

**SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, & LOCAL AFFAIRS
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON CITY, COUNTY, & LOCAL AFFAIRS
AND
LEGISLATIVE ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON LOCAL 911 SYSTEMS
MEETING JOINTLY**

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2015

MINUTES

The Senate and House Interim Committees on City, County, and Local Affairs, and the Legislative Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems met Thursday, August 6, 2015 at the Holiday Inn & Convention Center, Springdale, Arkansas.

Committee members present were Senators Missy Irvin, Jonathan Dismang, Bart Hester, Scott Flippo, and Greg Standridge, and Representatives Betty Overbey, Scott Baltz, Mary Bentley, Charles Blake, Justin Boyd, Gary Deffenbaugh, Jana Della Rosa, Charlotte Douglas, Lance Eads, Justin Gonzales, and Timothy Lemons.

Other legislators present were Senators Jon Woods and Representatives Bob Ballinger, Lanny Fite, Frederick Love, and Sue Scott.

The Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems non-legislative members present were Mayor James Firestone, City of Vilonia, Brianna Fields, Emergency Responder, Joel Hoggard, Consumer Member, Shelby Johnson, Director, Geographic Information System, County Judge Michael Lincoln, White County, David Maxwell, Director, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management and Chris Villines, Executive Director, Association of Arkansas Counties.

Call to Order

Representative Scott Baltz called the meeting to order.

Overview of Benton County and Washington County Departments of Emergency Communications

Representative Baltz recognized Michael DeRose, Director, Benton County Office of Emergency Communications. Mr. DeRose gave an overview of the Benton County 911 system which covers 880 square miles. He said the Benton County 911 Center was created in 1988 with funding from a 5% tax placed on landline telephone service. The monies collected from the tax support the operations of the four 911 centers in the county. The 911 system in Benton County has progressed from Phase 1 capabilities, to the deployment in 2015 of Next Generation 911. Mr. DeRose said that Benton County is the first in the state to implement texting emergency requests to 911 centers. Staffing for the four 911 centers includes a director, a deputy director, six front-line supervisors,

and twenty-five dispatchers. In 2014, the four 911 centers received a combined total of 40,000 wireless 911 calls compared to 5,000 landline calls.

Representative Baltz recognized John Luther, Director, Washington County Department of Emergency Management. Mr. Luther gave an overview of the Washington County 911 system, which covers 900 square miles. He told legislators that the Washington County 911 Center employs ninety-three full-time dispatchers in the five 911 Centers in the county. He described the process required to transmit 911 calls to the Centers, which includes:

- The University of Arkansas who receives 911 landline calls from campus properties, then transmits the calls to the county 911 system
- The cities of Fayetteville and Springdale who respectively receive wireless 911 calls, then transmits the calls to the county 911 system
- The Washington County Sheriff's office who receives landline and wireless 911 calls for smaller towns, then transmits the calls to the county 911 system
- Central Emergency Services receives all wireless 911 calls from unincorporated areas within the county, then transmits the calls to the county 911 system

Mr. Luther discussed the loss of revenue from the decline of landline telephone usage. He asked legislators to consider reviewing the formula used by the ETSB board to distribute the funds and the division of 911 fees collected from wireless telephones, versus landlines.

911 System Procurement Process Overview

Representative Baltz recognized Camber Thompson, Director, Office of State Procurement (OSP). Ms. Thompson summarized the process that could possibly be used to obtain a statewide contract for all 911 systems in the 75 counties. This would be for the bulk purchase of equipment, which would lower costs and standardize the equipment throughout the state. Below is an outline of the process:

- Develop specifications and requirements for all 911 systems
- Form a team of individuals from county 911 systems and agency personnel, including the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM), and the Geographic Information Office (GIS), who would develop specifications and purchase requirements for products
- The team would determine and oversee software and equipment implementation, also training, and a transition plan for new systems
- Following development of product specifications and requirements, OSP staff would be assigned to develop a Request For Proposal (RFP), and specify evaluation criteria
- Estimated time to let the RFP to vendors for bidding would be a three-week window
- Following the release of the RFP, two weeks would be allotted for vendor questions and answers concerning the bid process, and/or requirements
- OSP would review the submitted bids from the RFP proposal to determine if vendors meet the mandatory requirements

- An evaluation process would be initiated by a team of individuals, staff of OSP and three to seven subject matter experts
- Each evaluation team member would review and score the RFP based on criteria written into the bid
- The evaluation team would hold a consensus meeting to calculate the RFP scores
- An evaluation committee chairperson will average the scores and send them to OSP
- Staff of OSP will calculate points for pricing a bid and rank each vendor's bid
- OSP staff and members of the evaluation team would enter into negotiations with a selected vendor
- Upon completion of vendor negotiations, an anticipation award would be released for a fourteen-day time frame
- The fourteen-day window would allow vendors who were not selected, to submit a protest
- At the end of the fourteen days, county 911 systems would be allowed to begin purchasing from the awarded contract

Ms. Thompson suggested that legislators consider requiring vendors who submit proposals make oral presentations during the evaluation process and/or provide a demonstration of their software or equipment. Representative Baltz said he believes a statewide procurement process for 911 systems equipment and software would create savings and uniformity throughout the state.

Senator Dismang recommended that committee members be in agreement before moving forward. He suggested that a process be developed to ensure information and transparency throughout the process, along with any future questions concerning equipment purchases to be retained for future scrutiny. Senator Dismang also recommended a firm timeline be set for the process so that all parties on all levels can be included.

David Maxwell volunteered to contact the county judges in all 75 counties to determine their interest in a centralized procurement process. He said that based on a positive response from the judges, ADEM could lead an effort to organize an evaluation team to work with the OSP. Mr. Maxwell asked the committee to consider including telecommunication companies in future committee meetings to discuss the 911 fees on wireless and landline telephones and provide their perspective.

Update on Panic Button Alert System (Handout)

Representative Baltz recognized Tommy Wren, Mullenix and Associates, for an overview of the new Panic Button Alert System for schools. Mr. Wren provided the timeline for implementation of the Panic Button Alert System into schools throughout the state

- June, 2015 - funding for the system was secured through the Arkansas Department of Education

- July 1, 2015 – a team, including PSAP specialists, staff of Mullenix and Associates, and J.P. French, a new employee of Rave Mobile Safety, began the implementation process in the schools
- Throughout the month of July 2015, members of the implementation team contacted local law enforcement agencies, state law enforcement officials, and local 911 Centers to ensure sufficient notification and readiness for the Panic Button Alert system
- July 31, 2015 - a webinar was held for all K through 12 school administrators and other school personnel. The webinar had over 600 participants
- August 2015 - members of the implementation team, led by Rave Mobile Safety, is continuing to work with school districts and 911 Centers

Mr. Wren told the committee that Governor Hutchinson has a press conference scheduled for Tuesday, August 10, 2015 to announce the implementation of the Panic Button Safety Alert System into public school systems.

Representative Baltz announced that legislators are invited to tour the Springdale 911 Center following the AAC Conference luncheon. He also announced upcoming meetings of the Legislative Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems, which will be held Wednesday, August 26, and Thursday, August 27, 2015 in Blytheville, Arkansas.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.