

*City of Evanston
Emergency Telephone System Board
E911 Committee Meeting
Aldermanic Library
Thursday, January 22, 2009*

Board Members Present:

Mr. David Angelus, Community Representative
Fire Chief Alan Berkowsky
Mr. David Blatt, Community Representative
Police Chief Richard Eddington
6th Ward Alderman Edmund B. Moran
Mr. Perry Polinski, Communications Coordinator
8th Ward Alderman Ann Rainey
Deputy Chief Barbara Wiedlin

Board Member Absent:

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

Staff Present:

Mr. Bruce Slown, Interim Director, Business Performance & Technology
Delphyne Woods, Recording Secretary

Presiding Officer:

Alderman Edmund B. Moran, Committee Chair

Summary of Action:

Alderman Moran calls the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes.

The first order of business is approval of the November 11, 2008, special budget meeting minutes. Mr. Polinski and Alderman Rainey indicate corrections on pages 4 and 5. Alderman Rainey moves to approve the minutes as corrected, Mr. Polinski seconds, so moved.

2. *Police Laptop/MDB update (Bruce Slown, verbal).*

The contract with SunGard for the mobile data browser (MDB) product was signed on January 13, 2008, and the project was kicked off. Project members met, worked on a project plan, assigned tasks. Starting January 29, 2009, there will be weekly meetings. Information Technology (IT) is waiting for the software and training materials to arrive. SunGard will be on site March 3 through 13, 2009, for installation and administration of the product, and training the staff.

Mr. Blatt asks precisely what that entails.

Mr. Slown provides a quick overview of the MBD and E911 Dispatch operations. Fifty-three "Toughbook" laptops are expected to arrive February 12, 2009, ready to be loaded with software in 30 to 40 minutes and sent out the door. The City is working with Verizon installing wireless cards so the Officers can connect anywhere in the Verizon wireless system. Finally, the vehicle mount to go into the vehicles. The bid opened January 20, 2009, IT will bring it to the February 9, 2009, Council meeting for approval. Then the hardware will then be installed in the squad cars.

Alderman Rainey asks who does the installation.

Mr. Slown says Havey in Lake Bluff won the bid, with whom the City has worked for ten years or more. Only one bid was received. The cost is estimated to be \$34,093.00 to remove old equipment and install new hardware in forty-nine vehicles, install the antenna, and do the electrical work. The system will be ready to plug into the Toughbooks within sixty days.

Mr. Angelus requests that Deputy Chief Wiedlin and her crew receive one or two Toughbooks "to play with," to become accustomed to the configuration and setup.

Mr. Slown states there are ten onsite right now to be used for training. They have the raw mobile data browser product installed, and part of the training is the Officers configuring the product as they prefer it to be.

Chief Berkowsky agrees that it would be useful for them to be able to "play with" the machines for a time to see what they like and do not like, how they want it to look, etc.

Alderman Moran asks if project completion will be late April. Mr. Slown believes that is correct. In mid-March all the hardware begins to go into the vehicles.

Mr. Angelus asks how to accomplish the transition during that phase when some vehicles will have the old system, some the new system, and some with no system.

Mr. Slown says that will be an awkward period, IT will have to work with that.

Deputy Chief Wiedlin affirms there is no way around several awkward weeks of transition, logistically it will be difficult. Mr. Angelus wants to lay out a plan to train Officers on the new equipment as soon as practicable. Alderman Moran says that at least we are sensitive to the problem and are able to work around it. Mr. Angelus suggests Officers' training should start immediately. Alderman Rainey agrees, using the Civic Center computer training room. Deputy Chief Wiedlin agrees as there is no extra room at the station.

3. *Fire MDB demo (Chief Berkowsky):*

Chief Berkowsky presents an actual Toughbook laptop designed by the military for rugged usage under extreme circumstances. It provides four ways of obtaining information: mouse pad, mouse buttons, touch screen, and digital stylus. Normally it sits in the charging station, but it also can be carried into other areas. In the near future, Police and Fire personnel may be able to write reports at the scene.

From the point of view of the Fire Department, there is a three phase roll-out: 1) Obtaining hardware and a software package called "Remote Access," mapping software for which the City was fortunate enough to receive a grant. 2) Integrating the new with preexisting CAD software through the MDBs, plus a shakedown period on actual calls.

Each laptop has its own address. Chief Berkowsky displays Fire Shift Chief 2 ("FSC2") which is a spare. Once dispatched, messages are sent only to a particular computer. A cell phone-type ring sounds, the screen lights up with incoming data. Pertinent information is immediately available to the relevant unit. Once dispatched, personnel acknowledges via on-screen status buttons. While the rig is on its way, all exchanges are time-stamped. This allows vastly more accurate time records between Dispatch and the rig during a call.

