

UMATILLA MORROW RADIO & DATA DISTRICT
BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING
September 5, 2023
Boardman City Hall

Present: Director Irons Director Pierotti
 Director Kennedy Director Pratt

Absent: Director Primmer

Guests: Rod Ekholm, Racom (telephonically)
 Rick Stokoe, Boardman Police Department

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 August 1, 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 Kennedy.

Director Pierotti: Aye

Director Irons: Aye

Director Kennedy: Aye

Director Pratt: Aye

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

Regarding progress on the ISSI, Brett reported that Tait released a system version fix that should address the Phase 1 and Phase 2 problems between the District's system and the State's. Brett planned to wait and see how the version did on other systems before putting in on the District's.

In the days after the last meeting, Scott Skibness and Rod Ekholm were in the District, performing scheduled testing. They had hoped that Pendleton Fire would be able to show them the problem areas but, due to a fire on Tutuilla Creek, PFD was unavailable. Scott and Rod did some testing in and around the Round Up grounds and the Pendleton Convention Center (PCC). They tested with the transmitter at full and reduced power and were able to see errors in PCC conference room 7, where issues had been reported.

Brett reported that he had been able to spend some time programming subscriber units, in the field. He performed firmware updates at Umatilla Fire and East Umatilla Fire. He offered to work on Fire District 1's, but they requested a delay, due to other projects happening first. Voice annunciation was part of the updates and the feedback had been positive. Other fire agencies in Umatilla County that still needed updating included UCFD1, Pilot Rock, and Pendleton. There were also some in Morrow County. It was a time consuming process and Brett was back to doing it alone, due to the loss of the recently hired Comm Tech.

Regarding TAGS, Brett noted that the work of interoperability with 700 and VHF had been ongoing for some time. There was a hold up in June, due to hardware incompatibility. The idea was that equipment at the sites tied into a VHF radio, and brought the traffic into a talk group on the system. When it worked like it should, users would be able to go to the talk group, and be talking through the VHF radio. The intention had been to do ODF from Cabbage, Walla Walla

Fire & Law from Weston, and Benton County Fire District 6 from Feedville. Director Kennedy asked why Feedville, since Sillusi was in Benton County, and Brett responded that his preference was to add equipment to sites that the District owned. There was a lot of available space and tower room at Feedville and the site was easy to access and service. Rod had ordered and received the equipment, from a third party vendor that Tait used as the official equipment provider, for this purpose. He would be in the District later that week to attempt implementation at Cabbage Hill, then do some testing before ordering equipment for other sites. In response to Director Pierotti's question, Brett confirmed that this solution would not require someone to set up a patch and it would always be available to users.

Director Pratt had reported issues with the Boardman Police Harris mobiles. For about 3 weeks, some of the transmissions from Dispatch were being cut off at the very beginning. The radios had the current firmware. Brett reported that he had been working on it and was trying to isolate the problem that seemed to be unique to the Harris radios only. Rod clarified that the portables were not having the same problem.

Director Pierotti asked the Board about a timeline for acceptance. He thought Brett, with Rod's help, could come up with some project benchmarks. For example, "within the next xx months, xx% of the issues will be fixed". Director Pratt agreed. He felt it was more important to focus on the issues with the system and the ISSI, before working on the VHF. Director Kennedy agreed and thought it would be helpful to confirm that the system was running perfectly, before moving to another issue that might be affected by system problems that had not been resolved. In addition, Director Kennedy asked that Brett work to ensure that the District had a substantial cache of radios for interoperability. The error-free functionality of the District's radio system, and the ISSI, were the highest priority for the Board.

Director Pierotti reported that ODF had a hard stance of not providing mutual aid until they had communications. Director Kennedy suggested that, if Pendleton Fire relied on support from ODF, portables could be loaned to ODF until the VHF issues were resolved. Director Irons noted that Boardman had upgraded their VHF equipment, to ensure they were able to provide and receive mutual aid from agencies on VHF, like Fish & Wildlife. Director Pierotti thought it was worth looking into dual or multi band units.

B. Ukiah Site Construction

Brett reported that the NEPA study was still being conducted. He also noted that the generator from Cummins was delivered a few weeks ago, to the ODOT yard at Ukiah. The HVAC unit also arrived and would be installed, then turned on when the shelter was put in place.

Brett was unable to give a timeline for the site to be up, but hoped to be able to pour concrete before the first freeze.

C. Safety review

District staff reviewed driver and pedestrian safety, as it related to schools being back in session. They were reminded to watch out for children, busses, extra traffic, and bicycles. They were advised to be aware and observant when sharing the road.

VI. New Business

A. Communications Technician Vacancy/Overtime Authorization

Brett reported that the Communications Technician position was vacant again and he was finding himself in need a break from work. He had not been able to take time off since the installation of the new system. He would like to work with Racom, to contract for additional services until a new Comm Tech could be found. He wanted to plan some time off in late September and in October, after the next board meeting.

In response to Director Pratt's question, Rod confirmed that he and Brett had been discussing a service contract and he hoped to have a quote to the District shortly. In response to Director Kennedy's question, Rod explained that the original quote for a technician was \$125 per hour and, after going back to senior management, did not think that Racom would go below \$120 per hour for support. This support would only be tasks outside of the project, such as programming assistance or service work. Rod knew that Brett needed a break and he was willing to be closer and more available to the District for some amount of time. He had some flexibility in his schedule for that.

In response to Director Kennedy's question, Rod explained that non-system issues would include response to outages,

microwave related work, and subscriber related work. He planned to discuss that in more depth with Brett. Director Pierotti felt that this was a good temporary solution, but thought the District needed a long term plan, in the event that Brett was unavailable. Director Kennedy thought there should be a longer term agreement with Racom. Rod noted that, in their industry, service contracts were typical and were made very specifically to the needs of the customer. It might include 3 or 4 site visits, preventative maintenance, or work with one type of subscriber unit. Racom would create a contract that included what the District wanted, a la carte. Director Pratt thought this was a good idea and would like to see some of the maintenance issues taken off of Brett's responsibilities, so he could focus on other things, including getting the Comm Tech position filled.

The Board confirmed that Brett had authority to spend up to \$10,000 without Board approval. Director Kennedy suggested planning some preventative maintenance by Racom, while Brett was taking time off.

Director Pratt asked the board to consider and discuss authorizing overtime for Brett, while the Communications Technician position was not filled. He felt that, with Brett working so many hours, he should receive additional compensation for the hardship. Since the Comm Tech position was open, there were funds in that salary budget line to cover overtime hours. Brett acknowledged that there were funds in that line, but he wanted to be sure not to run out of funds when a tech was hired. In response to Director Pratt's question, Brett confirmed that he was regularly working 50-60 hours per week. The board was concerned. They preferred to spend funds on a service contract versus overtime for Brett, so that Brett was able to work less hours and take time off. In response to the board's question, Brett noted that he made about \$65 an hour, at his current salary.

Chief Stokoe suggested, instead of authorizing overtime, the District pay Brett part of the Communications Technician salary, since he was handling the responsibilities of both positions. The board decided to use overtime so there would be a way to track how much time was needed, for historical recording. They discussed capping the hours or the amount in pay and decided to authorize up to 15 hours per week, and reevaluate at the next meeting. They hoped to have a service contract with Racom by then. Rod planned to send a quote to Brett, to share with the board.

A motion to approve overtime, of up to 15 hours per week and at a rate of 1.5, from 09/05/2023 until the next board meeting, was made by Director Pierotti and seconded by Director Kennedy.

Director Pierotti: Aye

Director Irons: Aye

Director Kennedy: Aye

Director Pratt: Aye

Director Kennedy asked Brett, when tracking his overtime hours, to include notes about what tasks were being done during that time. This was not just for accountability, but to help determine what extra resources were needed.

The Board asked Brett what his plan was for filling the new vacancy. Brett explained that he had hoped to take a break before starting the search again. There was a lot of time invested into bringing a new person on, including training and administrative tasks. He also noted that there had not been many applications received previously. The Board directed Brett to look into companies that provided the service of handling the hiring process, including advertising and vetting applicants. Director Pratt felt that it would be money well spent by the District.

Rod volunteered to reach out to his hiring folks to find out who they used. He noted that speaking with an outgoing department of the military might be helpful as well.

VII. Open Discussion

In response to Director Kennedy's question, Rod confirmed that he would get a quote to the District as soon as possible and hoped it would be by the end of the week.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 2:23pm

Next Meeting
October 3, 2023
1:30pm
Boardman City Hall