City of Evanston  
Emergency Telephone System Board  
E 911 Committee Meeting  
Thursday, October 23, 2008

Board Members Present:
Mr. David Angelus, Community Representative  
Fire Chief Alan Berkowsky, EFD  
Police Chief Richard Eddington, EPD  
Deputy Fire Chief Thomas Janetske, Director of Operations, Office of Emergency Preparedness  
6th Ward Alderman Edmund B. Moran  
Mr. Perry Polinski, Communications Coordinator  
8th Ward Alderman Ann Rainey

Also Present:
Mr. Steven Drazner, Assistant Finance Director  
Mr. Curtis Nekovar, Assistant Communications Coordinator  
Mr. Merrill Silverman, Northwestern University Director of Parking & University Security System  
Mr. Bruce Slown, Director, Information Services  
Mr. Clement Stokes, Northwestern University Director of Emergency Management  
Deputy Police Chief Barbara Wiedlin, EPD

Staff Present:
Ms. Delphyne Woods, Law Department Executive Secretary

Presiding Officer:
Alderman Edmund Moran, Committee Chair

Summary of Action:
Alderman Moran called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes.

The minutes of the May 22, 2008, meeting were the first item of business to be reviewed and approved. Chief Berkowsky moved that they be approved, Mr. Angelus seconded, so moved.
2. **Introduction of New Assistant Communications Coordinator, Curtis Nekovar**

Mr. Nekovar was with the City for a couple of years until 2005, and has returned. He replaces Debbie Hakimian who has moved to the position of Police Records Director. Welcome.

4. **Blue Light Phone Update (verbal, Mr. Polinski)**

At Mr. Polinski’s request, the third and fourth items of discussion were switched to allow the guests from Northwestern University to contribute their report and depart.

Three out of the nine proposed blue light phones are fully operational: 1800 Sherman, Sherman & Emerson (Willard Hall), and the Foster CTA Elevated Station. These all utilize Northwestern’s service. Of the remaining six, four are installed (Noyes CTA Elevated Station, Central CTA Elevated Station, Fireman’s Park, and Hamlin & Sherman). Yet to be installed are two (Church & Benson, and Davis & Benson), both by the Davis CTA Elevated Station.

Mr. Silverman confirms that today AT&T installed phone service to the Fireman’s Park and Hamlin & Sherman boxes. Only the Davis Street boxes remain without power. He also assured that the cold weather will not slow down the boring required to complete installation of the boxes.

Alderman Rainey asks if there has been any feedback from the three operational boxes. None.

Alderman Moran extends thanks to Mr. Silverman of Northwestern University for their contribution to this project. He is optimistic and enthusiastic that this will provide an effective deterrent to bad situations on the street.

Mr. Clement Stokes is introduced as the new Northwestern University Director of Emergency Management. Welcome.

3. **FY 2009-2010 Proposed Budget**

Mr. Polinski provides adjusted and corrected financial reports, and thanks Steve Drazner for his assistance in sorting out irregularities in the old form of the reports.

The Emergency 911 telephone system, which is landline surcharge revenue, is currently averaging $60,000 to $64,000 per month in regular remittances from AT&T. Landline revenues have declined over recent years due to increased use of wireless phones. But in the last year or two it appears to be stabilizing. This revenue includes what we voluntarily receive from VOIP and other carriers, including Vonage which sends about $1,200 per month. On the wireless
side, we are averaging $26,000 to $31,000 per month, which has increased steadily. We average in interest about $3,600 per month posted this year.

Alderman Rainey asks if we have no more debt service at this time? No.

Alderman Rainey asks how much the balance is on which this interest is generated. Mr. Drazner stated that as of the last fiscal year the City has approximately $2,400,000 in fund balance, accruing 2%-3% interest.

Mr. Polinski says the proposed budget has not changed much from budgets past in terms of salaries, overtime, sick payout, insurance. Payroll provides that information.

Alderman Rainey is very interested in the year-to-date information. Why $995,000 in “Furniture and Fixtures”?

Mr. Polinski explains that many expenses are carried over from one year to the next. For example the Fire/Police radio upgrade was originally budgeted at $250,000, and this is under the “Furniture and Fixtures” label for an unknown reason. Actually it is more properly termed “Capital Outlay."

Alderman Rainey finds that deceptive, to place the new Fire/Police radio tower and a chair under the same label. It should be correctly labeled.

Mr. Drazner indicates there is a list with detail breakout.

Mr. Angelus asks if you will actually spend this amount as planned?

Mr. Polinski says that the figure actually represents trimming down Capital Replacement. There are items that were never seen through, for example, the satellite phones budgeted for $10,000 was removed. He did not include anything that was “pie in the sky” unrealistic. He also considers Information Services Department resources, as they are involved in a couple of these projects, such as the CAD400 migration and the Police phase of Mobile Data Browser (MDB). Some of these projects carry over from FY 2008-2009 to FY 2009-2010 before they are completed. The CAD400 migration is approximately $112,000, but $50,000 will be expended upon contract execution to occur before the end of the year. The balance will carry over to FY 2009-2010.

Alderman Moran asks if there is a better mechanism by which we would carry on the books funds that we expect to capture or already have captured but will not be expended over the course of the next fiscal year. Should we be showing this as a “reserve”?
Mr. Drazner says that in the General Fund we would not restrict that, we would restrict the fund balance. Since the amount under discussion is in the E911 fund, it can only be used for E911 purposes. Further restriction may not be necessary.

Alderman Rainey asks the definition of “restricting funds”?

Mr. Drazner indicates that “restricting” the funds is saying that they can only be used for certain prescribed expenditures. In the E911 case, they are already restricted.

Alderman Rainey wants to know how you can tell what you are actually spending in FY 2008-2009, not just what the fund balance is. You show a deficit, not a surplus at the end of this fiscal year of $472,000. What is the real “surplus” number?

Mr. Drazner says the original deficit projection was $882,000, so the $472,000 is less of a deficit than was budgeted.

Alderman Rainey says there is no balance, there is a deficit.

Mr. Angelus asks that if we underspend our plan, we then have a “surplus”? It is understood that we still do not have a positive flow, but the deficit was cut nearly in half.

Mr. Drazner states that there is a beginning fund balance of $2,400,000, so at the end of this year we project that it will be reduced to about $2,000,000. He believes that as of FY 2015 there still will be a positive balance, based on the current Capital Outlay Plan.

Mr. Polinski says that the proposed budget is also pretty much the same with service agreements and contracts.

Alderman Rainey does not want to vote on this budget tonight.

Alderman Moran asks when the budget must be decided on, December 31, 2008, presumably.

Mr. Drazner says it must be before the November legal notice publication. Adequate notice must be given.

Mr. Angelus insists that we have a coherent and accurate budget document that makes sense. Consensus. Also he wants to know what “longevity pay” is.

Mr. Polinski says that it is like a step increase, a bonus for longevity.

Alderman Moran requests that the budget must be carefully considered, but the decision must be made in a timely fashion. He calls for a special budget meeting Tuesday,
November 11, 2008, at 6:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Library to review revised documentation and vote on this budget.

Alderman Rainey says that a test report last May showed financial dire straits which now seem to have improved.

Mr. Polinski explains that he has cleaned up the Capital Replacement, clearing out such things as automatic computer biannual expenses appearing every other year. Also, income from landline surcharges has plateaued out, and wireless charges are increasing. The State of Illinois has dropped its take from $.75 to $.73 a line, and the City collects $.58 out of that, whereas before it was $.49.

Alderman Moran points out that the official “Enhanced 9-1-1 System Report” provided by the State of Illinois is grossly inaccurate. Springfield should produce a report with correct numbers.

Alderman Rainey is concerned about details in the various budget documents being inexplicably out of whack, with projections varying extremely from year to year.

Mr. Angelus requests a one-page recap that is accurate and can be understood. Also, he also wants to execute against this 911 backup center.

Mr. Polinski agrees, that is why we budgeted $50,000. It is operable right now. If God forbid something bad happens, and not only do we have to dispatch from that space, but Department heads within the City would have to operate from there as well as the Emergency Operations Center. To coexist as it is set up now would be difficult, the AM radio station is in there, people are moving around. We need to reconfigure the space and expand it, enclose and soundproof the radio room, new doors and windows, improve the lighting.

Chief Berkowsky says that in history, it was built but never utilized the way it has been the past few years. The 911 Center was down and had to operate out of there. During the recent flooding we had to operate from there. We have identified some of these deficiencies and ways to remedy them.

Mr. Polinski agrees, we need to do some upgrading. Consensus.

Alderman Rainey wants a couple page breakdown with inaccuracies corrected and understandable.

Alderman Moran suggests in trying to reconcile these things, Alderman Rainey should work with Perry who will have something ready to close down the budget for the meeting on November 11.
Mr. Slown suggests that for “Furniture & Fixtures,” have line items broken out for hardware and software maintenance, etc.

Alderman Moran agrees, itemization using the correct nomenclature.

5. **Radio System/Antenna Tower Status** *(verbal, Chief Berkowsky)*

Chief Berkowsky reports that the radio system has been very stable for seven months now, operating as anticipated so we are very happy with this. The next piece is the tower. Preconstruction work was done this week, we pour the foundation next week, then we bring the tower in the week after that. We will erect the tower, install the antennae, and move the coaxial over to the new antennae. We will have a better radio system, more signal penetration, better leads to our 911 Center.

Alderman Rainey asks when it will be done?

Chief Berkowsky believes by November 4 the poles should be up and the antennae connected according to the contractor.

6. **Police Laptop Purchase Request**

Mr. Slown reports that we intend to buy 53 Panasonic Toughbooks, industrial strength, military grade that will handle the high temperatures and bitter cold weather. This is the industry standard. We are getting them for 50 squad cars and 3 spares.

