

**Dakota 911  
Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes: September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Members Present:** Cara Schulz – Burnsville; Mike Slavik – Dakota County; Nick Lien – Farmington; John Bermel – Lakeville; Joel Paper – Mendota Heights; Jeff Weisensel – Rosemount; Lori Hansen – South St. Paul; Pat Armon – West St. Paul

**Members Absent:** John Bergman – Apple Valley; Mike Supina – Eagan; Jen Fox – Hastings; John Murphy – Inver Grove Heights

**Alternates Present:** Gary Hansen – Eagan

**Others Present:** Dan Wietecha, Lynn Groski – Executive Committee; Heidi Hieserich, Brent Anderson, Jen Hildebrandt – Dakota 911; Julie Stahl – Dakota 911 Fiscal Agent; Dain Olson – Dakota 911 Legal Counsel

**1. Call to Order**

Recognizing a quorum Chair Weisensel (Rosemount) called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Roll Call**

	Apple Valley	John Bergman		Clint Hooppaw
X	Burnsville	Cara Schulz		Dan Gustafson
X	Dakota County	Mike Slavik		Bill Droste
	Eagan	Mike Supina	X	Gary Hansen
X	Farmington	Nick Lien		Steve Wilson
	Hastings	Jen Fox		Mary Fasbender
	Inver Grove Heights	John Murphy		
X	Lakeville	John Bermel		Dan Wolter
X	Mendota Heights	Joel Paper		Stephanie Levine
X	Rosemount	Jeff Weisensel		Paul Theisen
	South St. Paul	Lori Hansen		Todd Podgorski
X	West St. Paul	Pat Armon		Julie Eastman

**4. Approve Agenda**

**Discussion:** Chair Weisensel (Rosemount) asked if there were any changes to, or objections to approving the agenda. There were none.

**Action:** The agenda was approved without objection.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**5. Consent Agenda – Board of Directors Chair**

- a. Approve minutes from the May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 regular meeting.
- b. Adopt and ratify April, May and June, 2024 paid claims.
- c. Receive June 2024 Unaudited Financial Report
- d. Receive Contracts and Agreements executed between April 17<sup>th</sup> and August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Action:** Motion by Slavik (Dakota County) to approve the consent agenda. Second by Bermel (Lakeville).

	Apple Valley
X	Burnsville
X	Dakota County
X	Eagan
X	Farmington
	Hastings
	Inver Grove Heights
X	Lakeville
X	Mendota Heights
X	Rosemount
	South St. Paul
X	West St. Paul

Motion passed.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

***Action Items***

None

***Information Updates/Discussion Items***

**6. 911 System Updates**

**Discussion:**

Hieserich (Dakota 911) referred to the 911 outage in February 2024 and acknowledged that a memo providing a status update had been sent to Governance over the summer and was included in the packet. Hieserich reviewed some key improvements included in the memo as well as improvements made since the status update was sent and reviewed recent improvements.

One improvement was that the call handling equipment would automatically log call-taking consoles in after a network disruption, significantly minimizing down time. Another key improvement made is that 911 calls would no longer drop but go back into

queue and present to the next available call taker. Hieserich advised that this functionality had been tested numerous times and was working as expected. Hieserich stated that the most significant improvement expected is the replacement of copper used for the “last mile” connection with fiber. Hieserich stated that this effort is currently underway with the State of Minnesota having contracted with Lumen to build a new primary 911 circuit fiber. Hieserich noted that upon her last check, the State was in the provisioning phase, ensuring this was a high priority for the Emergency Communication Network (ECN).

Hieserich noted that there were also ongoing assessments to address gaps that could be filled and risks that could be mitigated as part of the improvement effort. Hieserich explained how one key component the State of Minnesota was working on was contractual changes to increase vendor accountability. Hieserich clarified that in her conversations with the State of Minnesota and other key representatives, she stated assured that it was bringing on legal support to review contracts which were written in the vendor’s favor.

Hieserich reminded how the February outage impacted all 911 and non-emergency lines. Hieserich informed members that they could expect an item on the November agenda that would address Motorola contractual improvements related to improved Dakota 911 PSAP local survivability. Hieserich clarified that this effort would entail modifications to equipment that would maintain console connectivity for non-emergency lines in the event there was a network disruption.

