

UMATILLA MORROW RADIO & DATA DISTRICT
BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING
July 11, 2023
Boardman City Hall

Present: Director Irons Director Pierotti (telephonically)
Director Pratt (telephonically) Director Primmer (telephonically)

Absent: Director Kennedy

Guests: Rod Ekholm, Racom

Staff: Brett Mueller, Rosanna Brown

- I. Call to Order and Recognition of Guests: The meeting was called to order at 1:30pm.
- II. Changes/Additions to the Agenda: None
- III. Business from Guests: None
- IV. Consent Agenda
 - A. Minutes from the meeting on June 13, 2023.
 - B. System Administrator's Report
 1. District Income Review
 2. District Expenditures Review
 3. District Bank Statement/Checks Review
 4. LGIP

A motion to accept the consent agenda was made by Director Irons and seconded by Director Primmer.

Director Pierotti: Aye

Director Irons: Aye

Director Pratt: Aye

Director Primmer: Aye

- V. Old Business
 - A. LMR System Project Update

Brett gave an update on the ISSI. He was continuing to work with the state and pushing Harris to incorporate the feature that was missing in the firmware, that was preventing the state's access to talk groups. The Harris engineers acknowledged that the radios were working as designed and could not access two systems at the same time. Racom was investigating some work arounds, but the ultimate fix was for Harris to add the feature to their firmware, similar to what Tait and Motorola have.

Brett reported that, following the fires at Hat Rock, Mt. Hebron, and another in Pendleton city limits, he had received more reports of missing call audio. He investigated the reports, where he had enough information from the user, and looked for explanations. He noted that additional user complaints were received at the Dispatch User Group meeting on June 28. Brett found that some of the missing calls were due to users in fringe areas, where coverage was spotty. He was able to determine some user error as well.

The issue of communicating with Life Flight on Neon, was due to known issues with the radios on their aircraft regarding their volume setting. There was a new crew from Hermiston that had not been briefed on how to set the radio up. He planned to arrange another comm check with them to confirm that that was the problem.

For the trouble reports that came in for radios that should have had good coverage but missed audio, Brett was continuing to work with Rod Ekholm and Scott Skibness and scheduling time with them to do more testing in the next

week. A particular area of study would be in south Pendleton, near Main Street and the railroad tracks, where Pendleton Fire and Pendleton Police reported problems.

Director Pierotti expressed concern about the issues that users were experiencing and felt strongly that the District owed its customers a reliable system. Communication issues led to safety issues, with possibly dire ramifications. As a user and director, he was feeling frustrated.

Director Pratt agreed with Director Pierotti and insisted that this should be one of the District's top priorities. He thought the District needed to push Racom, Tait, and Harris to get things resolved.

Brett reported that he performed upgrades the week before and had only had two missing call complaints. One complaint was attributed to the user being in a poor coverage area so the missed call was not surprising. Brett thought the other complaint may indicate that the portable needed attention. He planned to update the firmware in all 67 of the base stations and repeater base stations around the District and hoped that would also help.

Rod spoke to Director Pierotti's points and agreed that reliable communications were critical and lifesaving. Racom was committed to work their hardest in the coming weeks to identify the problems and work with Brett to create short term and long term solutions.

Director Pierotti was appreciative of Racom's hard work, but did not think the District was ready to proceed with system acceptance. Rod agreed and asked the board to continue to encourage users to report the issues to the District. Director Pierotti suggested creating a roadmap that included goal dates. He did not want to leave acceptance open ended. Brett felt that Director Pierotti's point was valid and noted that Rod and Scott's time was finite and the District was not Racom's only customer. They provided good service, but were stretched thin. Rod stressed that the District was the top priority of the CEO, CFO, and president of both companies. They had weekly calls with the president, Scott, leadership, and technicians that mostly focused on UMRDD. It was also a discussion they were having with Tait and calling them in for support as well. Tait had been slow to respond and some of the work could not be done without them, as the system and equipment manufacturer.

