

From: "Wanda Greene" <Wanda.Greene@buncombecounty.org>
Subject: **FW: Dispatch Center**
Date: February 23, 2009 4:20:38 PM EST
To: <jsandford@mountainx.com>

From: Wanda Greene
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2009 9:58 AM
To: commissioner@davidgantt.com; Bill (William H.) Stanley; ywdgbill@aol.com; rrbaily0922@aol.com; peterson7@bellsouth.net; hollyj@main.buncombe.nc.us; Holly Jones
Cc: Jerry (Marshall J.) Vehaun; Kim Pruet; Michael C. Frue; Mack Salley; Wanda Greene
Subject: Dispatch Center

Need to give you an update on the 911 dispatch center. You'll recall that we agreed in September of 2003 to consolidate county and city dispatch functions. The 2003 agreement requires an operating agreement before APD moves into the facility.

EMS, Sheriff and AFD moved into the facility on July 20, 2008. The center is like a breath of fresh air - both the facility and the equipment used to receive calls are major upgrades from what either agency was using. APD wanted to go through their re-accreditation before moving. I genuinely believe everyone involved in the center would tell you it is a great facility, and that we've been more than fair to everyone.

We've hit a roadblock with the agreement and APD has delayed moving into the facility. The 2003 agreement has a definition that we believe exposes the county to paying for an upgraded/new radio system for the city. That was never the intention; and we have to get this definition resolved before signing a new agreement. I've asked Gary Jackson if it was the city's intention that the county replace the city's radio system. He says he "would rely on the attorney's interpretation of the 2003 agreement."

I can't sign this agreement with this exposure for the county. When we looked at the City's capital plan, there are 4 projects on the plan for basic radio equipment - a total of \$909,500. Our IT staff that works on the radio system estimates that full replacement of the system would be "millions" and provided a recent quotation

of \$2 million to replace the equipment on one tower. The quotation was for another agency, not county or city.

The city has a "proprietary" system and is fairly locked into having to pay whatever Motorola says. We also have Motorola equipment, but not an agreement for a propriety system. Some examples of the cost differences include:

1. City Console \$36,000 vs. County Consoles of \$24,000
2. City Mobiles \$ \$2,680 vs County Mobiles of \$1,500
3. City Handheld Radios \$ 2,273 vs County Handheld Radios of \$1,500
4. City Touch Screen Monitors \$\$2,134 vs County Touch Screen Monitors of \$\$900
5. City Labor and Engineering costs per day of \$3,000 vs County Labor and Engineering costs per day of \$520

We aren't criticizing the decision to have a propriety system, that's a city management decision; however, it makes our exposure even greater.

To me, this is a fairly easy fix. First, we redefine "console" and put a statement in the required agreement that it is not the intention of either city or county for the other to replace the radio system and equipment used to dispatch calls. We've provided that agreement to Mr. Jackson and await his response. We understand it will be discussion at the meeting on Tuesday night. I didn't want you to hear that and not have an overview of the situation.

Bottomline, we've spent \$2.1 million for city staff and equipment to get the center ready. We expected to pay for the equipment, and actually replaced APD's consoles twice to get the facility ready. All they have to do is move in, sit down and start dispatching calls. I'd be remiss if I didn't share our appreciation for Jonathan Feldman (City IT Director) who facilitated use of the City's Charter franchise agreement to run fiber to the Dispatch Center. That resulted neither city or county having to pay for fiber to the center.

Worse case scenario is us giving notice to cancel the agreement, and then negotiate an operating agreement. There is no need to go to this extreme, but we'll see whether the last agreement is satisfactory to the city.

As a side note, we talk a lot about tax equity, etc. when the water agreement comes up. Both the dispatch center and public safety training facility are excellent examples of the county taking on the financial responsibility for much needed facilities without any investment from the city, other municipalities or fire departments.