



MINUTES – January 23, 2025 - 7:30 AM
BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES EXECUTIVE BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
Richland City Council Chambers ~ 625 Swift Blvd
Richland, WA 99352

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 a.m. by Richland Assistant City Manager Drew Florence.

Attendance

Members

Michael Alvarez
Stephen Bauman

Lisa Beaton

Kevin Crowley

Drew Florence (*In for Jon Amundson*)

Rachel Shaw (*Arrived after Roll Call*)

Brent Gerry

Paul Carlyle (*Remote*)

Benton County (2 Votes)

Franklin County (2 Votes)

City of Kennewick (2 Votes)

City of Pasco (2 Votes)

City of Richland (2 Votes)

City of Prosser (1 Vote)

City of West Richland (1 Vote)

Benton County Fire Districts (1 Vote)

Absent

Erin Erdman

Jon Amundson

Bill Reed

City of Kennewick (2 Votes)

City of Richland (2 Votes)

City of Benton City (1 Vote)

Also Present: BCES Executive Director Jay Atwood; SECOMM Manager Kim Lettrick; BCES IS Administrator Doug deGraaf; Emergency Management Manager Deanna Davis; Accounting Specialist Jordan George; Administrative Assistant/Board Secretary Carole Cimrhakl

Other Attendees: Benton County Deputy Administrator Matt Rasmussen; Benton County Sheriff Commander Mat Clarke; Franklin County IS Director Beau Beckley; Franklin County Assistant IS Director Michael Namchek; Kennewick IT Director Cody Lewis; Kennewick Assistant IT Manager Tracy Troutman; BiPIN Business Analyst Kandy Gonsalves; BiPIN Software Analyst II Travis Amundson; Kennewick Finance Director Jessica Platt; Richland Fire Chief Tom Huntington; West Richland Police Chief Thomas Grego

Approval of Agenda

BRENT GERRY MOVED AND STEPHEN BAUMAN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 13-0.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of the Consent Calendar

1. Approval of the DRAFT January 23, 2025, Benton County Emergency Services Executive Board regular meeting minutes – Drew Florence

LISA BEATON MOVED AND BRENT GERRY SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR AS PRESENTED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 13-0.

Director's Report

2. Manager's Report – Jay Atwood

Staffing

SECOMM staffing will be down 14.5 positions after several resignations. Six (6) candidates are currently certified on the eligibility list with one of those at final assessment and another at suitability/integrity assessment. The other four (4) are in pre-hire screenings. One (1) new hire started a week ago and another will be hired mid to late February. A training academy is anticipated to take place in March.

A strong need for one (1) supervisor per shift has been identified. With significant salary savings from existing open positions, two (2) additional supervisors will be added. This is expected to take place in the fall, allowing Human Resources to assist with the process. Two lead positions will also need to be filled.

Microwave Project Update

Equipment is arriving and is being staged at the City of Richland's warehouse. The project is on track with work scheduled to begin in Benton County in March. Once completed, crews will then begin work in Franklin County.

Task Force Update

The fourth meeting was held on January 15, 2025. The primary discussion focused on updating the current fee structure relative to the SECOMM budget, to a model that uses cost per event. Finance heads from each of the Big 5 agencies will be invited to participate in the next Task Force meeting for further discussion. Dr. De Hicks and Donnie Quitugua from Stuart Consulting Group Inc. (SCGI) will attend a future meeting to provide a brief to the board.

Items of Business

Benton County Emergency Services (BCES)

None

Benton County Emergency Management (BCEM)

None

Southeast Communications Center (SECOMM)

None

800MHz System

None

Benton County Microwave System

None

Strategic Advisory Team (SAT)

BCES/BiPIN Consolidation

Discussion Items

3. Radio System Update

BCES Executive Director Atwood provided a brief on the status of the Radio System Upgrade.

Aside from getting equipment on the mountains, solutions are needed for how to get the mobiles and portables out to users along with how installations will be made in various apparatus. Conversations with Day Wireless as a potential subcontractor have resulted in their commitment to dedicating a full team from outside the area to help with the project. Discussions include conducting a census of apparatus to create a thorough inventory of exactly what is needed for each vehicle's equipment installation. This will ensure everything is on hand and potential delays are avoided. Day Wireless could also go to each agency rather than taking vehicles out of service for extended periods. Further discussion is needed to determine costs and funding options.

With the potential to order equipment this year, it is important to develop a central distribution model that can be used to issue and keep track of an inventory of 1,800 portables and mobile devices while also providing accountability for the assets. The intent is for these assets to fall under the new independent agency. The thought is to tag each item as a BCES asset with the understanding that BCES doesn't own the equipment – the Big 5 are the owners as spelled out in the recently revised interlocal agreement.

Ordering equipment will be predicated on what installation and programming plans look like. Fire and law enforcement vehicles can be time consuming and complicated. If the project remains on schedule, the goal would be to have the system turned up by the end of 2026 with gear needing to be installed well before. The intent is to start installations sometime this year for that reason. An additional bonus is that fire would also be able to use the mobiles sooner as they are dual band.

A worksheet that clearly outlines everything needing to be done for the various installations is in progress. Each radio will be assigned to an apparatus along with a kit that includes everything necessary for proper installation. Provided kits will contain the tools that will be needed to install everything appropriately and a couple of in-house workshops will go through the installation process. We will likely bring a vendor in for a final check to ensure connectivity and that radios are tuned appropriately.

Richland Assistant City Manager Drew Florence noted that the fourth re-stated interlocal went through Richland's City Council yesterday. He polled board members about using DocuSign to collect signatures. Franklin County is unable to use DocuSign at this time so they will sign a hard copy first. The document will then be routed through DocuSign to collect the remaining signatures.

Pasco Fire Chief Kevin Crowley supports tagging the new equipment as a BCES asset.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 a.m.

APPROVED:



Drew Florence for Jon Amundson,
BCES Executive Board Chair

Date Approved: February 27, 2025

ATTEST:



Carole Cimrhakl, BCES Board Secretary

Date Published: April 9, 2025