

**Dakota 911
Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes: April 24th, 2024**

Members Present: Tom Lawell – Apple Valley; Matt Smith – Dakota County; Dianne Miller – Eagan; Lynn Gorski – Farmington; Dan Wietecha – Hastings; Kris Wilson – Inver Grove Heights; Justin Miller – Lakeville; Cheryl Jacobson – Mendota Heights; Logan Martin – Rosemount; Ryan Garcia – South St. Paul

Members Absent: Gregg Lindberg – Burnsville; Nathan Burkett – West St. Paul

Alternates Present: David McKnight (Dakota County)

Others Present: Apple Valley Fire Chief Matt Nelson – Fire/EMS Operations Subcommittee Chair; Rosemount Police Chief Dahlstrom – Law Enforcement Operations Sub-Committee Chair; Julie Stahl, Laura Miller – Dakota 911 Fiscal Agent; Dain Olson – Dakota 911 Legal Counsel; Heidi Hieserich, Brent Anderson, Jen Hildebrandt – Dakota 911

1. Call to Order

Recognizing a quorum, Chair Wietecha (Hastings) called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm.

2. Roll Call

3. Approve Agenda

Discussion: No discussion.

Action: Motion by Miller (Lakeville) to approve the agenda. Second by Martin (Rosemount). Motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

4. Consent Agenda – Executive Committee Chair

- a. Approve minutes from the February 7th, 2024, regular meeting
- b. Approve January, February, March 2024 paid claims
- c. Receive 2023 audited financial report
- d. Receive operations committee meeting minutes
- e. Recommend not waiving monetary limits for the 6/26/2024-6/26/2025 coverage period

Discussion: No discussion.

Action: Motion by Martin (Rosemount) to approve the consent agenda as presented. Second by Miller (Eagan). Motion passed.

REGULAR AGENDA

Action Items

5. 2025 Operating & Capital Budget

a. Fixed Costs Workgroup Report

Discussion:

Hieserich (Dakota 911) informed the group that at member direction, the fixed costs workgroup reconvened to review capital expenses and consider fixed costs. Hieserich noted that the workgroup, made up of Board Directors Weisensel and Slavik, Executive Committee members Martin, Miller and Smith, Fiscal Agent representatives Stahl and Miller and herself, met in March when they took the following steps:

1. Determine that 100% of the Capital expenses were considered fixed costs.
2. Discussed various funding scenarios relating to the possibility of the County increasing their contribution beyond 50%.
3. Created the proposed 2025 Operating & Capital Budget based on the assumption that the County's contribution toward fixed costs would remain at 50%.

Smith (Dakota County) reported that on April 23rd the entire County Board and senior leadership gathered at Dakota 911 for a presentation and tour. Smith noted that this opportunity set the table for a May 7th meeting where the Dakota County Board would be considering a possible increase to Dakota County contributions toward Dakota 911 fixed costs. Hieserich (Dakota 911) agreed that the on-site opportunity went well. Wietecha (Hastings) inquired if there would be a value or need for Dakota 911 governance representation at the May 7th County Board meeting. Smith (Dakota County) responded that the May 7th would be the County Boards first exposure to the baseline budget and potential implications, and Dakota 911 attendance may be premature. Smith continued stating there was no expected action until later summer, which may be a better opportunity.

Martin (Rosemount) noted that one topic discussed by the workgroup was a review currently underway in which Dakota County is evaluating its contributions to county-wide initiatives compared to other counties and their contributions to their respective county-wide initiatives. Martin noted that the findings of this review may bring some valuable context to Dakota County's consideration of increased contributions to Dakota 911 fixed costs. McKnight (Dakota County) clarified that the original ask of the OPA was to remind the County Board of the biggest projects Dakota County contributes to. McKnight continued that Dakota County is likely most comparable to Olmsted County. Martin (Rosemount) commented that the message seemed to be different at the Board of Directors level. McKnight (Dakota County) acknowledged and assured that clarification would be made.

Wietecha (Hastings) referred to early funding discussions, and how at least one commissioner expressed the desire for increased Dakota 911 efficiencies as part of the funding consideration. Wietecha inquired if Dakota 911 efficiencies were still of concern. Smith (Dakota County) referred to a Dakota 911 operational study that was done approximately 5 years prior and noted that he hadn't heard much about that lately.

Smith (Dakota County) acknowledged that there were varying opinions on what factors should contribute to the Dakota County increased funding discussion.

Wietecha (Hastings) recapped that he was hearing there may be some interesting discussion at the County's May 7th meeting, but it was not critical for Dakota 911 representation to be in attendance. Smith (Dakota County) noted this was going to be a hard budget year for the County Board.

b. 2025 Operating & Capital Budget Workgroup Report

Discussion:

Hieserich (Dakota 911) reviewed efforts that lead up to the presentation of the Proposed 2025 Operating and Capital Budget. Hieserich thanked Fiscal Agent representatives Julie Stahl and Laura Miller for their work in development of the proposed budget, and Chair Dan Wietecha, Vice-chair Lynn Gorski, Dianne Miller and Cheryl Jacobson for their participation on the 2025 Budget Review Workgroup. Hieserich then reviewed the proposed operating and capital budget, summarizing that total overall change reflected a 9% increase.

Hieserich (Dakota 911) referred to Contractual Expenses, anticipated to increase by .6% from 2024. Hieserich explained that \$100,000 of professional services was attributable to a 1-time \$50,000 expenses for a staffing and compensation study and a 1-time \$50,000 expense for facility and space planning. Referring to the staffing and compensation study, Hieserich reminded that per Board direction, this was to be done every 3 – 5 years, and a study in 2025 would be year 4. Hieserich referred to the facility and space planning effort and noted this would help Dakota 911 plan for growth and facility needs that have not been accounted for in the Capital Project Fund. Continuing with Contractual Expenses, Hieserich noted that the equipment maintenance increase of 11% was due largely to an audio logging replacement and redundant fiber links additions. Hieserich clarified that the audio logging replacement cost was yet to be determined and noted the fiber costs were related to a new 911 circuit put into place in late 2023. Hieserich noted that the fiber costs for 911 network connectivity are typically covered by the State and shared that she is discussing the matter with the Emergency Communications Network. Closing out the expenses contributing to the contractual expenses increase was a \$60,000 expense for Cybersecurity. Hieserich clarified that the one-time NG911 appropriation funds would be used to cover this expense for 2024-2025.

Hieserich (Dakota 911) referred to Personnel Expenses and acknowledged a 11.7% increase from 2024. Hieserich reminded the group that the increase was attributed to previously negotiated cost of living increases and the addition of 1 FTE, an additional operational supervisor. She added that medical insurance was projected to increase by 9.5%. Miller (Lakeville) asked what the length of the term was for the approved union contracts. Hieserich (Dakota 911) clarified that the current contracts are for 2024-2025. Wietecha (Hastings) asked if past union contracts were on 2-year terms. Hieserich (Dakota 911) confirmed that current and historical contracts were on 2-year terms.

Hieserich (Dakota 911) referred to the proposed 2025 capital budget of \$239,000 and explained that the proposed budget reflects a few notable expenses and changes including \$100,000 for data sharing (CAD to CAD), \$40,000 for supervisor office expansion, and \$65,000 for switch, firewall and PC end-of-life replacements. Hieserich referred to the data sharing expense and explained that there had been \$100,000 slated for 2024 and 2025, but the \$100k was removed from 2024 due to lack of progress with regional and state data sharing efforts. She anticipates that leadership changes at the Emergency Communication Network (ECN) will delay the state's data sharing initiative. Hieserich stated that the final \$35,000 would be for a dispatch training room furniture refresh that would increase training capacity. Hieserich clarified, however, that cost would be covered by NG911 appropriation.

Hieserich (Dakota 911) referred to member fees and assessments and stated that the workgroup recommends using excess fund balance to reduce member fees in 2025 and going forward. Hieserich displayed how this practice would help keep member fee projections down. Hieserich reminded the group that there had been no member contributions to capital funding since 2020, and the current balance would be inadequate for upcoming large projects like radio console and CAD replacements in 2026 and 2027. The work group agreed that it would be wise to break those anticipated costs out over several years if possible. Hieserich acknowledged that it was early and there were many variables that could change in this forecast. Kris Wilson questioned why the \$3M expense for computer aided dispatch (CAD) that Hieserich discussed for year 2027 was not visible on the slide shared as a visual with the committee. Laura Miller (Fiscal Agent) explained that the cost was distributed over 10 years at \$300k per year.

