



Deschutes County 9-1-1 Service District User Board Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 10:00 hours

Location: Deschutes County 9-1-1, 20355 Poe Sholes Drive, #300, Bend

Attendees: Sara Crosswhite, Chris Perry, Jonathan Spring, Kim Morse, Tony DeBone, Nick Lelack, Dave Doyle, Paul Garrison, Sean Hartley, Jason Maniscalco, Aaron Wells, Nanette Howard, and Day Wireless representatives Christy McClung and Garret Winter.

1. Call to Order and Introductions – Sara Crosswhite, Director

2. Approval of November 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes

There being no corrections, the November 16, 2021 meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

3. Good of the Order – No comments.

4. Governing Board Update – Commissioner DeBone welcomed Nick Lelack as the new County Administrator and, for the benefit of any newcomers, explained the County Administrator also serves as the 9-1-1 Director's supervisor. He reported the County Commissioners' primary focus now is exploring ways to address the homeless issues. He observed public safety personnel are facing many challenges right now and expressed appreciation to the District and the user agencies for working in partnership with each other and for the culture of service among the agencies.

5. Public Comment – No comments.

6. Staff Reports

Administration – Sara Crosswhite reported the District held an after-action meeting following the recent power outage and invited Chris Perry and Jonathan Spring to share with members some of the lessons learned.

Chris Perry stated things went well considering the circumstances. The outage occurred at 6:00 p.m. after he and systems staff were already gone for the day. The on-duty supervisor acted quickly and had 9-1-1 calls transferred to Central Lane 9-1-1 (Eugene), so calls were being answered in a timely manner. Fortunately, the outage occurred during shift change, so there were eight staff members on-site with another six coming in for shift change. With extra staffing on hand, the on-duty supervisor sent four dispatchers to the backup center to begin its activation and quickly re-establish communication with police and fire partners.

The following are some of the operational issues discussed during the after-action meeting:

- 1) Mobile radios do not work during a power outage; an additional backup option is needed at the dispatch consoles;
- 2) The current backup center becomes cramped very quickly when fully staffed and operational;
- 3) Having more leadership support at the backup center to run point on dispatch operations, ensure staff is utilizing systems as designed, and help serve as a technical and operational liaison to the District's 14 partner agencies would be helpful;
- 4) Using portable radios in the current backup center causes too much distraction when phones are ringing and 9-1-1 calls are being answered (Note: Earpieces have been ordered, so audio will go directly into the dispatcher's ear);
- 5) Having whiteboards at the backup center would be helpful for sharing information;
- 6) Better management of dispatch cards is needed; without power, there is no CAD, so everything must be written down during calls;
- 7) Setting up a recording for non-emergency calls directing callers to either call 9-1-1 if it is an emergency or call back at a later time; and
- 8) Ensure on-duty staff members have access to a District cell phone for any communication needs.

After this experience, the District would like to conduct more training drills; Megan Craig is currently putting together a training packet for a drill in January.

Jonathan Spring stated he was out of town when the outage occurred, but IT staff were quick to get him operating remotely so he could assist. He was also impressed with how well the teams responded. He explained going from a complete outage in a data center as complicated as the District's to having it fully operational within an hour was admirable. The outage was linked to the uninterrupted power supply (UPS) unit housed in the data room. The device has a control board designed to "talk" to the battery packs, measure the load in the room, and determine how many battery packs are needed to migrate the District to the generator when an outage occurs. It was discovered the firmware in the power module and the battery pack control pieces were not in alignment, which caused the communication aspect to work improperly. Once the issue was identified, an escalated priority ticket was opened with the UPS manufacturer, and they were able to get everything in working order.

The District is exploring options for a new backup center and ways to mitigate some of these issues going forward.

Sara Crosswhite advised the District is working with Facilities to assess the feasibility of using a portion of one of the county-owned buildings in Redmond as the new backup center. Upgrades are needed to meet building code requirements, but beyond that, everything looks promising. Structural and code compliance review is underway and, if the building is determined to be a good option, full design and permitting will be done soon followed by remodeling and upgrades. She explained \$250,000 was set aside in FY 2022 for the possibility of a new backup center, and then \$500,000 was set aside in FY 2023 for potential remodeling costs.