**Action:** No action.

## **7. County Fixed Cost Contributions Update**

### **Discussion:**

Hieserich (Dakota 911) provided a timeline recap stating that in March 2024 the fixed costs workgroup convened to consider various funding scenarios. Hieserich stated that she attended the May County Board meeting where the funding scenarios were presented and considered. Hieserich stated that at the meeting, questions revolved around the operations assessment done in 2018 and the County OPA review done in 2019. Hieserich stated that she agreed to compile and provide a status report. Hieserich noted that the report, which was included in the agenda packet, was provided to the County Board in June. Hieserich continued, stating that she also attended the September 10<sup>th</sup> County Board work session, where she answered questions about the report and answered questions about the proposed funding scenarios. Hieserich reported that as of the close of the work session it was agreed that Dakota 911 had satisfied outstanding questions related to the 2018 operation assessment and 2019 County OPA review. Hieserich stated that the actual funding portion of the work session discussion was very brief. The County deferred to a current effort underway that will identify County contributions toward County/City collaborative costs at a county-wide

level. Hieserich noted that the County was waiting to continue Dakota 911 funding discussions until receipt of the results of the County/City collaborative costs review. Slavik (Dakota 911) noted that the matrix included in the packet was exceptionally well done. Slavik noted that some of the excerpts taken from the 2018 and 2019 reviews discredited Dakota 911 as inefficient. Slavik stated that members of the County Board continued to pick at those excerpts receiving no clarifying response until receipt of the matrix and Director Hieserich's report. Slavik continued stating that using the matrix Hieserich was able to explain efficiencies and how Dakota 911 is a "gold standard". Slavik added that the previous County Board-perceived glaring concerns were no longer there, and the belief is that Dakota 911 is a very well-run organization. Slavik referred to the delayed funding consideration and explained that Dakota County was looking at its largest levy in almost 50 years. Slavik acknowledged the pressures all government entities faced including mandates, contract negotiations and resident expectations and noted that while the effort was still moving forward, the County needed to receive the wholistic report, so County and City representatives had a full understanding of county contributions toward County/City collaborative efforts. Slavik reminded members that under the current JPA, the County was already contributing funding to the tune of \$700,000 for membership and fixed costs. Slavik referred to Director Hieserich's articulation and explanation of Dakota 911 status and stated that he was looking forward to her annual attendance at future Board meetings. Hieserich (Dakota 911) thanked Slavik for his words of support and stated that she was glad to hear that the message had been made clear that while the organization would always strive for improvement, the organization was running smoothly.

Weisensel (Rosemount) inquired when the County Board might have a report on the findings of the County contributions toward County/City collaborative efforts. Slavik (Dakota County) responded that he anticipated it by the end of the year. Slavik acknowledged that the review would possibly display that the County was not contributing as much toward Dakota 911 as what other Counties contributed to their PSAPs. However, it would also provide a larger picture view of how the County might be contributing more to other collaborative efforts. Slavik clarified that didn't mean the County shouldn't do more, it would simply display a wholistic assessment.

Hieserich (Dakota 911) asked the group if they would like this topic to remain as a standing item on the agenda. Slavik (Dakota County) commented that the County Board would likely not be considering increased contributions until their 2026 budget, which meant discussions would likely not pick back up until June of 2025. Weisensel (Rosemount) suggested this item remain on the agenda and if there is nothing to report, that is fine.

**Action:** No action. Update only.

## **8. Dakota 911 Projects and Goals Update**

**Discussion:**

Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that she included a full narrative report on the status of Dakota 911 projects and goals in the packet, so unless there were specific questions, she was going to focus her update on two specific goals, improving operational efficiencies and emergency response, and ensuring Dakota 911's ability to maintain critical operations under adverse conditions.

Goal: Improve operational efficiency and emergency response

Hieserich noted that action had begun to address the objective of making improvements to the non-emergency call taking process to allow greater focus on emergency response. Hieserich explained that Dakota 911 launched the new online service request tool, which allows citizens to request non-emergency service. Hieserich advised that prior to activation of the feature, it was tested by member agency police department reception staff. Hieserich stated that the feedback was very positive. Hieserich noted that the next step was to begin promoting the feature with membership and on social media, but that it would likely take some time to get the word out.

