

**\*SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES\***  
**WINNEBAGO COUNTY EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SYSTEM BOARD**

Rockford Fire Headquarters – 204 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
August 25, 2025

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 11:00 a.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Chairman Gary Caruana, EJ Dilonardo, Adam Truman, Joel Hallstrom, Brian Carlson and Marc Gasparini

Absent: Carla Redd, Shawn Connors, Mike McCommond and Todd Stockburger

Guests: John Girone (911 Business Mgr), Elizabeth Russell (911

Director/Rockford), Rick Ciganek, Steve Schultz, Adam Eich and Sandy Stansell

**New Business**

**Surcharge Budget/FY 2026 – John Girone**

ETSB Chairman Gary Caruana called on John Girone to present. John referenced the highlighted items on the first page, advising that these reflect the projected increases for 2026. Girone asked board members if they wanted him to go through each item. Board members advised that would not be necessary, but there were questions,

Marc Gasparini: Why was the Software Subscription so high.

John Girone: The major reason is that we are placeholding for the two PSAPS who are still in the researching stages, looking at everything from the aspects of call handling, training and to Quality Assurance. At the point of deciding they would bring their choice to the board for approval. The dollar amount is suggested for when that occurs and it places that amount at the high end of costs for the software.

Marc Gasparini: What vendor is the most expensive

John Girone: The product is called Prepared. It is an all in one, comprehensive software. This dollar amount would cover both PSAPS if they choose to work with that solution. Prepared is unique from the others, because they check all the boxes. We have not asked for quotes as of yet.

Marc Gasparini: Would the yearly maintenance costs be included in that figure.

John Girone: This amount is at the higher end and that price would include recurring yearly costs. There are other software subscriptions but this one is the best.

Marc Gasparini: Had a question regarding Building Improvements

John Girone: This is preparing for the worst case scenario. Both PSAPS need significant HVAC repairs and much like Software, this amount would be reflected of the highest cost amount. 520K of that figure is for the replacement of both boils at each building. Complete Mechanical says that work on these boilers needs to be done in 2-3 years but since both have seen significant repairs, they may need replacing in 2026. Jen Fey prefers not to do boiler replacement because of the extensive renovation work being done at the County 911. It

would be very difficult during that time to be without water, also. 150K has already been set aside for the reno work at the county building.

Marc Gasparini: What is our current debt?

John Girone: I don't have that figure available, maybe Steve can answer

Steve Schultz: Did not have that figure available

EJ Dilonardo: Under Instruction and Schooling, do you feel that is enough? I feel an investment in the dispatchers is an important investment and it builds up the quality of morale. I would have expected it to be more.

John Girone: I don't think there is an level of cap. Four years ago that figure was \$20K. The board added \$100K. Since that time we have not hit \$120K. We will be close this year, now with conferences and hosting onsite classes and certified classes, we will be spending more.

EJ Dilonardo: Do you think this is enough (referring to the budgeted amount) What if someone suggests training and there is an opportunity to exceed that amount?

Chairman Caruana: Are you asking if we can amend that amount?

EJ Dilonardo: Yes, so if for instance you need an additional \$9K

John Girone: Yes, it would be brought back to the board to amend it. Certainly, you could add additional funds now so that later the board wouldn't have to amend it.

EJ Dilonardo: Elizabeth, are you comfortable with the amount or would you want to add more item that line item.

Elizabeth Russell: I think it is fine where it's at.

Steve Schultz: There has been much conservatism within each line item that I don't think overspending is going to be a problem.

John Girone: There is room in the budget

Brian Carlson: Is the budget balanced?

John Girone: We don't exceed the surcharge money. There is a move to increase the surcharge but that money wouldn't necessarily go to us. The state may be getting a portion to find their NG network.

Marc Gasparini: What is are fund balance at?

Steve Shultz: \$8.2 Million this fiscal year

EJ Dilonardo: Is there a potential that money in our fund balance could be swept.

John Girone: Advised that there is no mechanism in place to do so.

Chairman Caruana: Who would sweep it?

EJ Dilonardo: Who knows?

Sandy Stansell: Advised board members that there were attempts years ago but 911 agencies and Administrators held that line. John is correct, there are no legal measures or means in place for anyone to sweep the funds.

Marc Gasparini: Thanked John Girone for a nice job with the budget! Also Marc stated that he also feels that Instruction and Schooling should be increased.

John Girone: Advised that under Professional Services there was \$100K earmarked for each PSAP for Ops that can be used for discretionary purposes; for instance dispatch salaries

Chairman Caruana: Steve Schultz in confirming, we can use that for dispatch salaries.

Steve Schultz: Yes, you can.

Joel Hallstrom: With our budget planning, something always happens that you cannot plan

for, like having to replace an engine. So we have to move funds too.

EJ Dilonardo: **Motion: I make a motion that Instruction & Schooling is increased from \$140K to \$160K. My rationale is that the dispatchers and leaders are the most important asset and this shows their importance.**

Marc Gasparini: **Second**

**Roll Call Vote: Unanimous**

Caruana – Yes Truman - Yes Hallstrom - Yes EJ Dilonardo - Yes  
Gasparini – Yes Carlson - Yes

#### **Approval of FY2026 Budget**

Marc Gasprini: Motion: I make a motion to approve the FY2026 Budget for the total budget amount of \$5,439,403.37.

EJ Dilonardo: **Second**

**Roll Call Vote: Unanimous**

Caruana – Yes Truman - Yes Hallstrom - Yes EJ Dilonardo - Yes  
Gasparini – Yes Carlson - Yes

#### **Training Room Furniture**

John Girone: There were 3 quotes. The preferred vendor is OFN in Madison. ETSB has purchased from them in the past.

Marc Gasparini: Why didn't we go with a local vendor.

John Girone: The local vendor was higher and OFN has a much better power solution

Marc Gasparini: **Motion: I make a motion to approve the purchase of training room furniture through OFN in Madison**

Brian Carlson: **Second**

**Roll Call Vote: Unanimous**

Caruana – Yes Truman - Yes Hallstrom - Yes EJ Dilonardo - Yes  
Gasparini – Yes Carlson - Yes

#### **Adjournment**

**Motion:** Brian Carlson

**Second:** Marc Gasparini

Motion carried and meeting was adjourned