

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2009**

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE  
COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)  
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE  
MANTORVILLE, MN**

**2009-10 Work Session**

The Dodge County Commissioners met in a Work Session September 1, 2009, in Conference Room B at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 9:41 a.m. CDT. David Hanson opened the meeting at 9:41 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present and established that there was a quorum:

Those Present

Members present: Klaus Alberts District #1  
Lyle Tjosaas District #2  
David Erickson District #3  
Don Gray District #4  
David Hanson District #5

Members absent: None

Also present: David McKnight County Administrator  
Becky Lubahn Deputy County Clerk  
Paul Kiltinen County Attorney

Emergency Management Director Matthew Maas met with the Board to discuss radio systems.

Radio Systems  
Discussion

Mr. Maas shared information on the following three options:

**Option #1 – Analog conventional narrowband**

- Replace equipment as needed to comply with FCC mandate
  - ✓ **Strengths**
    - Cost – less expensive
    - Existing sites
    - Some existing equipment can be used
  - ✓ **Weaknesses**
    - Does not address key requirements
    - Slightly less coverage
    - Poor audio quality at fringe areas
    - 6.25 kHz
    - Potential for stranded investment

**Option #2 – Digital conventional VHF**

- Replace system with digital VHF equipment
  - ✓ **Strengths**
    - P25 standards-based, 6.25 kHz (P25 Phase II)
    - Coverage
    - Existing sites
    - Addresses some key requirements of emergency responders
      - Coverage
    - Supports advanced features
      - Unit ID
      - Emergency Button
      - Encryption
    - Backward compatible with analog VHF
  - ✓ **Weaknesses**
    - Cost – more than Option #1
    - Console replacement/upgrade
    - 700/800 MHz interoperability

Radio Systems  
Discussion -  
Continued

**Option #3 – Digital trunked 700/800 MHz – ARMER**

- ARMER participation
  - ✓ **Strengths**
    - Grants available to offset cost
    - P25 standards-based solution
    - Addresses most key requirements of emergency responders
      - Coverage
      - Capacity
      - Interoperability
    - Easily scalable (future users: Schools, Hospitals, etc.)
    - Supports advanced features
      - Automatic roaming
      - Priority
      - Emergency button
    - Simplified migration
  - ✓ **Weaknesses**
    - Cost – more expensive than Option #1, Initially less costly than Option #2 but estimated to be slightly more over 10 years
    - Console replacement/upgrade
    - Non-ARMER user interoperability

The Emergency Management Director stated that Option #1 is really not an option for us; the county would be spending money that would have to be spent again sometime in the future when the FCC mandates that the system be updated.

Mr. Maas reported that Option #2 does not give us many options and would have a similar outcome to Option #3.

The Emergency Management Director stated that Option #3 would take the county all the way.

Radio Systems  
Discussion -  
Continued

Commissioner Erickson wanted to know if other agencies are being asked to contribute money towards the radio upgrade.

Sheriff Jim Trihey informed the Board that it is his recommendation that other agencies not be asked to contribute money toward the radio upgrade because they cannot afford it. The plan is to have Dodge County work with each agency to replace each old radio with a new 800 MHz radio. After the initial 800 MHz radio purchase any expense for maintenance or purchase of any additional radios will be at the agencies expense. It was noted that schools are not included in this plan because this is for public safety.

Commissioner Gray wanted to know if some agencies were on a different system if the systems would be compatible.

Mr. Maas reported that there are methods for patching systems together that are not updating to the 800 MHz radio system.

The Sheriff informed the Board that the states purpose for requiring the upgrades is to achieve interoperability between the agencies.

Commissioner Erickson questioned the use/compatibility of the backup dispatch center in Dodge Center.

Lead Dispatcher Rick Eggert reported that the backup dispatch center will be compatible and capable of being updated to the new radio system.

Mr. Trihey discussed the cost for the radio system and funding options that are available for the new system. The Sheriff noted that mandates may be coming in the future and the county would be required to spend additional money in the future if the Board chose to go with Option #1 or Option #2 now.

It was reiterated that any expense related to the new radios and their maintenance after the initial purchase will be at the agencies expense.

The Emergency Management Director shared the following pricing information with the Board.