Bermel (Lakeville) referred to after-hours calls to the Lakeville police department non-emergency number and asked if they would still get a dispatcher. Hieserich (Dakota 911) advised that there were no changes to the after-hours police department phone roll-over practices. Hieserich clarified that this was an online service request tool that would allow residents to go online and report something that might not otherwise require direct contact with a telecommunicator. Hieserich commented that Dakota 911 planned to explore the use of artificial intelligence to assist with non-emergency calls and service requests, both with the online tool and possibly during periods of high call volume. She assured Dakota 911 would proceed with caution on the matter of AI assisted non-emergency call answering. Hieserich referred to an agency out of Colorado that utilizes an AI assistant for non-emergency call processing support and noted that they've seen a 40% reduction in non-emergency call volume with the assistance of AI.

Armon (West St. Paul) asked what experience had been since rolling out of the online reporting feature. Hieserich (Dakota 911) clarified that it had only been live for one day and had not been promoted yet so there was little to report on so far. Hieserich noted, however, that when tested by member police department reception staff, there were 68 reports over a 2-week period. Hieserich advised that she would provide an experience update at the next meeting.

Bermel (Lakeville) asked if, down the road, there was a plan to reach out to the Dakota County community and solicit feedback. Hieserich (Dakota 911) stated that this was something she would be interested in, and there were a couple of ways to go about it. However, it would likely be a budgetary item.

Lien (Farmington) asked what regulatory body was involved in use of artificial intelligence in 911. Hieserich (Dakota 911) clarified that the online requests were

specifically for non-emergency and when using it the reporting party had to acknowledge it was not an emergency. Hieserich added that with the online service request, there were key words and phrases that AI could pick up on to prompt the requestor to call 911 if necessary. Hieserich clarified that the online requests were still managed by human oversight. The data directly populated into the dispatch system and the telecommunicators handed the call just like any other non-emergency call from there. Lien (Farmington) acknowledged that it was an input tool. Hieserich (Dakota 911) confirmed.

**Goal:** Ensure Dakota 911's ability to maintain critical operations under adverse conditions

Hieserich (Dakota 911) acknowledged that Dakota 911 had established a goal to strengthen continuity of operations and that the specific action item in 2024 was to test and identify vulnerabilities. The outages and service disruptions that occurred earlier in the year helped highlight risks and vulnerabilities in support of this action item. Hieserich stated that future work would involve planning and recommendations for necessary improvements, and explained some of these efforts were already underway due to urgency of resolution, such as the 911 system improvements, even though they weren't specifically identified in the 2024 action plan.

Armon (West St. Paul) referred to the staffing goal and asked how that was going. Hieserich noted that great progress had been made, but there was still improvement needed. Hieserich assured that she would provide more detailed information on Armon's question as part of her Executive Director report.

**Action:** No action.

## **9. Executive Director Report**

### **Discussion:**

Staffing – Hieserich (Dakota 911) reported that Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST) staffing was currently at a gross of 54 of the authorized 55. Hieserich clarified that ten PSTs were in training and one was on leave resulting in a net staffing of 42. Hieserich noted that several of the PSTs in training were close to being finished, which would provide some relief later in the year. Hieserich stated that the year-to-date PST average was at 52, a 9% improvement from last year. Dakota 911's goal was to improve average staffing by 10%, which was an ambitious goal given the low staffing numbers in 2023. While the goal was not met with full time PSTs, the full time equivalent of the 4 part-time PSTs would put Dakota 911 at 10% improvement.

Armon (West St. Paul) applauded the staffing efforts and asked how possible anticipated separations might impact the staffing level. Hieserich (Dakota 911) acknowledged that fluctuating staffing levels was expected and something that would always require monitoring. Hieserich noted that the reality was that not all trainees

make it through training, and staffing can quickly trend downward. Hieserich noted that Dakota 911 anticipated two retirements in 2024 and advised that hiring efforts continued to be a work in progress.

Paper (Mendota Heights) referred to salary increases in 2023 and 2024 and asked if that contributed to improved staffing. Hieserich (Dakota 911) confirmed, stating that the increased wages helped with attraction. Hieserich continued stating that it was imperative that Dakota 911 wages and benefits maintain a competitive edge as all PSAPs were struggling with staffing. Hieserich added that most of the new hires coming on board didn't have experience, so they were comparing PSAP benefits before making employment decisions.

Hieserich referred to the small supervisory team stating that two long-term military leaves hit the team hard in 2024. Hieserich reiterated that one of the experienced members on the supervisory team would be retiring the end of 2024.

