was aiming to report on improvement recommendations at the November meeting.

Smith (Dakota County) noted that in the past there had been reports of numerous levels of redundancy. Smith inquired if multiple lines had been cut. Hieserich (Dakota 911) explained how there were multiple lines coming into the facility, but depending on where the cut took place, the system could still go down. Hieserich clarified that the cuts in July were upstream with Frontier land to avoid service impacting outages like this Dakota 911 would need to consider carrier redundancy.

Legislative Update – Hieserich (Dakota 911) informed members that the Emergency Communication Network (ECN) was able to secure a 1-time appropriation of \$7,000,000 for the 102 PSAPs in the State. Hieserich noted that Dakota 911 should be receiving its share of this appropriation in the next couple of weeks, and staff are working with Dakota 911 Fiscal Agent on how to handle that. Hieserich noted that there were specific funding priorities set by the state on what the funds could be used for including next gen readiness and cyber security. Hieserich advised the members that she would bring an update to the November meetings, and that it would likely include a budget amendment formalizing the addition of this added revenue.

Telecommunicator Certifications: Anderson (Dakota 911) updated that the state effort to implement telecommunicator certification was just finalizing the socialization period. Anderson noted that PSAPS would soon be requesting public safety partners to submit letters of support for consideration at the upcoming legislative session. Anderson reiterated the importance of the certification effort, reminding the group that it would just

be a formality for Dakota 911 as all staff already obtained the level of training that would be required of certification. Anderson reminded that like post-board, there would be an oversight committee made up of representatives at the PSAP, law enforcement and fire levels. Anderson referred to the timeline and explained that the rules would be established in 2026 and agencies would work toward an anticipated implementation in 2028.

Martin (Rosemount) inquired if there was any sort of “read” on legislation. Anderson (Dakota 911) noted that the reason this didn’t pass when submitted previously was because the governing oversight hadn’t been established. Anderson explained that it was believed that was the only hurdle.

Staffing – Hieserich (Dakota 911) reported that as of the meeting staffing was at 45 of the authorized 54 public safety telecommunicators. Hieserich added that with three of those 45 FTEs in training, the net staffing level was at 42. Hieserich noted that Dakota 911 was hoping to onboard three in October, and had interviews scheduled on September 19th and October 11th. Hieserich acknowledged the staffing shortage and shared that most public safety dispatch centers were having the same experience. Hieserich noted that Dakota 911 is focusing on recruitment, including a recent partnership with other area PSAPs to staff a recruitment booth at the State Fair and local representation at the Dakota County Fair.

Martin (Rosemount) inquired about the progress of the dispatch marketing campaign. Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that the campaign had been pushed out a few months prior via social media, radio, and billboard advertisement. Hieserich noted that in the metro area alone there were at least 90 openings. Hieserich noted that it was a very tough market and Dakota 911 was revamping the employment brochure, revisiting increased social media presence, and discussing possible part-time positions.

Lawell (Apple Valley) asked what Dakota 911 was looking for. Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that there weren’t many requirements to be a public safety telecommunicator. Hieserich noted that a high school diploma or GED were required, and 2-years of customer service was desirable. Hieserich continued, stating that applicants needed to pass a multitasking, problem solving and critical thinking skills assessment. Hieserich commented that Dakota 911 was looking for people who were able to multi-task, who were good communicators and who were customer service oriented.

Garcia (South St. Paul) asked if staff had any insight as to why folks were leaving. Hieserich (Dakota 911) confirmed stating that those who left weren’t leaving for other dispatch centers, however that wasn’t out of the question given the competitiveness. Hieserich shared the reasons staff were leaving, including three new hires that decided the job wasn’t for them during training, some that moved into law enforcement, and others that left due to the demands of the job, including forced over-time and shift work which were causing issues with work/life balance. Garcia (South St. Paul) asked if a hybrid/remote option was a possibility. Hieserich (Dakota 911) stated that this was a

possible future consideration and that we were closely watching some centers across the county who have recently implemented a remote work option.

Technical Support Staff – Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that Kevin Sok would be joining the two-person technical support team.

