

**DRAFT MINUTES
HOMETOWN SECURITY STUDY COMMITTEE**

May 7, 2003, 1145 hours

Members Present: Chair General Stanley Heng, Carol Brown, Oscar Rios Pohirieth, Jim Geist, Major Guy Moon, Jeff Fortenberry, Larry Hudkins, Julie Righter, Tom Casady, Mike Spadt, Doug Ahlberg, Bruce Dart

Not in Attendance: Don Marti, Annette McRoy, Ken Svoboda

City Staff & Other Public Present: Jeff Cole (Staff), Corrie Kielty (Staff), Darrell Podany (Council Office)

Approval of Minutes

General Heng called for approval of the minutes of the April 23rd meeting. **Jim Geist moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Carol Brown. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Public Comments

No public comments.

Work Group Reports

Police/911: Summary reports from the April 22nd and 29th subcommittee meetings were distributed. Today's discussion focused on the subcommittee's recommendations for the 911 Center. Julie Righter provided information on the current status of the 911 Center. The 911 Center has a total of 35.5 FTEs (which includes 4 management positions). Her budget includes \$90,000-\$100,000 per year for overtime to meet minimum staffing levels. She faces retention challenges which are directly related to the shortage of staff (working conditions, working shifts, having to work holidays, stress of job). Julie identified establishing a technology replacement fund to finance improvements in 911, with Fire and Police communication technologies (mobile radios) as a key priority.

Recommendation: The City raise the line surcharge by 50 cents to the legal limit of \$1. It was estimated that this increase in the user fee would generate an additional \$750,000 per year for the 911 Center.

Currently the City charges 50 cents surcharge on telephone bills for wire lines. The subcommittee is recommending to increase the surcharge to the state authorized \$1.00 limit, which would generate approximately \$750,000-\$800,000 per year. The increase in the number of cellular phones is causing a decline in revenue. The surcharge is not imposed on cellular (mobile) telephones. Wireless phones generate 50 cents per phone which goes into a state-wide fund that is maintained by the Public Service Commission which is for the reimbursement of costs of the Public Safety Answering Points (whoever answers 911 calls). Its sole purpose is to fund technology and costs of the answering point as well as the cellular carriers to implement locating technology. There are two phases with wireless locating. Phase 1 is the physical address of the cell tower the call came through and the phone number of the calling party. Phase 2 is the actual location. Phase 2 is the goal and Lincoln/Lancaster County's 911 Center is working towards that goal, however there are upgrades that need to be done before it qualifies for reimbursement. There currently is about \$5 million in the fund. With cellular usage increasing, the land line tax is decreasing. Suggested was approaching the legislature to change the law to allow the cellular fund to be more directly funneled to offset this.

Three issues were raised that require more research; is it reasonable to look at additional contracts for the use of the current towers, having those funds earmarked for an enterprise fund, and a long term structure issue is to recommend that the Mayor's Office look at the process by which the monies from cellular phones are directed into a fund like land line 911 charges.

Recommendation: In year one, a portion of these additional funds (approximately \$265,000) be used to provide the 911 Center with the five staff members necessary to operate an additional call station. At an estimated annual cost of \$53,000 per staff member, this new call station would entail an annual cost of \$265,000.

Recommendation: In years two and three, an additional two staff members be brought on to the 911 Center staff. With the estimated \$53,000 cost per staff person, this would add an additional \$106,000 per year. At the end of this three year cycle, the annual cost of the additional 9 staff members recommended would total approximately \$477,000. Understanding that utilizing these funds for staff positions will delay the planned replacement of the emergency services providers' mobile communications technology, the Committee suggests that the balance of funds from this additional surcharge be earmarked for this purpose.

Recommendation: Additional 911 Center staff positions are identified and supported at a rate reflecting the community's overall population growth and the volume of emergency services. At a minimum level, traditional growth projections would necessitate hiring an additional 911 Center operator every three years which would necessitate budgeting for 1/3rd of a position each year for a new hire.

Jeff Fortenberry expressed a concern about comparing needs based on a survey of similar sized cities rather than what is happening here because emergency response is being delayed. Julie responded that she wants to take steps to ensure that we do not have a death that is the result of slow response. She has noted that the number of citizen complaints is going up. Dispatchers are in a hurry because they have to answer incoming calls. There are 27 incoming 911 lines, as well as the police non emergency lines.

Recommendation: That the City set up a sinking fund to finance future mobile communications needs.

Jlie Righter said one section of the 911 Center is the City Radio Shop which maintains the 800 mghz radio system, the portable mobile radios, mobile data terminals, laptop computers in police cars and firetrucks. The Police Department's 800 radios were purchased in 1992 and this equipment will need to be replaced soon. The cellular towers around town are not high enough for the 800 system, and therefore towers needed to be built. Space on our towers is being rented for cellular use (except the tower in Jensen Park).

The Radio Shop has six staff members (not included in the 911 Center numbers). The Radio Shop has its own budget and is considered an enterprise fund within the city. They charge the users a set fee and do not receive any surcharge money. There are a total of 2400 radios on the radio system. Prior to going to the single system for Lincoln and most of Lancaster County, all the agencies operated their own radio system and had contracts for radio maintenance. To keep the cost of running the communications system low, they were combined into a single system. The contract for the use of our tower is \$18,000 a year per vender, and that goes back to the Radio Shop to replace monies that were spent building the tower. The work group recommended that the surcharge increase would be for additional staff. To replace radios, a different plan would need to be developed. The subcommittee felt that radios should be in the budget of the user department, not in the budget of the 911 Center. Chief Casady said that the handling of radios should be handled the same way as police cruisers are handled; the department should be paying into a fund every year a set amount of money per radio to build that fund up so that it could be drawn upon to replace radios. Chief Casady said he does, however, put in his budget every year X amount of money for radio replacement. In previous budgets, this request has been cut.

Future Meetings:

The charge from the Mayor was to have a final report by June 1st. Corrie Kielty said that Mayor Wesely will have a budget that he will pass on to Mayor Elect Seng. The recommendations from the Hometown Security Committee will be used by Mayor Elect Seng when she prepares her own budget that she recommends to the Council. Remaining issues that need to be discussed are

the subcommittee recommendations for the Police Department and for the Fire Department. To be discussed at the next meeting will be the subcommittee's recommendations regarding the SRO program. Provided to the Committee was information collected by Oscar Rios Pohirieth through interviews with Lincoln Public Schools stakeholders which gives LPS perspective of the SRO program.

Information also provided to the Committee was the Fire/EMS work group report as well as a report from the Bureau of Fire Prevention. These reports will be discussed at a future meeting.

Jeff Cole said that information requested at the last meeting regarding the outstanding general obligations bonds for Police/Fire/911 was provided to Committee members by Steve Hubka.

Members of the Committee felt that they needed extra time to prepare its recommendations. It was decided that in addition to the weekly subcommittee meetings, the Hometown Security Committee will need to meet weekly (May 14th, May 21st and May 28th) to meet the June 1st deadline. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 14th at 1145 in Classroom A.

Meeting adjourned at 1310 hours.

Submitted by:

Virginia Fischer