#### State/ECN Updates –

- Leadership Update - Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that the State Emergency Communications Network (ECN) had lost its director and 911 program manager in early 2024, and neither position had been filled yet. Because of this the Commissioner of Public Safety was the acting ECN Director. Due to these changes at the state, progress with some of the strategic projects had suffered.
- Statewide data sharing initiative - Hieserich reminded the group that a metro region data sharing /CAD to CAD effort had been abandoned as the result of the State expressing interest in a state-wide data sharing pilot project that may also be funded by the State. Hieserich commented that the metro region was disappointed that this project had fallen on the State's priorities list with the changes in leadership. Hieserich noted that the region was currently exploring two NextGen mapping platforms that offer varying levels of interoperability support. Both platforms are available to all MN PSAPs on the state contract, and currently funded by the state. Hieserich advised that she would be representing the metro region in state conversations, and she would continue to emphasize the need for interoperability and CAD to CAD capabilities.
- NextGen 911 System - Hieserich stated that NextGen 911 system efforts were delayed pending placement of a new ECN director.

#### Regional Updates –

- Data sharing/CAD to CAD - Hieserich (Dakota 911) noted that the metro region was looking to reconvene data sharing and CAD to CAD conversations that had been previously abandoned pending State efforts.
- COOP planning – Hieserich reported that there were conversations at the regional level regarding PSAP continuity of operations and 911 contingency routing plans. Hieserich informed members that there were currently no formal

agreements in place between PSAPs agreeing to provide back-up support. Dakota 911 is working on a draft agreement with Ramsey County to formalize our arrangement.

- School Mapping – Hieserich informed members that the ECN was awarded a \$7 Mil grant to support indoor school mapping. Hieserich stated that the only thing currently known about how the State plans to distribute those funds, is that it will be at the regional level. Hieserich noted that she would be working with the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board (MESB) to find out how this will impact Dakota County going forward.

Armon (West St. Paul) asked for clarification on what school mapping was. Hieserich (Dakota 911) clarified that if there was a 911 call from a school, the PSAP would have tools that provided very detailed mapping of the school buildings. This mapping would be used to support public safety response.

**Action:** No action. Update only.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Slavik (Dakota County) referred to Public Safety Telecommunicators being part of the General PERA pension plan, and a push in legislature to move PSTs to another existing plan or create a new plan specific to PSTs. Slavik noted that this push was to support something better than the current General plan as members of public safety. Slavik acknowledged that while there had been a lot of opposition over the years from current public safety plans like police, fire and corrections, PERA was currently doing an actuarial study to identify potential impacts. Slavik stated that because most counties have a direct connection to PSAPs, the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) formed a group tasked with reviewing the actuarial study and understanding what the impact might look like in the event it continues through legislature.

Hieserich (Dakota 911) confirmed that it was absolutely a top priority in the PSAP industry is to find a way to bridge the gap between PSTs and Fire/LE pensions. Hieserich noted that staffing retention issues would be difficult to overcome without changes to make retirement benefits comparable to those of 911's public safety partners.

Slavik (Dakota County) commented that he didn't think people disagreed with Hieserich's comment. He thought the concern was about the "slippery slope" it may create. Slavik noted that he just wanted members to be aware that there may come a time where a letter of recommendation is requested.

Wietecha (Executive Committee Chair) reported that the annual Executive Director Performance Evaluation effort had begun, and Executive Committee members would soon be receiving a request for feedback. Wietecha reminded that in past years, the Executive Committee member was tasked with engaging their Board and Operations



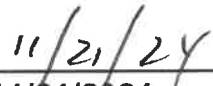
Committee leadership to formulate one consolidated agency response. Wietecha noted that in the 2023 evaluation, only 7 responses had been received and the goal was to have 100% response for 2024. Wietecha reminded that feedback was necessary to ensure membership needs were being satisfied, and to help Director Hieserich and the organization she leads grow and improve. Wietecha encouraged members to lean on their managers and administrators over coming months.

**ADJOURN**

**Action:** Motion by Weisensel (Rosemount) to adjourn. Second by Armon (West St. Paul). Meeting adjourned at 8:52am.

**Next Regular Meeting:  
November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024  
8:00am  
Dakota 911 Training Room  
2860 160<sup>th</sup> Street W, Rosemount, MN 55068**

  
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**Jeffery D. Weisensel, Board of Directors Chair**

  
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**11/21/2024**

  
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**Heidi Hieserich, Executive Director**

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**11/21/2024**