Shift Chief is able to see where all vehicles are on the street, which are en route, which are on the scene, etc. The system now allows rig personnel to access the central computer and search a call, thus you get real-time information and needs at a certain address. As the preexisting CAD system has been in use since 1995, historical data is also available. Messages can be sent from the rig to Dispatch and other units.

Once rig personnel transmits that a call is complete, a report generates back at the station with all available data. Rig personnel then provides additional data for unknown fields at the station.

The third phase is: 3) Remote Access, mapping software which automatically receives a dispatched call instead of it going straight to the CAD program. It flashes GIS images of the building, its location, phone boxes, alleys, sewers, hydrants, plus any hazardous exposures.

Alderman Rainey asks if electrical data is included. Chief Berkowsky says no, because he believes it is not that necessary. At the moment, density of information should be somewhat limited so as not to slow transmission. There is internet access on the rig to Federal, State, and local area databases, including weather conditions.

The Fire Department has been working with the new system for about three weeks now. What is crucial is that everything – MDB, Verizon, the operating system – all have to be “in synch” to perform properly.

Alderman Rainey asks about those calls about electric wires being blown down, etc., how is that handled?

Chief Berkowsky explains that we are able to identify the wire, whether it is cable or telephone. If there is live electrical wire danger, ComEd is called in, the Fire Department stays if a fire threat exists.

Alderman Rainey asks if the Fire Fighters like the new system. Chief Berkowsky says there is a learning curve, about 75% positive and 25% negative reaction.

Deputy Chief Wiedlin remarks that the new system allows Fire Fighters to be more on the street. This greatly reduces time spent at the station writing reports, as they can be written in the rig.

Alderman Moran thanks Chief Berkowsky for the excellent report.

4. 2008 ICC Annual Filing (Mr. Polinski, verbal and projection):

Mr. Polinski reports that the City annually updates contact information for our Public Safety Answering Point (“PSAP”), the makeup of the E911 Board, the E911 surcharge (if changed), and documentation received from AT&T (our local exchange carrier) as to access line count, number of trunks, and network design. The 2008 access count of landlines is 32,000, which is down from 34,000 in 2007. The trend continues toward decreasing landline activity and increasing wireless activity since the City began receiving wireless E911 calls in 2001.

Chief Berkowsky mentions the decline now is over one-third. Alderman Rainey believes it has stabilized in recent years. Mr. Polinski agrees, replacement of traditional landlines with residential VOIP will produce some stability in the landline decline.

In its annual filing, the City also renews its emergency call handling agreements with neighboring communities – Wilmette, Skokie, Chicago, Cook County, the Illinois State Police. These are agreements outlining how to handle calls in the boundary areas adjoining our neighbors, how to redirect misdirected calls.

Total 2008 E911 call activity, both landline and wireless, was 56,717 calls. Strictly landline calls numbered 26,570. A majority of the total, 30,147 calls, were wireless – down about 2,400 wireless calls from 2007. In 2007, landline E911 calls still outnumbered wireless, but in 2008 wireless outstripped landline calls.

Early in the wireless era, wireless E911 calls were shooting all over the Chicago metropolitan area. Working with AT&T and other wireless carriers, plus better database management now delivers the latitude and longitude of the callback number to the appropriate cell tower which passes along the call. The situation has improved, there are fewer misrouted VOIP calls.

Chief Berkowsky is concerned not only with the delayed response to emergency calls by misdirection, but wasted time in several municipal departments straightening them out.

Mr. Angelus asks Mr. Polinski when the actual ICC filing takes place. It is typed up and filed by mail at the end of each January.

5. *Video Relay Service (Mr. Polinski, verbal):*

Mr. Polinski was advised by an APCO email about a "Second Report and Order" from the FCC on December 19, 2008, requiring that, by December 31, 2008, all "video relay service" and "IP relay service" providers must deliver emergency calls to PSAPs via the E911 trunks. Video relay service calls use a computer and video camera. IP calls use a PDA or whatever for text messaging. Recently, the Board had agreed to receive OnStar calls on E911 trunks. This is the same idea, but not only dealing with automatic crash notification, but also people who have hearing or other disability. This basically replaces the TDD telephone device which is antiquated technology. A telephone caller, using a computer and video camera, contacts a relay center which is a private company to which he subscribes. The relay center determines the nature of the caller's disability, interprets the message, and verbally passes it over to the E911 trunk.

