

MINUTES
Scotland County Board of Commissioners and Laurinburg City Council
Joint Session, April 1, 2014
Small Business Innovation Center, US 401 North

At 6 p.m. Chairman Guy McCook convened the special meeting for the purpose of discussing the consolidated 911 call center. Laurinburg City Mayor Tommy Parker convened the City meeting.

Commissioners in attendance: Chairman McCook, Vice Chair Carol McCall and Commissioners Bob Davis, John Alford and Whit Gibson. Commissioners not in attendance: Commissioners John Cooley and Clarence McPhatter. Staff present: EMS Director Roylin Hammond, County Manager Kevin Patterson, Clerk to the Board Ann Kurtzman and Human Resources Manager Susan Butler.

City Council in attendance: Mayor Parker and City Council members Dee Hammond, Drew Williamson, Mary Jo Adams, J.D. Willis and Curtis Leak. Staff present: City Manager Charles Nichols and City Clerk Jenny Tippett. City Council Member Willis delivered the invocation. City Council and the Commissioners approved their agendas as presented.

Chairman McCook said the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the draft Memorandum of Understanding which, if approved, would signify a partnership between the City and the County in the staffing of the 911 call center and emergency operations center.

Mr. Hammond gave a brief history of 911 in the County, which encompasses the entire County and all municipalities. Mr. Hammond explained how calls are transferred when a call comes to 911. He said with the increase of wireless calls, most calls default to EMS rather than Laurinburg Police. Mr. Hammond also discussed expenditures associated with 911, including upgrades and the funding for construction of the EOC and the move toward a consolidated 911 call center. The call center will be complete in September 2014 and operational in December 2014.

Mr. Patterson discussed current budget proposal for the EOC/911 call center. He said a six-person Board that includes the County Manager, Sheriff, EMS Director, City Manager, Fire Chief and Police Chief will set policy and develop recommended budgets moving forward. Mr. Patterson said actual costs and future operational costs will be borne by the County. Personnel costs only would be shared by the County and the City if the MoU is approved for 66 percent and 34 percent, County and City share, respectively. Mr. Patterson added that each department would pay for their own radios, and department costs would not transfer. Any eligible expense could be used for 911 funding.

Mr. Patterson said the preliminary personnel budget of \$701,354 would represent \$462,894 from the County and \$238,460 from the City and accounts for part-time, vacation and sick leave. Mr. Patterson said the calculation is based on average wage and assumes personnel will use all vacation and sick leave. \$423,780 would be salaries for 12 dispatchers and the new director. Overtime would be \$37,440 based on fair labor standards at modified half time. Personnel would be cross-trained with use of eligible 911 funds. Each department would bear their personnel costs until they become part of the consolidated 911 center.

Mr. Patterson said the new Director position would carry a pay scale equivalent to the Chief Deputy in the Sheriff's Department. Mr. Patterson said other counties were queried regarding salary range for the new Director position. The position was budgeted on the high side of salary range, but it might not be spent depending on the applicant pool.

City Council members discussed in general hiring straight time versus halftime and overtime as a possible cost savings measure. Mr. Patterson said that would be a policy decision where the six-member Board would find ways to operate more effectively and efficiently. The budget as presented is based on current conditions, and the committee would be responsible for cutting or adding costs.

Mr. Patterson said the six-member Board would work with the Director to develop a proposed budget, which would be presented to County and City and go through the budget process. Adding staff would go to City Council and Board of Commissioners for discussion and consideration.

Chairman McCook said any budget requests would have to be justified by three City employees and the three County employees who serve on the Board. Chairman McCook said the County would take the lead in any partnership with six-member Board serving in an advisory capacity only. Chairman McCook said the City and County would have to come to an agreement on personnel costs, which would be an annual event.

Mr. Patterson said the MoU was developed with the assistance of a consultant. Mr. Patterson said the length of the MoU could be considered but the five-year period in the document would allow sufficient time for the entire operation to get up and running. Mr. Patterson pointed out that 911 funds do not pay for people, and personnel costs would not be reimbursed.

The \$462,894 reflects an increase in personnel costs for the County from \$397,400. Mr. Patterson attributed the increase for the County and the City to the Director salary and training costs. Mr. Patterson said Richmond County is included in the MoU for a possible redundancy or backup plan.

Mr. Patterson said the consolidated call center would save about four seconds for those who contact 911 because it would eliminate call transfer to another responding agency. Mr. Patterson noted that in an emergency those four seconds could seem like hours.

Patterson said operational savings are expected by putting equipment in a climate-controlled room. There would be a small savings from rental fees for current equipment in the Police Department, which Patterson described as antiquated.

Patterson said State 911 Board efforts to require two dispatchers at each PSAP are expected to continue. If the bid is successful, it could double personnel costs for the City if it elects to not approve the MoU.

City Council agreed to discuss the MoU further at its April 15 meeting. The MoU will be on the agenda for the April 8 Board of Commissioners meeting. The City Council adjourned.

Motion was made by Vice Chair McCall and duly seconded by Commissioner Alford to adjourn.
Vote: Motion unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk to the Board

Guy McCook
Chairman