

MINUTES

WINNEBAGO COUNTY EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SYSTEM BOARD

Rockford Fire Headquarters, 204 S. 1st Street Rockford, IL 61104
November 29, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Michele Pankow, Co-Chair Gary Caruana, Joel Hallstrom, EJ Dilonardo, Mike McCammond, Dave Loria, Carla Redd, Todd Stockburger, Marc Gasparini and Adam Truman. Absent: Shawn Connors

Guest: Elizabeth Russell, John Kelly, Adam Eich, Tim O’Keefe, Dan Ewers, Kirk Wilson, John Dergeron and Sandy Stansell

III. New Business

TEXT to 911 PSA

Sandy Stansell advised ETSB members that the NINGA counties have decided to announce the startup of Text to 911 in their respective counties by way of social media on Monday, December 4, 2023. Stansell also advised that Rockford 911 had experienced a delay with the AT&T testing process which was completed a few weeks prior, Elizabeth Russell and Chief Pankow would be meeting to discuss whether they want to monitor for a period of time before Rockford made the announcement over social media. Stansell said she just wanted to make board members aware because surrounding counties would be announcing and they may hear about it so she wanted them to be aware and informed.

ETSB and Mercyhealth IGA Discussion

Chair Michele Pankow began the meeting with a brief overview of what has transpired with the IGA. Pankow advised that the IGA has gone back and forth between ETSB and Mercyhealth two times. There is an email stream, which provides a timeline as well. Pankow said that members were present today to discuss a response and to talk about a face-to-face with Mercyhealth in an attempt to move this process along.

Co-Chair Gary Caruana – Asked who would be involved in the face-to-face

Chair Michele Pankow – Advised that both she and Caruana would meet with them.

Attorney John Kelly – This has gotten to the point where a face-to-face might be beneficial. Nobody likes to get attorneys involved to cut through this process. Kelly said three members could be present in order to conduct a closed meeting. You cannot have a majority of the quorum present to be a closed session

Dave Loria – Supported the idea of the face-to-face

Joel Hallstrom – Hallstrom felt that the third person should be representative of the

Departments who use RockCom for their dispatch. Either he or Dave Loria.

Attorney Kelly – Stated a face-to-face would show favorably with the State Administrator

Marc Gasparini – Suggested that they table the face to face until a discussion ensues. He stated that he had lot of questions. He asked what the ETSB's commitment would be financially.

Elizabeth Russell – For the primary - \$27,000 for fiber plus \$1,800 per month. The second Site on Riverside would be \$3,526 monthly. So, the total commitment would be \$30,500 for One-time costs and about \$5,000 monthly or \$60,000 annually.

Marc Gasparini – Asked if Mercyhealth could use that fiber for other purposes.

Attorney Kelly – No, that fiber would be dedicated to 911. I don't think they can use that fiber

Marc Gasparini – What if Mercyhealth terminates, is the ETSB out that \$30,000.

Attorney Kelly – The question would be what is the return on the investment. Does the ETSB ever get that money back.

Marc Gasparini – I don't think this contract is good for either side.

Attorney Kelly – The ETSB is still responsible for the SAP

Joel Hallstrom – The term of the contract is a sticking point, either party can terminate with cause. Both PSAPS currently do not have a ready-made solution. What would be cause for us to terminate.

Attorney Kelly – The State Administrator will not allow Mercyhealth to shut down unless there is another place to go.

Joel Hallstrom – I think we are stuck. If we have to pay \$64,000 for the next few years, I am for that.

Chair Pankow – Last year we voted to move forward with the SAP. Our staffing is better but we aren't at that point to take over dispatch of those departments. That is why we voted for the SAP in the first place.

General Discussion

At this point there were comments made by several board members that Mercyhealth publicly or in an open forum announced during a 911 ETSB meeting that they would cover the costs.

Co-Chair Caruana – We should send back that the board wants a 2yr agreement. They need us and we need them. We need to tell Mercyhealth what their representatives said during the face-to-face meeting.

Todd Stockburger – They stood and said they would not request money from the ETSB and that's why I voted yes for them to become a SAP.

Chair Pankow – I can't speak for Smetana but he probably wasn't authorized to state that

Co-Chair Caruana – We still need to bring this up at the face-to-face

Chair Pankow – Asked if the board should move forward on planning the face-to-face.

Marc Gasparini – Just confirming, does 911 keep ownership of equipment. Attorney Kelly responded, yes. Gasparini asked if ETSB could deny any other outside expenses. Kelly said yes.

Attorney Kelly - The SAP has been operating illegally but Cindy has been accommodating. Still it is a legal problem. With regards to Mercyhealth stating last year that they would cover costs, Attorney Kelly said that should be the ETSB's opening card at the face to face

because it is on record that the ETSB voted based on the statements made by Mercyhealth reps.

EJ Dilonardo - The ETSB got pressured into this, now the pressure sits on each member of the Board. He wants to make sure this is done right. EJ asked How can this contract be terminated.

Attorney Kelly – Attorney Kelly read the termination clause to the board. Kelly said he had Issues with some of the language. He suggested that they rewrite that language.

Chair Pankow – we should simplify it to state with our without cause.

Attorney Kelly – The best posture is to meet with Mercyhealth face to face regarding this

Carla Redd – Their reps publicly stated they would cover the costs. This should be brought up in the face-to-face.

EJ Dilonardo – Asked we know what money we have to lay out. What is Mercyhealth laying out.

Chair Pankow – Any other costs they are doing, will not be paid by the ETSB.

Co-Chair Caruana – So we would only be paying for their primary, not Riverside.

Chair Pankow – That's what we said but now they want us to pay for Riverside.

EJ Dilonardo – What if Mercyhealth shutters and moves completely to Riverside, would we have to pay for fiber there. Attorney Kelly said, yes.

Attorney Kelly – Each member should express their concerns regarding the IGA, since not all can be involved in the face-to-face. These comments or thoughts can be assembled by an individual and then have them bring the collective comments to the three members who will be attending the face-to-face.

Marc Gasparini – Asked If there is a quorum can we go into private session for this.

Attorney Kelly said no it would still be a public meeting. The OMA has limitations on when a public meeting can go into private session.

Chair Pankow – We will have someone reach out to board members to get their bullet points.

Marc Gasparini – There is an approved motion not to pay any costs. Attorney Kelly said there was no negotiations for a contract at the time. So, the board can still move on this.

Motion: Marc Gasparini made a motion for the Chair, Co-Chair and Joel Hallstrom to meet on the issues with Mercyhealth and report back to the board so that they could proceed with negotiations. EJ Dilonardo seconded the motion. All board members were in favor and the motion carried.

Attorney Kelly – There are two main issues to focus on; Term and price.

Adam Truman – Asked if they can move forward with scheduling the meeting with Mercyhealth.

Chair Pankow – Yes, also we will send Cindy an update.

Adjournment

Motion: A motion to adjourn was made by Mike McCammond and seconded by Todd Stockburger. Motion carried and meeting was adjourned.