Contract Negotiations – Hieserich (Dakota 911) informed members that contract negotiations with the public safety telecommunicators, and supervisors had just started a couple of weeks prior and were progressing nicely.

Gorski (Farmington) referred to the 3.5% mid-contract year memorandums of agreement (MOA) and asked how that came about. Hieserich (Dakota 911) reminded the group that during the budget process, there were conversations held about how Dakota 911 needed to remain competitive in the local wage market. Information was shared about metro-area competitors giving significant increases, upwards of 16%, and some centers giving mid-contract market adjustments. Hieserich stated that it was clear that Dakota 911, being in the bottom 25% for wages already, needed to make a move sooner than the upcoming contract to remain competitive. Gorski (Farmington) asked who administered that analysis. Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that PSAPs in the metro area completed a survey process. Hieserich provided two examples stating that Anoka had just given a \$3/hour adjustment to all their staff and Minneapolis agreed to a 16% increase out of contract. Hieserich noted that she was pleased with the plan which was within the approved budget. Hieserich added that she believed members would see the contracts in November.

Action: No action. Update only.

Smith (Dakota County) updated the group on discussion currently happening between the County and the townships. Smith stated that the townships were currently enrolled in the county's Dakota 911 operating cost allocation which meant taxpayers and city members were essentially paying for the costs of public safety in the townships. Smith stated that Commissioner Slavik was advocating that the townships seek, as a group, membership of the Dakota 911 Joint Powers, with direct billing. Smith noted that these had been challenging conversations that have resulted in many questions. Smith stated that the townships understand they ought to be paying for their costs for service, and some were willing while others were not interested at all. Smith cautioned that Commissioner Slavik may suggest to the Executive Committee that there be a working group formed to consider what options there may be for a plan that would allow township representation in the JPA.

Hieserich (Dakota 911). Hieserich commented that upon request she attended a Sciota Township meeting to educate about Dakota 911 and what went into the costs to run the center. Hieserich stated that in complete transparency, the meeting got heated at times, and she received numerous questions about rising costs and budget increases. Hieserich stated that she was requested to return to an upcoming Sciota Township meeting that other townships would be present at, and she was not certain what to

expect. Hieserich reminded that any proposal would require revision to the Joint Powers Agreement.

Martin (Rosemount) noted that if bringing township representation in would change the strength of the consortium, he wasn't sure he was interested in that.

Lawell (Apple Valley) asked if the current JPA even allowed representation of this nature. Smith (Dakota County) stated that it would require an amendment, and if the townships could align, the county may suggest an amendment. However, he was not certain what that looked like. Lawell (Apple Valley) then asked if the townships were paying something for sheriff's services currently. Smith (Dakota County) responded that they were not, and that the Sheriff's patrol unit was essentially their local PD. Smith reiterated how member agency residents were paying more for those costs than the townships were. Smith stated that based on coverage demand, the Sheriff was interested in adding more staff and if that happens, it would involve a levy on everyone. So, the County Board was thinking the townships could help shoulder some of the public safety cost. Smith noted that Slavik was suggesting this alternative option and if it didn't work, the discussion would return to consideration of individual service contracts with each township.

Wietecha (Hastings) commented that this really seemed to be a county issue between the county and townships. Smith (Dakota County) acknowledged that was being done some places, but the Sheriff wasn't enthusiastic about that option as inevitably, areas ended up with patch-work services. Wietecha (Hastings) asked if there had been any consideration of a reduced level of service. Smith (Dakota County) confirmed and stated that Slavik was hoping to gauge support for this option first. Smith acknowledged it was very complex. Wietecha (Hastings) asked if there had been any discussion at the county level about increasing the share of costs for Dakota 911 in relation to this topic. Smith (Dakota County) responded that he wasn't sure if that would come up, but it was not yet part of 2024 budget discussions. Smith added that he wasn't certain whether it would come up in the 2025 budget cycle, after 2024 when the county was at the 50% agreed to.

Action: None

Adjourn

Action: Motion by Martin (Rosemount) to adjourn. Second by Gorski (Farmington). Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 3:56pm.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING
November 1st, 2023
3:00pm
Dakota 911 Training Room