Working with the fiscal agent, the budget was created based on a recommendation to plan for a \$900,000 member assessment in 2025 and then \$700,000 thereafter. Hieserich reiterated this was a catch-up effort in anticipation of upcoming larger expenses. Hieserich circled back saying that the represented Member fees could change based on the outcome of Dakota County Board discussions about increasing contribution toward fixed costs. Lawell (Apple Valley) inquired if there had been any discussion about going out for grant dollars to help with some of these costs. Hieserich (Dakota 911) confirmed stating that NG911 funds being appropriated, and staff would continue to work with the Emergency Preparedness partners to identify possible grant aid. Hieserich noted that she wasn't sure if the identified Dakota 911 projects would be eligible for the grant funding but assured that would be investigated. Smith (Dakota County) commented that the Board of Commissioners were likely to go directly to grant aid. Hieserich (Dakota 911) acknowledged and added that there were discussions at the regional and state levels to push for increased support of 911 centers. Martin (Rosemount) referred to the large capital purchases and questioned the assumptions built into the budget. Martin asked if these products were lease purchase programs and questioned if the \$900,000 had to happen all in 2025. Hieserich (Dakota 911) referred to the radio console project, which was anticipated to cost \$2,000,000 and stated there was a possibility this could be delayed. Hieserich stated that she wasn't certain leasing would be an option, but she would consider this as the project got closer. Hieserich

referred to the CAD projects, which were anticipated to cost \$3,000,000 and noted that there had been conversations about pursuing that as a subscription, or through the consortium. Hieserich explained that the budget was developed based on what was known today, and as the projects got closer, procurement planning could be looked at more closely. Miller (Lakeville) asked if there had been consideration of transferring funds from the operating budget to the capital budget. Miller (Fiscal Agent) responded that the workgroup felt it important to leave those funds in the operating budget. Miller added that the identified amounts were the minimum required to prevent a close to zero balance in coming years. Miller added that since the procurements begin in 2026, the numbers needed to be larger. Miller continued stating that this effort included a desire to avoid debt. McKnight (Dakota County) asked if the Board of Directors discussed debt. Hieserich (Dakota 911) acknowledged that there had been debt in the past. Hieserich commented that her understanding was that it was preferred to avoid debt if possible, and she was not aware of opinions otherwise. Miller (Fiscal Agent) concurred stating that the topic hadn't been broached in recent years. Hieserich reiterated that the recommendation was to avoid debt and save money in the future. Miller (Fiscal Agent) acknowledged that while the overall cost was high, by member, it is lower.

Smith (Dakota County) acknowledged that like any capital plan, 2026 and forward is still uncertain and depending on future decisions, acquisition avenues will still need to be considered. Hieserich (Dakota 911) agreed and reminded the group that this budget currently reflected the worst-case scenario. Smith (Dakota County) agreed, stating the recommendation seemed to be to plan for the worst and make sure you have cash as you don't want to issue debt on a small expense. Smith added that funding options in 2026 and forward could include seeking state assistance to help offset costs.

Miller (Eagan) inquired if Dakota 911 had a fund balance policy for the capital budget. Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that there was no fund balance policy for the capital budget. Miller (Fiscal Agent) noted that the fund balance is basically operated on a 10-year review, and that practice was part of the reason for the forecasted assessments.

Lawell (Apple Valley) questioned if there was concern that the Dakota County Board might see the capital costs forecast starting in 2026 and be turned off. Wietecha (Hastings) commented that in 2025 the capital is 239,000, so the assessments at 50% did show that the members were carrying some of the expense.

Action: Motion by Garcia (South St. Paul) to recommend approval of the 2025 Operating and Capital Budget as proposed. Second by Miller (Lakeville).

Further Discussion: Lawell (Apple Valley) referred to the member allocations as identified in the budget packet and reminded the group that the recommendation to the board was to approve the 2025 member fees represented page 5 in the budget document in the packet.

Motion approved.

Information Updates/Discussion Items

6. MESB Cost Study Report

Discussion:

Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that the MESB cost study report that had been discussed in the last meeting was attached as information only. Hieserich added that a few highlights were identified in the background.

Action: No action. Report only.

7. Executive Director Report

Discussion:

Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that just after the last Executive Committee meeting, on February 8th, Dakota 911 experienced a massive outage of all 911 and administrative lines. Hieserich noted that the primary trigger was a tornado in Iowa which damaged the state 911 network and impacted four centers, all on the same call handling system hosted by Motorola. Hieserich added that a secondary point of failure was in Motorola equipment that failed to reroute 911 traffic to the back-up circuit Hieserich stated that the reroute failure was attributed to something the industry refers to as “network flapping”, where the equipment couldn’t detect a loss of network due to sensitivity to quality-of-service monitoring.

Hieserich assured members that this issue is a priority with regional and state authorities. Hieserich commented that while working through this experience, Dakota 911 has experienced three additional 911 service disruptions. Hieserich clarified that these three experiences were not network outage events, but service disruptions related to Motorola call handling equipment failures that resulted in the call processing equipment losing connectivity with the Motorola host due to network quality. In all three disruptions the call takers were disconnected from their call handling platforms, and active 911 calls, and forced to log back into the system to reinitiate communication with the caller.