Alderman Moran asks if this is a means by which a person with one disability or another is enabled to deliver an emergency call.

Mr. Polinski says yes. Disabled people are entitled to E911 access just like everybody else, this facilitates technology until such time as the telephone network evolves to enable these calls to come in directly. The camera is for sign language conveyance. This has developed very recently, there is no training provided yet. Text messaging is handled in the same manner.

Alderman Rainey points out that texting is not a service limited to the disabled, it also is a quiet surreptitious way of placing an E911 call. But you must subscribe to the relay service. You could also text a friend or relative to relay the message to the Police.

6. *Tower update (Mr. Polinski, verbal and projection):*

Mr. Polinski relates that in October and November of 2008 they started preparation work for the foundation at the new antenna site behind the Police station. After the foundation was complete, they drilled down about seventy feet, half the height of the tower. The sleeve was inserted all the way down the seventy-foot hole with a crane. The sleeve sections were placed in the hole, the foundation collar bolted down. The 140-foot tower was delivered. The tower was placed in the foundation section by section. Antennae and coaxial cable are installed, then they swepted the lines to test the cable and connectors. From that point we coordinate with Motorola,

scheduling the switchover to new equipment. Then the old tower will be dismantled and removed.

Chief Berkowsky mentions that the old tower will be reused at Fire Station #5.

Alderman Rainey and Alderman Moran thank Mr. Polinski for the impressive presentation.

Additional Report: Cross-notification with Northwestern University of emergency alerting systems (Mr. Polinski, verbal).

Division Chief Janetske, Deputy Chief Wiedlin and Mr. Polinski have been meeting with Northwestern University to discuss emergency system cross-notification. The City needs to be aware of when Northwestern activates their on-campus emergency alerting system, and notify Northwestern Police when the City launches its emergency sirens. The plan is to coordinate on the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 a.m.

Alderman Moran relates that Northwestern Police are aware of the potential for a campus-wide emergency, and how to gain tight control over campus facilities quickly and alert people.

Deputy Chief Wiedlin agrees, saying that since the 2008 Northern Illinois shooting incident, Campus Police has been re-thinking its alert and control techniques.

Mr. Polinski says the solution reached was installing a receiver in their campus Dispatch Center which is a secondary PSAP under the City umbrella, and a receiver in the City Dispatch Center. The City siren launch is via radio frequency, the campus receiver would pick up the tones and would be alerted to an activation. The same is done with the campus system, the City would receive their signal. Then it would be a matter of talking to each other to find out what is going on. Northwestern is paying for installation of the both receivers. At the moment they are exploring and testing the possibility of an external antenna, depending on reception in the E911 Center.

Finally, Information Technology joined the Police in an "enhanced" E911 telephone system demonstration. We are researching the replacement of the legacy E911 telephone system and will issue an RFP in the near future. This is budgeted for \$200,000.00. It is a choice between replacing our system with something most similar to

what we presently have which is 14-15 years old, or thinking in terms of what the future may hold with text messaging, video delivery, and properly setting redundancy.

Mr. Slown says that right now we have a PBX which is wired in the E911 Center. Should it fail, we are belly up in the water. The new technology is an IP-based system providing duplicate service that not only replicates failed service, but it can be placed in different buildings. So servers receiving calls can be in one end of the Police Department and another one in the Police Service Center building. You can actually connect users from anywhere. That is the enhancement.

Alderman Rainey inquires about who provides the technology. Mr. Polinski says today's demonstration was from Plant CML. This technology is very new, only two or three companies provide it. They are just beginning their homework on this project. Deputy Chief Wiedlin says Kenilworth has such a system, as does northwest Indiana.

Mr. Slown indicates that the City Water Department, the Library, and part of the Civic Center use IP-based telephones. Alderman Rainey is thinking more of the City Dispatch Center utilizing this technology.

Mr. Polinski advises Alderman Rainey of \$118,364.49 received from the State of Illinois from surplus wireless funds – revenue collected via wireless surcharge which were not redistributed to certain PSAPs at their appropriate level. A nice surprise.

Alderman Rainey thanks Mr. Polinski for the report.

7. *Adjournment.*

Alderman Moran asks for any further business, there is none. He announces the possibly that this may be his final meeting and he thanks everyone. Chief Berkowsky moves to adjourn, Mr. Polinski seconds, so moved. The meeting adjourns at 8:15 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled E911 Committee Meeting will be on Thursday, May 21, 2009, in a new location – room 3650.

PP:djw