

UMATILLA MORROW RADIO & DATA DISTRICT
BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING
Stafford Hansell Government Center – February 3, 2025 – 1:30pm

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

Absent: None

In-Person Guest(s): Chief Ronald Bridge, Umatilla Police Department

Remote Guest(s): None

Staff: Brett Mueller, Rosanna Brown, Hank Gehrke

I. Call to Order and Recognition of Guests: The meeting was called to order at 1:30pm.

II. Roll Call

Director Pratt-present
Director Irons-present
Director Primmer-present
Director Kennedy-present
Director Pierotti-absent*

III. Recognition of Guest(s)

IV. Changes/Additions to the Agenda: None

V. Business from Guests

VI. Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes of the meetings from December 2, 2025.
- B. System Administrator's Report
 - 1. Income Review
 - 2. Expenditures Review
 - 3. Bank Statements/Checks Review
 - 4. LGIP Account Review

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

Director Pratt: Aye

Director Irons: Aye

Director Primmer: Aye

Director Kennedy: Aye

*Director Pierotti joined the meeting telephonically at 1:31pm.

VII. Old Business

A. LMR System Project Update

Brett reported that since the December meeting, the District completed the final firmware upgrade to all system controllers. He stated that the system had been stable and that the upgrade provided improvements in management interfaces and ISSI compatibility.

One area being tested was full duplex audio support between Avtec consoles and field units. Brett explained that on a Phase 2 P25 system, when a field unit keyed up at or near the same time as dispatch, dispatch might hear some of the field audio, before the channel was taken by dispatch. This would

provide an audible indication that the dispatcher was interrupting traffic and, in some cases, allow the dispatcher to hear part of a message that otherwise would have been missed. Brett noted that this behavior was constrained by P25 Phase 2 and represented the best improvement available with current standards.

Brett also reported a recent controller that shut itself off unexpectedly. He indicated this appeared to be the same hardware-related issue that has been seen before. Due to the high cost of replacing controllers at manufacturer pricing, Brett was monitoring and exploring alternatives before making a purchase. Final review of the system documentation was completed at the end of January in anticipation of system acceptance, closeout, and final payment to Racom. Brett stated that Scott would need time to incorporate the edits and that Brett would like to have Adcomm do a final review. Brett hoped that system acceptance would be completed soon. In response to Director Kennedy's question, Brett confirmed that the final payment was around \$450,000.

Brett noted that Chris Sheasley was expected to be on-site starting the following day through the end of the week to complete preventative maintenance at the Umatilla site, including some significant cleaning. Chris was also going to help with the testing regarding the signal distortion issues at Radar Road and Bensel Lane. Brett explained that similar distortion issues had been observed at other sites, sometimes resolving only after subscriber units were reprogrammed. He noted that simulcast systems require precise alignment, and increasing power levels to improve coverage tends to increase opportunities for distortion as well.

Director Pratt commented that he noticed distorted audio that sounded encrypted or garbled in the Boardman area. Brett confirmed he heard similar distortion at his residence when monitoring the Pendleton zone. Staff will continue to look for ways to improve audio quality.

B. Fire Portable Radio Committee Update

Director Irons and Adam Wilkinson met as part of the Fire Portable Radio Committee. Brett reported that the committee initially believed the Motorola radio demonstrated was NFPA-rated, but later determined it did not meet NFPA structural firefighting standards. This prompted additional discussion and evaluation.

Brett stated that some fire users strongly prefer NFPA-rated radios as an important safety consideration, while others do not view NFPA compliance as critical and instead prioritize factors such as cost, size, usability, and availability. The committee acknowledged this split in priorities and recognized that no single radio could fully satisfy all preferences.

Ultimately, the committee focused on Motorola's extreme-environment radio, which included Wi-Fi capability but not LTE. A NASPO-based quote was obtained, and depending on configuration (including an extra battery, microphone, charger, and a seven-year warranty) the cost was around \$11,000 per radio. Brett noted that based on the District's population and eligibility, an AFG grant could potentially provide up to \$1 million, which would pay for roughly 85 radios.

Director Irons reported positive feedback from testing the Tait 99 series radio, noting its size and large controls were similar to existing radios and well-received by users. He stated that intrinsic safety was not a high priority for him and that Tait radios might be more financially feasible.

In response to Director Pierotti's question, Brett estimated that there were about 350 combined portables in use for fire and EMS, some being EMS-only. Brett suggested that some agencies, such as Morrow County Health, could benefit from dual-band radios. Director Pierotti suggested exploring whether agencies could collaborate on reallocating radios or adjusting response to reduce the total number needed.

Brett reported that FEMA, under the Department of Homeland Security, remained affected by another federal shutdown, and no AFG funding announcement has been made. Grant consultant Nick Ducote was standing by and working on draft MOUs. Brett explained that multiple MOUs would be required: one between Echo Fire (as the lead agency) and participating fire agencies, and another between the District and Echo Fire outlining responsibilities. Brett emphasized the importance of having these agreements

clearly defined, especially given the cost and accountability requirements for radios in such a high price range.

Brett also discussed a recent situation involving Heppner Fire, which purchased BK9000 radios using grant funds and requested District programming assistance. Brett explained that the vendor would have to handle programming directly using the District's system key, similar to how outside radios were handled for other agencies. Heppner users had not been aware of the process for "outside" radios to access the system.

Brett reported that he had been approached by rangeland fire protection association planners, to see what help the District could provide regarding poor coverage. Brett noted that they should probably focus on using VHF to get the needed coverage and that the District wasn't responsible for service in that band, though dual-band radios could be beneficial to the agencies providing service in those areas.

C. City of Umatilla Dispatch Center Update

Brett reported on follow-up discussions with Adcomm regarding the City of Umatilla dispatch project after the bond passed. Adcomm focused on using an interim cell site for microwave connectivity. Brett explained that while the District typically avoided cell sites, he did not have the typical concerns if the City of Umatilla was responsible for the lease arrangements. He also noted that cell sites were generally well-maintained, though financial agreements often favored the cell provider.

Chief Bridge reported that Nokia conducted a microwave path study and concluded that two towers would be required: either a tower on the south hill near the existing cell tower or a taller tower on Lind Road. At the police department, engineering had been completed for the base, with a proposed 75-foot monopole. From there, the signal would either connect to the south hill or to a new 120-foot tower on Lind Road.

Chief Bridge clarified that while the City owned the cell site property, the existing tower was not tall enough. The City intended to construct the base and conduit first, then install the tower later.

Director Kennedy asked about redundancy, including whether a loop from the police department to Umatilla Ridge would mirror redundancy planned for Lind Road. Brett confirmed redundancy would be achieved either way. Brett also discussed a previously considered direct hop from Radar Road to Sillusi Butte, which could create multiple rings and improve system performance. While adding links introduced additional failure points, Brett confirmed that properly designed redundancy still improved resilience. Brett explained that additional microwave paths would not affect existing LMR distortion issues, as the microwave signals are in separate frequency bands. He outlined the current Hermiston simulcast configuration and how additional links could improve performance and redundancy.

Chief Bridge had no further questions and noted that they were pleased with the work that Adcomm was doing.

D. District Safety Committee Update: Staff reviewed safety tips related to winter driving.

VIII. New Business

A. Interoperability MOUs

Brett introduced a draft MOU request from the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Police Department, which was seeking interoperability access to the District's system for coordination with law enforcement along the river. Brett stated he had no objection in principle and proposed sharing the draft MOU with CRITPD. If acceptable, the District would consult with agencies along the river before authorizing access to those talkgroups.

Brett noted that the request could involve around 85 mobile and portable units and would require providing access to system and encryption keys, which he approached cautiously. He indicated that access would likely be limited to law enforcement and possibly fire or medical talkgroups, subject to approval by talkgroup owners.

Director Kennedy suggested fire talkgroups might not be necessary. Director Pratt, and the rest of the board agreed that having CRITPD on the system was a good idea and they didn't have any objections to an agreement.

Brett reported that Amazon was seeking a way for public safety responders to communicate with on-site personnel during incidents at Amazon facilities. Brett explained that the concept involved creating a new encrypted talkgroup on the District's system. Amazon would purchase a radio programmed by the District, and connect that talkgroup to their Avtec console system for patching during incidents as needed.

Brett emphasized that the talkgroup would be used strictly for interoperability and would not provide Amazon access to agency talkgroups. The patch could be initiated as needed by Amazon at the request of responding agencies, and user radios would have to be reprogrammed to include the talkgroup. Brett stated there would be no exchange of money for this arrangement and that it would be established to improve responder safety and efficiency. He noted that a formal MOU would be required and reviewed by legal counsel.

Director Pratt supported the concept. Director Kennedy agreed but emphasized that Amazon should not have access to agency talkgroups. Brett confirmed that access would be limited to the designated interoperability talkgroup only.

B. Subscriber Unit Purchase

Brett reported that subscriber units were being requested all the time and inventory was being managed carefully. He stated that he did not want to over-purchase hardware, due to ongoing updates like new mobile control head options.

Brett described newer control head options, including a model with a larger knob. Firmware compatibility issues with fleet management software were still being resolved, which could delay ordering. Brett requested approval to purchase 10 mobile radios and 10 portable radios, along with accessories and cables.

A motion to approve the Racom purchase of subscriber units, in the amount of \$47,795.90, was made by Director Kennedy and seconded by Director Primmer.

Director Kennedy: Aye

Director Primmer: Aye

Director Pierotti: Aye

Director Pratt: Aye

Director Irons: Aye

C. KCUW Project

Brett reported that in October 2023, he received an inquiry from representatives of the Confederated Tribes regarding their application for a grant and FCC license for a low-power FM transmitter. At the time, Brett responded that he didn't have any objection in concept and provided a general indication that tower space might be available.

Recently, after 2 years had passed, he received an email indicating that the project was proceeding. KCUW operated a low-power transmitter at the Wildhorse hotel and was seeking a second transmitter to improve coverage, at the District's East Pendleton site on SE 6th. The station was a non-profit entity funded through CTUIR grants and donations.

Brett discussed equipment needs with the project engineer and noted the FCC construction deadline was September. Brett outlined possible antenna placement at approximately the 110-foot level, with flexibility to locate lower if needed. The installation would involve one equipment rack.

Brett stated he had no objection to KCUW locating equipment at the site but wanted a cost-sharing agreement in place to address power usage, propane, generator maintenance, and HVAC. He noted that KCUW's transmitter might consume more power than existing LMR equipment.

Director Kennedy raised concern that the suggested 50/50 split might not be appropriate if KCUW's usage was substantially higher. Director Pratt suggested a provision that the agreement be void if KCUW ceased to operate as a non-profit. Brett stated he would require industry-standard installation practices and that any interference issues would be addressed by KCUW. Brett noted that frequency separation made interference unlikely.

The Board expressed approval moving forward conceptually. Brett planned to draft a cost-sharing agreement, using existing ODOT shared-site maintenance agreements as a reference, and bring it back for Board review.

IX. Open Discussion

Brett reported that the District expected to receive a draft audit soon for review and filing.

Brett provided to the Board, a notice regarding a public meeting on the Hermiston Enterprise Zone, which was set to expire June 30, 2026. The City intended to apply for a new 10-year term. All taxing districts were invited to attend the public meeting on Thursday, February 12, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at Hermiston City Hall.

Director Pratt asked Brett about the GPS and emergency button functionality. Brett and Hank explained that while radios transmitted location data, there wasn't a good way to map it. The radios could be configured to report location based on certain activities and send that data to an IP address, where it could be collected and processed but that, after years of discussion, Sunridge had been unable to provide a way to make it work.

Director Pratt expressed interest in having location data appear automatically on dispatcher maps. Brett acknowledged this would require additional development and coordination but remained a potential future improvement that he would like to see.

X. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.

Next Board Meeting
March 3, 2026 - 1:30pm – Boardman City Hall