The original intention was to buy these from the Illinois State contract costing over $200,000. In informal bidding, one organization underbid the State contract. Mr. Slown began to uncover some misinformation or disinformation among other bidders. He is beginning to decide to undergo the formal bid procedure through Purchasing and bid out the project in a normal manner instead of going solely through the State contract. Alderman Moran asks how long that would take? Four to six weeks.

Alderman Rainey asks if this is in FY 2008-2009 or FY 2009-2010?

Deputy Chief Wiedlin remarks that this was requested last year and they need these notebooks now. We do not need further delay.

Mr. Polinski explains this has been going on for a long time. In FY 2008’s budget we budgeted $90,000 for the PC car project. In FY 2009 we budgeted originally $115,000, all told $200,000 plus. I believe that breaks down to $5,000 apiece.

Alderman Moran understands the total is more like $300,000.
Mr. Angelus wonders if the savings is worth the time and bother of bidding this out, a small savings?

Mr. Slown says the low bidder offers $8,000 savings, and no other vendor will go much lower.

Alderman Moran affirms that if we do the State contract, we are okay, even if we spend a total of $8,000 more, get the units earlier. What are the ramifications of bidding out?

Chief Eddington says speed is of the essence. But if we get them eight weeks earlier, will we install them eight weeks earlier? Is top value being obtained?

Mr. Slown says it will take two months get the Mobile Data Browser (MBD) up and running, then the laptops would be integrated and it would optimize laptop performance.

Alderman Moran asks if the difference in having the MBD in place and having the laptops earlier rather than later, is that a significant benefit?

Deputy Chief Wiedlin says we have to have the MBD operational before these laptops can function. The MBD is essential to the correct operation of these laptops.

Mr. Polinski explains what we are currently using is Alerts, which has been around for years. It originally came out of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. A few years ago the Illinois Department of Central Management Service rolled out a product called Illinois Wireless Information Network (IWIN). We had two competing State agencies. There was uncertainty, many of the existing Alerts customers were concerned to the point where they privatized Alerts. The City followed this for three years, watch and wait. Skokie bailed out of Alerts, went to IWIN, and spent thousands of dollars just to have that vendor cancel support. The City was lucky not to have dropped Alerts.

Chief Berkowsky asserts that we (the Fire Department) are the guinea pigs for the whole project. We will have administrative training November 4-6.

Mr. Angelus says we need a consolidated integration of all the new technology, time is of the essence. We need a coherent plan to coordinate the various technical elements.

Mr. Slown says the sooner the laptops are in the sooner they are programmed, and the sooner they are installed in the vehicles.

Alderman Moran wonders if they are installed but the MDB is not operational, it is pointless to put them in the cars. We are chasing our tails here.
Alderman Moran wants IS’s best estimate of the time line for this to be rolled out. A savings of $8,000 does not justify the time spent when the safety of people is involved. But if speed in delivery of the laptops does not facilitate the launching of the project, there is no point. We need a plan by November 11.

There is consensus that we do not go with the formal bid procedure.

Mr. Polinski says execution of the contract with the vendor of the Police MDB can be done pronto. It was previously approved by the Board, it would just take a motion and approval tonight to proceed with that for presentation at Monday night’s Council meeting.

7. 2009 Emergency Telephone System Board Meeting Schedule

The proposed 2009 meeting schedule is:

- November 11, 2008 * special budget meeting
- January 22, 2009
- May 21, 2009
- August 27, 2009
- September 24, 2009

Alderman Rainey moves to approve the meeting schedule as amended, so moved.

8. Other Business

Mr. Polinski wants to share things brought back from the annual 911 conference in Springfield. A new VOIP carrier will be operating in Evanston, part of the AT&T project Lightspeed, called U-Verse VOIP. Bad news is that it is connected with those video ready access devices. Good news is that AT&T will voluntarily remit a surcharge of $1.50 a line.

Also, there will be a new wireless company coming to Illinois and Wisconsin the first quarter of next year called Cricket Communications. This year they rolled out in St. Louis. We will see surcharge income with this competition in wireless carriers.

There is more talk of VOIP mobility, hand-held devices that operate with VOIP that will actually compete with cell phones. It is possible that cell phone usage may drop and move to this VOIP mobility as it is cheaper. The challenge is locating people when they call, there are no requirements for accuracy. There are requirements for location determination coming out of new emerging technologies from the 911 Technologies Improvement Act of 2008 signed in July. (HR3403) That provides for the same level of service as wireless with respect to location determination. New technologies are rolled out so fast, standards procedures do not keep pace. It is a real challenge.
Also under HR3403, PSAPs are afforded the same liability immunity with respect to call handling as wireless and landline, so when some intoxicated motorcyclist takes a header in a corn field in McHenry, McHenry County will not held liable.

Alderman Rainey asks if Springfield legislators understand their legislation?

Mr. Polinski says yes, National Emergency Number Association (NENA) has the 911 Caucus at the national level, and the Illinois Chapter of NENA and APCO work at the State level as well, at a snail’s pace.

9. Adjournment

Alderman Moran moves to adjourn, Mr. Polinski seconds, so moved. The meeting adjourns at 9:05 p.m.

PP: djw