MINUTES – March 27, 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 7:30 a.m. by Richland Assistant City Manager Drew Florence

Attendance
Members

Beau Beckley *(In for Stephen Bauman)*	Franklin County (2 Votes)
Matt Rasmussen *(In for Michael Alvarez)*	Benton County (2 Votes)
Erin Erdman	City of Kennewick (2 Votes)
Drew Florence *(In for Jon Amundson)*	City of Richland (2 Votes)
Rachel Shaw *(Remote)*	City of Prosser (1 Vote)
Brent Gerry	City of West Richland (1 Vote)

Absent

Michael Alvarez	Benton County (2 Votes)
Stephen Bauman	Franklin County (2 Votes)
Kevin Crowley	City of Pasco (2 Votes)
Jon Amundson	City of Richland (2 Votes)
Bill Reed	City of Benton City (1 Vote)
Paul Carlyle	Benton County Fire Districts (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: Franklin County Interim County Administrator Brian Dansel (in for Steven Bauman/Arrived after rollcall, assumed board position from Beau Beckley); Franklin County IS Assistant Director Michael Namchek; Franklin County Sheriff Commander Monte Huber; Benton County Sheriff Commander Mat Clarke; Kennewick IT Director Cody Lewis; Kennewick Assistant IT Manager Tracy Troutman; Kennewick BiPIN Software Analyst II Travis Amundson; Richland Police Chief Martin Pilcher

Approval of Agenda

BRENT GERRY MOVED AND ERIN ERDMAN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 10-0.

Public Comments
There were no public comments.

Approval of the Consent Calendar

1. Approval of the DRAFT February 27, 2025, Benton County Emergency Services Executive Board regular meeting minutes – Drew Florence

MATT RASMUSSEN MOVED AND BRENT GERRY SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR AS PRESENTED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 10-0.

Director's Report

2. Manager's Report – Jay Atwood

<u>Staffing</u>
Seven (7) candidates are on the eligibility list, an additional seven (7) applicants are in pre-certification steps. Fourteen (14) vacancies remain in SECOMM. Efforts to further streamline the hiring process are being explored in hopes that fewer candidates will drop out of the process due to the length of time it takes to get them on board. Streamlining the process is estimated to save 3-4 weeks. Recruitment efforts will ramp up with advertisements on Indeed and online with the possibility of running another radio campaign.

Management continues to explore various options to assist dispatch. The MACC (Multi-Agency Communications Center) in Moses Lake was visited to see their AI (Artificial Intelligence) non-emergency answering service which was found to be impressive. Benton County and Kennewick have implemented online reporting. Currently, 60% of calls answered are non-emergency. The state is also pushing out a huge recruitment effort that will include social, traditional, and online media. Internal "All-Hands" meetings have been scheduled to discuss expectations and check in with staff.

<u>BCES Information Systems</u>
BCES Information Systems Administrator Doug deGraaf's last day will be April 11, taking twenty (20) years of knowledge with him and leaving behind a huge void. Executive Director Jay Atwood credits him for getting the agency to where it is today with multiple project accomplishments. Interviews are currently underway to fill his position. Blayne Smith, Richland's IT Operations and Services Supervisor, has been "loaned" to BCES to help in the interim. Richland Electronics & Instrument Technician Rob Ramsey has also been designated to assist with the radio system project. Service contracts are in place with Adcomm and Hexagon and Jay is working with Motorola on potential, additional support services to bridge gaps.

<u>Microwave</u>
The project is moving along nicely with Motorola and MNI (Microwave Networks Inc.) doing a great job getting things set up.

A link between Jump Off Joe and Kahlotus went down. One (1) of the dishes was found, dangling from the tower. Michael Namchek (Franklin County IS Assistant Director), Doug deGraaf and the rest of the microwave team were able to use some of the new equipment, along with existing equipment to get the link back up.

Radio System

The project kicked-off on March 19 with the entire project estimated to wrap up towards the end of 2027 (for full system testing and final acceptance). We're hoping to have most users migrated by the end of 2026.