Director Primmer felt that creating a roadmap, with goal dates, was a good idea and asked Rod if the District should attempt contact with Tait directly. Rod thought it might be helpful, but asked the board to hold off until after the next Racom group call.

B. Ukiah Site Construction

Brett reported that the engineering firm did move things around on the site drawings as expected. They were working on a title search and a survey for the easement. In general, they were moving along as quickly as they could. Brett would continue to push for regular updates.

C. Communications Technician

After an extensive background check by Detective Ward, Brett confirmed the hiring of the new Communications Technician, Josh Bozeman. His first day of employment was 07/10/2023. Brett noted that one of Josh's first tasks would be programming updates on subscriber units, particularly in the fire services. This would include connecting to the Frontier system and other interoperability. There were a number of updates to be done and that firmware had the potential to help with performance issues.

D. Safety review

The SDIS Best Practices program for this year was related to emergency planning. Staff was working on drafting a plan, based on a template from SDIS. There would probably be a piece that included the directors, as volunteers.

VI. New Business

A. Subscriber Unit Purchase over \$10,000

Brett reported that an increased demand for subscriber units called for a purchase of additional inventory. He confirmed that some of the 6 mobiles and 12 portables that he planned to order would fill existing requests and that the rest were for requests that he expected to be coming in.

A motion to approve the Racom purchase of subscriber units, in the amount of \$33,547.08, was made by Director Pierotti and seconded by Director Irons.

Director Pierotti: Aye

Director Irons: Aye

Director Pratt: Aye

Director Primmer: Aye

B. Resolution 23-07-11-01: Changes to the Budget

The District received billing for the May 2023 special election, from Umatilla and Morrow Counties. Brett noted that it was very difficult to budget for election costs, not knowing which positions would be vacant and how many people would be running. The total cost was more than budgeted, so \$7023 needed to be transferred from Contingency into the Elections budget line.

A motion to adopt Resolution 23-07-11-01: Changes to the Budget, was made by Director Primmer and seconded by Director Pierotti.

Director Pierotti: Aye

Director Irons: Aye

Director Pratt: Aye

Director Primmer: Aye

VII. Open Discussion

Director Irons reported that he had spent the previous two days in Gilliam County and that everyone had good service in Heppner and between Morrow and Condon. He noted that UCFD1 was also there, but they did not have Frontier in their radios. Brett confirmed that the only District users that had Frontier programmed into their portables currently were Heppner, Lexington, Lone, Boardman, and Irrigon.

Director Primmer noted that, while at the Camas Prairie rodeo, she found out that Ukiah did not have a fire chief. Brett confirmed that he heard that news the last time he was there as well and spoke with Roger, who planned to volunteer but not be in a leadership position. It was up to the city council to fill the position. He noted that Ukiah did not have any District radios and would not have anything on the system until the site was completed. The District did fund some VHF equipment in the past. In response to Director Primmer's question, Brett explained that the District did not provide any service or upkeep on VHF, as it was beyond the scope of the District's mission. The focus always was the band the system was on and certain interoperability. The only reason Ukiah received it was because they had no system coverage and needed to communicate with surrounding entities. Brett confirmed that both Umatilla and Morrow counties had their own VHF repeaters. In response to Director Pierotti's question, Brett confirmed that there were multiband radios that would work on the District's system and support communication on VHF. He noted that the District would need to be consulted on the purchase of such radios, to ensure the units had the features needed to operate on the system. Director Primmer advised Brett to expect a call about multiband radios from UCFD1, as they needed communications due to their contract with the Army Depot.

Brett confirmed that VHF was the ultimate solution for interoperability for fire entities and he did not recommend users ever getting rid of their ability to use it.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 2:18pm.

Next Meeting

August 1, 2023

1:30pm

Umatilla County Fire District #1, Station 23