Tony DeBone stated there are two County-owned buildings in Redmond that will serve multiple departments; backup power and infrastructure-type stuff will likely be the most costly aspect of the renovations.

Nick Lelack noted there is a tenant occupying the building that is being considered, so those pieces will have to be navigated, but he understands the District's urgency given the services it provides.

Operations – Chris Perry reported call volume is averaging 800 calls per day; overtime was heavy in December, but there is no overtime in January; and supervisors are still filling in for staffing shortages as much as possible. The Deschutes Alerts registration has grown to just over 41,000 as of yesterday; he and Sara Crosswhite are working on ideas with County Administration to increase that number. He is also meeting regularly with Deschutes County Emergency Management to explore ways to improve the Deschutes Alerts system itself. He stressed it is working well, but now that the District has joined the State system, there are new tools available to make it easier and more efficient for dispatchers and supervisors to send alerts.

Tony DeBone suggested sending periodic reminder messages to those already registered with an invitation for them to encourage friends and family to sign up. Chris Perry will raise this suggestion with the Emergency Management group when they next meet.

Chris Perry advised he is also working with law enforcement and fire on a couple of operational projects. On the law enforcement side, he is working with users to streamline how the District dispatches and notifies agencies of non-emergency calls or not-in-progress calls as well as fine-tuning the self-dispatching policy and sending out call notifications. Fire-wise, he is still working with COFOG members on various mutual aid response plans and air ambulance / helicopter auto-launch criteria. The District is also working with its phone vendor to get outbound text to 911 set up, observing there are less than five centers nationwide with the ability to initiate an outbound text from a dispatch center.

Training and Hiring – In Megan Craig's absence, Sara Crosswhite reported there are two new hires attending the In-House Academy; two employees have successfully completed call-take training and are answering calls; one of those two will be transitioning into police dispatch training in late January. The job posting is now closed, but will re-open once the job announcement is revised.

Technical Systems

Jonathan Spring provided the following updates:

CAD – The District is starting to plan for a significant upgrade in Quarter 1 or 2 of 2023; the upgrade will include the replacement of older Windows servers with new master images from Tyler Technologies, Inc. (Tyler) and will also include Tyler-provided server redundancy and load balancing.

Radios – Programming updates were completed for LaPine Fire District; programming for some of Crook County Sheriff’s Office interoperability was completed last week; the District completed the final testing for its portion of the statewide P25 radio upgrade project; and the PSRT group will discuss next year’s radio template modifications/changes at its meeting today.

In response to Tony DeBone’s inquiry, Chris Perry advised LaPine Fire has been using the P25 radio system for the last 60 days and plans to stay with the system. Sara Crosswhite added LaPine Fire is going to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the District and has requested support and maintenance be included.

Radio Long-Term Enhancement Plan – The District has finalized its contract with the civil engineering firm, so work on site drawings and permitting can move forward for the three new sites (Henkle, 704, and Long Butte); contract negotiations are ongoing with L3 Harris Corporation for the equipment for the three sites and should be finalized by the end of January 2022; and the District has provided Sisters Fire with radios for testing at the new Henkle site.

7. Working Group Meetings

Public Safety Radio Team (PSRT) – The PSRT group will meet today at 11:00 a.m.

Central Oregon Fire Operations Group (COFOG) – Sean Hartley reported COFOG members are working on updating the VHF communications plan to support surrounding counties still using VHF and having an all-hazards VHF communications plan in place that all agencies will have access to; and members discussed the current air ambulance / helicopter auto launch criteria and procedures. He shared Redmond’s fire department is considering a fee in lieu of for some of the mega structures that are going to be built in its district. Instead of the contractor purchasing the in-building radio system required for larger structures, a fee would be collected and held in a pool to help pay for mobile repeaters.

Law Enforcement Review Team (LERC) – Chris Perry advised some members were unable to attend the last LERC meeting due to scheduling conflicts, so members have been working through some operational details via email. LERC will resume meeting via Zoom in January 2022; he is going to try to schedule meetings prior to the User Board meetings, so his updates to the User Board will be more substantive.

8. Round Table

Sara Crosswhite plans to send members a new calendar appointment for 2022; User Board meetings will resume virtually beginning in January 2022 until further notice.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:34 hours.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sara Crosswhite and Nanette Howard.