	<b>Option #1 VHF Analog Narrowband</b>	<b>Option #2 VHF P25 Digital</b>	<b>Option #3 700/800 MHz P25 ARMER</b>
Estimated capital cost and first year maintenance.	\$395,000	\$1,791,000	\$1,559,000
Estimated cumulative cost of ownership over 10 years.	\$1,122,000	\$2,896,000	\$2,967,000

Commissioner Alberts commented that he was not enthused about the proposed system and felt that the same communication could be achieved by using a cell phone.

Radio Systems  
Discussion -  
Continued

The Sheriff indicated that time is of the essence in emergency situations and that it is not practical for dispatchers to make several calls vs. one call over the radio. It was also noted that with cell phones, it is not always possible to reach everyone due to coverage issues.

Mr. Trihey discussed possible future FCC mandates that may require the county to update several years down the road. The Sheriff stated that it comes down to the Board determining how they want to spend the county's money on updating the radio system and how many times they want to spend county money on the radio system. Mr. Trihey felt that Option #3 is the best use of the taxpayer's money for the future needs of the county.

Mr. Maas reiterated that time is of the essence in an emergency. The Emergency Management Director felt it was not an option or acceptable to use cell phones to relay emergency information to emergency personnel.

The Sheriff stated that they frequently have a need to talk to several people at once and using cell phones to relay emergency information would not allow this therefore they recommended Option #3 be considered when updating the current radio system.

County Engineer Guy Kohlhofer commented that because of the way that cell phones work there are communication limitations as well as access issues which makes the system unfeasible. Mr. Kohlhofer indicated that using cell phones can also be costly.

The Emergency Management Director informed the Board that ARMER has the most grant opportunity out there to help reduce the cost of the system to the agencies. Mr. Maas also indicated that he felt the county would have a better chance of obtaining grants for the radio system if they included all law enforcement and emergency services agencies in the county in the grant proposal request.

Commissioner Erickson reminded the Board that the radio system issue affects the whole county.

Mr. Maas reported that the FCC has mandated that they narrowband the radio frequency due to coverage issues and capacity issues.

Former Olmsted County Sheriff and State Interoperability Coordinator Steve Borchardt further discussed options #1, #2 and #3 with the Board. Mr. Borchardt discussed the importance of statewide interoperability and his experience with the power/reception of his 800 MHz portable radio system. It was Mr. Borchardt's opinion that it may not be necessary to have a mounted radio unit in all of the vehicles since the portable 800 MHz radios appear to have exceptional reception and is pretty standard in size now.

Commissioner Hanson commented that he appreciated Mr. Borchardt's input.

Sheriff Trihey informed the Board that he will be asking them for a formal ARMER commitment at the next meeting as the radio system needs to be updated by January 1, 2013.

[Radio Systems Discussion - Continued](#)

The Emergency Management Director noted that radio congestion is a problem during severe weather.

Mr. Borchardt reminded the Board that there is no state fee associated with the 800 MHz radio system and that once the radios have been purchased it is each agency's responsibility for the maintenance of their equipment.

Mr. Borchardt commended Sheriff Trihey, Matt Maas and Rick Eggert for being proactive in getting out and talking to the municipalities about the updates needed to the radio system.

The Board thanked the group for the information.

A majority of the Board favored going with the ARMER/800 MHz option and having the county bond for the initial purchase of the public safety equipment countywide. The Board asked that staff continue to refine the cost of this project. The Board will take formal action on this issue at their September 8th meeting.

The Sheriff discussed with the Board the impact of the decision by the Claremont City Council to cancel their contract with the Sheriff's Office effective October 14, 2009. Although the Board understood the reasons the Sheriff presented for continuing the FT position that was funded primarily by the law enforcement contract with the City of Claremont, the Board decided for financial reasons to reduce the FT position to PT. The Board asked the Sheriff to report back to them in November with an update on any ramifications of this decision.

[Claremont Law Enforcement Contraction Discussion](#)

The Board briefly discussed the status of the Four Seasons Arena and Dodge Center's desire to be released from the joint powers agreement. Also discussed was the possibility of releasing the City of Mantorville from the agreement and the City of Kasson taking over the ice arena operations.

[Four Seasons Arena Discussion](#)

Commissioners liked the idea of the City of Kasson and Dodge County becoming equal partners of the Four Seasons Arena with the city taking over the management and daily issues involving the arena and were supportive of the County Administrator and City Administrator working together to resolve any transitional issues that may come up.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:29 a.m. CDT.

[Meeting Adjourned](#)

**ATTEST:**

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DAVID HANSON  
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

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BECKY LUBAHN  
DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK

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DATED: