



Agenda Item:

56

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION City Manager's Office

GENERAL INFORMATION

Agenda Date: 07/26/04

Communication

No.:04-357

Agenda Item Type: Resolution

Roll Call

No.:

Submitted by: William McCarthy, Chief of Police
Phillip Vorlander, Fire Chief

SUBJECT—

Polk County E911 Surcharge Referendum

SYNOPSIS—

Polk County is one of only two counties in the State of Iowa without a 911 hard line surcharge. Passage of a referendum is needed to provide an additional funding source to financially support growing equipment needs for public safety. Allowing a \$1.00 per month surcharge will generate approximately \$3.2 million annually for Polk County public safety agencies.

The \$1.00 surcharge would require only a simple majority vote. Also, with only a \$1.00 surcharge, there is no automatic sunset clause for the surcharge. The projected revenue from the surcharge would be divided equitably among the three Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). The division of funds would be decided by the already established E911 Service Board.

FISCAL IMPACT—

The \$1.00 per month surcharge will generate approximately \$3.2 million annually for Polk County public safety agencies. The division of funds would be decided by the already established E911 Service Board.

RECOMMENDATION—

Approval

BACKGROUND—At its July 12, 2004 meeting, the City Council deferred action on a resolution to support the E911 surcharge (Agenda Item 04-1497) and directed the City Manager to provide additional information.

There are three Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) that serve the citizens of Polk County. They are the Des Moines Police and Fire Communications Center, the Polk County Sheriff's Communication Center, and the WESTCOM Communications Center. The Polk County Sheriff's Communications Center serves the cities of Alleman, Altoona, Ankeny, Bondurant, Delaware Township, Elkhart, Grimes, Johnston, Mitchellville, Pleasant Hill, Runnells, Saylor Township, Windsor Heights and rural Polk County. The WESTCOM Communication Center serves the cities of Clive, Urbandale and West Des Moines.

These PSAPs need to upgrade existing voice and data technologies to enhance interoperability so that public safety officials can effectively manage Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) or terrorist events, as well as their day-to-day mutual aid operations. Shrinking local government budgets have handicapped the PSAPs' ability to retrofit voice and data technologies to achieve this much-needed interoperability. The funding problem is exacerbated because most Homeland Security grants designated for this purpose are awarded to larger, more heavily populated metropolitan communities.

The cost of technology hardware and software upgrades has exceeded the PSAPs abilities to fund these needs from existing public safety operating budgets. An inventory of the common technology needs of the PSAPs found \$15 million in voice and data hardware/software and equipment costs, most of which are annual or triennial recurring costs. Additionally, all PSAPs are faced with an aging infrastructure that includes radio, telephone, and computer-aided dispatch systems.

Despite the recent consolidation efforts (WESTCOM 2001 and the PCSO/Ankeny 2003), the LINC Channel, COPLINK, and Fiber Optic connectivity of the PSAPs mostly remains to be done.