

*City of Evanston Emergency Telephone System Board  
Emergency 911 Committee Meeting  
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center  
Thursday, August 27, 2009  
7:00 p.m.*

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***Board Members Present:***

David Blatt, M.D., Community Representative  
Fire Chief Alan Berkowsky  
9th Ward Alderman Coleen Burrus  
7th Ward Alderman Jane Grover  
Mr. Perry Polinski, Communications Coordinator

***Board Member Absent:***

Police Chief Richard Eddington  
Division Fire Chief Thomas Janetske, Director of Operations, Office of  
Emergency Preparedness

***Staff Present:***

Mr. Brian Drake, Assistant Communications Coordinator  
Deputy Police Chief Barbara Wiedlin, Support Services Division  
Delphyne Woods, Recording Secretary

***Presiding Officer:***

Alderman Jane Grover, Committee Chair

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***Summary of Action.***

Alderman Grover calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. ***Approval of minutes.*** Mr. Polinski moves to approve the June 25, 2009, meeting minutes, Alderman Grover seconds, so moved.
2. ***Legislative update (verbal, Mr. Polinski).***
  - a. **SB1433** (Amending the State Finance Act) approved, effective July 15, 2009:

i. Authorizing the Governor to sweep various funds, including the Wireless Carriers Reimbursement Fund totaling \$13,650,000.00, from which Evanston benefited to the tune of \$118,364.49 in December 2008.

The Governor is able to raid funds from numerous sources otherwise dedicated to specific purposes, such as the Wireless Emergency Surplus Fund (funds unclaimed from the Wireless Carriers Reimbursement Fund). We shall see if there will be any check forthcoming this December. Should there be misappropriation of Federal grant money being disbursed via States to their local entities for the purpose of implementing emerging technologies for 911 services, those Federal funds may be jeopardized.

b. **SB2057** (Special Needs Alert Program) sent to the Governor June 29, 2009:

i. Requires PSAPs to keep a record in their Computer Aided Dispatch system database of persons individuals within the community having special medical needs.

ii. This is an unfunded mandate.

This is currently on the Governor's desk and looks like it will be signed and enacted. We will have to proactively share that capability with the community. Data input may be an issue depending on how much information is garnered, and whether or not there will be any salary attached to that. Another concern is keeping the information current. Presently the Fire Department already has a growing database of individuals persons with special medical needs.

Deputy Police Chief Wiedlin asks how the word will be broadcast, via the City radio and television stations? Public service announcements?

Fire Chief Berkowsky mentions that the problem often is less in obtaining the information, but rather updating when specific medical needs no longer are necessary.

c. **SB2106** (Authorizes use of Emergency Telephone System funds to purchase automatic external defibrillators (AED)) has passed the Senate and is presently in the House.

- i. Modifies appropriate ETS 911 expenditures to include AEDs, subject to certain restrictions.
- ii. Seems to be dying in the House Rules Committee as of May 29, 2009.

**3. Article: “Report to Congress: On State Collection and Distribution of 911 and Enhanced 911 Fees and Charges” (report, discussion).**

a. Recently passed legislation, the IP-Enabled Voice Communications and Public Safe Act (S428) and the NET 911 Act (HR3403) were merged into the “New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act.”

b. Signed into law in 2008, it improves the capabilities of public safety communications systems by giving voice over internet protocol (VOIP) providers the tools necessary to relay accurate information to emergency first responders.

The FCC Report contains language making it clear that States have the authority to impose 911 fees on wireless and VOIP services. Currently there is no official cost recovery mechanism in place to allay the cost of wireless and VOIP 911 calls already coming in. Certain providers are voluntarily paying surcharges for their VOIP products. The money obtained thereby is strictly limited to be used for 911 purposes. Wisconsin, New York, and Arizona have been abusing their 911 funds for the sole purpose of balancing their budgets, to the detriment of their PSAPs. Overall, Federal thinking is to discourage this State “raiding” of 911 funds by withholding 911 grants where abuses exist.

Deputy Police Chief Wiedlin asks what is preventing City governments from “raiding” 911 funds to balance their budgets as well?

Fire Chief Berkowsky says everything goes through this Board, and that thus far Evanston has not abused its 911 fund.

**4. Future funding (memorandum and 911 call comparison chart, verbal, Mr. Polinski).**

a. In general, NENA and APCO are proactively lobbying State legislators on behalf of dispatch centers in Illinois to make them aware of challenges facing PSAPs in light of emerging 21st century technologies (text messaging, video, “magic jack” VOIP telephony, automatic crash notification) and the growing need for a new funding model.

In 2008, the number of wireless calls (30,147) handled by Evanston telecommunicators was nearly six times the total (5,836) received in 2001. During the same time period, hardline calls decreased from 31,365 in 2001 to 26,570 in 2008. Total 911 calls increased from 37,201 in 2001 to 56,717 in 2008.

People do not realize that, as they replace their copper landline telephones with products such as AT&T's Uverse, Vonage, or "magic jack" VOIP, not all new systems deliver 911 service ... the emergency call goes to dead air.

Dr. Blatt asks if the volume of 911 calls were to overload available trunk lines, would the caller receive a "busy signal"? Mr. Polinski says no, Wilmette is the back up PSAP and the call would roll over to Wilmette.

Fire Chief Berkowsky stresses the importance of educating the public to the limitations of new communication technology. Maintaining an old fashioned standard hardline telephone in the home is the best insurance in emergencies, power outages, etc.

Mr. Polinski mentions that former Northbrook Police Officer John Kelly, with a lengthy background in 911 in the State of Illinois, has been commissioned by Illinois NENA and the Illinois Commerce Commission to rewrite the Emergency Telephone System Act which would revisit the funding model and include such things as cost recovery for VOIP 911 calls.

**5. Budget preliminary** (*verbal, Mr. Polinski*).

a. Currently is updating expenses and inputting revenue projections into the budget entry system, and updating the capital replacement schedule. Steve Drazner from the Finance Department will be invited to speak on revenue and give a general 911 fund overview.

**6. Other Business.**

a. ETS 911 agendas and meeting minutes have been attached as links to the ETS Board on the City of Evanston website.

Mr. Polinski introduces Mr. Brian Drake who started August 3, 2009, as the second Assistant Communication Coordinator. He has been involved in

Police and Fire dispatch for eight years and is a member of the State of Illinois Interoperability Executive Committee representing the Illinois Medical Emergency Response Team (IMERT). IMERT is comprised of doctors, nurses, paramedics and other emergency medical team members, logistics people, and communications people who are first responders in extreme emergency situations such as Katrina.

Alderman Grover describes a citizen request for a system designed for “people who get lost” such as sufferers of autism, Alzheimer’s or other disorienting disorders who may be fitted with a “finding device” such as an ankle bracelet. Investigating funding sources for such devices is fitting for the E911 Board.

Fire Chief Berkowsky recalls that over the past fourteen years he dealt with many Police and Fire communication issues. The current setup, which is a direct result of the E911 Board’s deliberations and action, is an extreme improvement and working very well.

7. *Adjournment.* Fire Chief Berkowsky moves to adjourn, seconded, so moved. The meeting adjourns at 7:50 p.m.

PP:djw