Jay attended a fire chief's meeting in North Franklin County to help update the mostly volunteer agencies with installation plans and what they might look like, system coverage expectations, and to answer other operational questions they might have. Doug, the Motorola team, Michael Namchek and the Franklin County team were also present. It was well received.

Last month, the Board approved the replacement of Prosser Butte's damaged equipment. It will go before the Richland City Council on April 1. Richland Assistant City Manager Drew Florence noted the insurance check has already been received. Fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) was confirmed as the deductible BCES is responsible for.

Items of Business

Benton County Emergency Services (BCES)

3. Carry-over of Grant and Project Funds from Year Ending 2024 – Approval

The carry-overs are funds not yet expended for previously approved projects.
The SECOMM 2025 adopted budget will be increased by $106,584.
The BCEM 2025 adopted budget will be increased by $624,694.
The Microwave 2025 adopted budget will be increased by $4,867,321.

MATT RASMUSSEN MOVED AND ERIN ERDMAN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CARRY-OVER OF EXISTING BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES GRANT AND PROJECT FUNDS TO INCREASE THE 2025 APPROVED BCES BUDGETS AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO MAKE THE NECESSARY BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 10-0.

Benton County Emergency Management (BCEM)

None

Southeast Communications Center (SECOMM)

4. E911 Equipment Contract E25-351 – Approval

The E911 Equipment Contract provides $98,335 for costs related to the previously approved Lumen Next Generation phone system firewalls. The state grant covers 90% of this project with the additional 10% required match to come from E911 reserves.

ERIN ERDMAN MOVED AND BRENT GERRY SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE E911 EQUIPMENT CONTRACT E25-351 IN THE AMOUNT OF $98,335

AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO MAKE THE NECESSARY BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS UPON CONTRACT ADOPTION BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF BENTON COUNTY. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 10-0.

800MHz System

5. Radio Expansion Project Pre-Installation Vehicle Survey – Approval

To effectively understand the scope of the project and the associated costs for installation, a survey of all impacted response apparatus will need to be conducted to correctly identify necessary parts, cables, connectors, or any other special considerations. This will ensure installation will be complete, accurate, and timely.

MATT RASMUSSEN MOVED AND ERIN ERDMAN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE DAY WIRELESS CONTRACT FOR THE RADIO EXPANSION PROJECT PRE-INSTALLATION VEHICLE SURVEY IN THE AMOUNT OF $79,462.09 USING 800MHz FUND BALANCE AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO MAKE THE NECESSARY BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

Benton County Microwave System

None

Strategic Advisory Team (SAT)

No significant updates. The SAT was updated on BCES projects that are currently underway, staffing, and how IT will be supported moving forward.

BCES/BiPIN Consolidation

None

Discussion Items

6. Independence Task Force - Update

The last meeting was held March 12. Discussion was focused on the fee model and what it would look like relative to the SECOMM budget. The team is looking at several different options using events, cases, and/or staff time with the goal of arriving at a consensus. The team is still moving forward with an event-based model for assessments (number of events x a specific rate) in addition to separating users from owners (owners should benefit from a discounted rate as they bare the capital costs and risks) and separating again between law and fire. With a new methodology for funding, some agencies will face a greater impact on their assessments while others benefit, some of them greatly. A ramped approach is being explored for this reason.

A workshop for the Board is planned and will show different funding models for the SECOMM portion of the budget, what a first-year operating budget might look like and an overall budget that includes potential staff changes and costs related to the use of the radio system.

A separate workshop is scheduled for March 31st to discuss Emergency Management and how it would work into the project. The next task force meeting is scheduled for May 5.

Jay will invite SCGI (Stuart Consulting Group Inc.) to attend the regular April 24th Executive Board meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 a.m.

APPROVED:

Jon Amundson, BCES Executive Board Chair

Date Approved: April 24, 2025

ATTEST:

Carole Cimrhakl

Carole Cimrhakl, BCES Board Secretary

Date Published: April 24, 2025