Hieserich noted that the Motorola executives would be on-site on April 25th for further discussion and shared that the matter has the attention of regional and state authorities supporting Dakota 911 and the other centers that have been impacted. Hieserich explained that Dakota 911 is the largest of the 41 911 centers in Minnesota on this Motorola platform. Hieserich stated that while there have been no additional massive scale outages, the continued disruptions are incredibly concerning. Miller (Lakeville) referred to an outage somewhere else in the country and asked if there were any similarities. Hieserich (Dakota 911) confirmed that there were absolutely network outage similarities, some of which were also on the Motorola system, and these experiences just proved the point of how complex these fiber configurations are. Wilson (Inver Grove Heights) asked how long Dakota 911 had been with Motorola. Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that the relationship had been since day 1 of Dakota 911 operation, but the current experience had been since migration to a new platform in 2023. Wilson (Inver Grove Heights) asked if Dakota 911 was too big for the system to handle. Hieserich (Dakota 911) explained that she was doing a deep dive into the system, and contract which was established in 2022. Hieserich explained that this was represented as a transition to a hosted solution platform. Hieserich further explained that the platform was

a MN solution hosted by Motorola at their data centers established in Minnesota. Lawell (Apple Valley) commented that while Dakota 911 was the largest of the 41 centers on the MN solution, there were probably other larger customers elsewhere. Hieserich (Dakota 911) agreed and clarified that Dakota 911 is the largest on the MN hosted solution and assured that Motorola was being held accountable by Dakota 911 and regional and state 911 leadership. Hieserich acknowledged, however, that it is a process that necessitates giving Motorola time to address problems and make improvements. Hieserich assured that membership would be kept updated on the status of the effort. Hieserich then noted several in-house lessons learned:

1. Technology Risks – For efficiency reasons, Dakota 911 admin lines are integrated with our 911 call handling platform. The outage on February 8th resulted in the loss of all phones. Staff are actively working through possible solutions that will help prevent this level of outage going forward.
1. Contingency plans – Dakota 911 contingency plans are outdated and lack clear directions on how to make them operational. Already in progress as a strategic goal in 2024, this experience emphasized the need for improvements, which include working with our backup 911 center partner Ramsey County on a transition plan.
2. Public alert and warning notification –Improvements have been made to staff guidelines and the State of Minnesota is scheduled to provide in-house Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) training later in the week. A challenging system for 911 centers to navigate, lessons learned from Ramsey and Hennepin County experiences will help us to be more prepared for in-the-moment situations.
3. Stakeholder notifications – Timely operational notifications were made, and stakeholder notifications were made as quickly as possible (approximately 45 minutes after the event), but there were gaps. Staff have already updated notification lists to include chiefs and emergency preparedness partners.

Hieserich noted that while this will likely be a lengthy process, it was being given high-level attention and all findings would be shared with governance.

Legislative Updates

Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that Dakota 911 was watching two bills being considered by State Legislature, HF3966 and HF4796.

HF3966 - Hieserich explained that HF3966 referred to state public safety telecommunicator training and certification requirements. Hieserich assured that this was long overdue and supported by Dakota 911. Hieserich added that Dakota 911 public safety telecommunicators were already held to the standards identified in the bill.

HF4796 - Hieserich explained that HF4796 proposes modifying the local government correctional service retirement plan to include public safety telecommunicators. Miller (Lakeville) asked what the status of this bill was. Anderson (Dakota 911) commented that the bill had made it through the public safety committee, but he was uncertain of the status. Miller (Lakeville) asked if there was any coordinated lobbying being done on the

bill as it is a pretty significant budget impact. Wilson (Inver Grove Heights) asked if anyone was familiar with the corrections retirement plan and how it compares to the general plan.

Anderson (Dakota 911) stated that the coordinate plan is 1.7% of salary per year of service that you put in, while Corrections is 1.9%. Corrections also have a retirement age of 55 without penalty. Gorski (Farmington) noted that the employee contribution to the corrections plan is 5.83% while the employer contribution is 8.75%.

Project and Goals Update

Hieserich (Dakota 911) provided a quarterly update on 2024 projects and goals.

Action: No action. Update only.

OTHER BUSINESS

Lawell (Apple Valley) congratulated Dakota 911 on improved staffing levels.

Smith (Dakota County) noted that this would be his final Executive Committee meeting. Smith acknowledged that programs don't get any more core/critical than the Dakota 911 operation and he has great admiration for how Dakota 911 runs. Smith added that Dakota 911 stands out among county-wide initiatives and his hope is that it can be used as a model going forward.

ADJOURN

Action: Motion by Gorski (Farmington) to adjourn. Second by Martin (Rosemount). Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:16pm.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING
September 4th, 2024
3:00pm
Dakota 911 Training Room