**RED RIVER REGIONAL DISPATCH CENTER
Authority Board Meeting
Thursday, January 12, 2023**

**Cass County Courthouse, 211 9 St S, Fargo, ND**

**Commission Room 105W**

1. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Commissioner Scherling at 1000hrs**

**Present:**

Director Mary Phillippi – RRRDC Director

Clay Commissioner Ebinger

Clay Commissioner Campbell

Cass Commissioner Scherling

Moorhead Mayor Carlson

Fargo Commissioner Kolpack

Virtual:

Clay County Administrator Larson

Moorhead Commissioner Nelson

West Fargo Commission President Dardis

Attorney Erik Johnson – RRRDC Legal Counsel

Fargo Mayor Mahoney

Cass Commissioner Peterson

**Also, in Attendance:**

Fargo IS Todd Keel

Moorhead Interim Chief Wallin

Erik Johnson Legal Assistant - Ian McLean

Tracy Peters – Assistant Cass County Administrator

Barnesville Chief Voxland - Virtual

1. **AGENDA**

Approval of January 12th, 2023, Agenda. Carlson made a **motion to approve the agenda**; Commissioner Ebinger seconded the motion. No discussion. All approved; **motion carried.**

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Discussion surrounding appointments for having Chair and Vice Chair represented from both states. Scherling suggested Cass County Chair the first year as it’s in the building stage and have been highly engaged in facility discussion.

* **Scherling nominated Chad Peterson to be Chair of Authority Board.** **Dardis second.** Discussion: Ebinger, asked if like the diversion project, if next year it would rotate to MN and if it would be the currently elected Vice Chair. Ebinger also asked if it needed to be identified who takes the role each year - between the 5 entities? Carlson asked if the Vice Chair won’t always serve as Chair the following year. Erik advised that in the JPA it states the Vice Chair would be the Chair the following year and Mary reviewed with the group what was stated in the JPA. Scherling moved forward with nomination - **All approved,** **motion carries.**

Vice Chair nomination: Campbell advised they have someone to nominate for Vice Chair but have questions about the move from Vice Chair to Chair for the following year.

* **Campbell nominated Mayor Carlson to Vice Chair**, Ebinger second, no discussion, **motion carries**.

Scherling turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Carlson due to elected Chair, Peterson, being absent.

1. **APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY**

Requested information regarding what the role of secretary will be - Per Erik, Secretary role is to maintain business records, can be someone on Authority board or from RRRDC, takes meeting minutes. Ebinger advised that on previous BOA it was the responsibility of elected chair to bring in the secretary. Scherling suggested it makes sense for continuity it would be Mary. Carlson assessed that the suggestion is that Mary take the role, Scherling confirmed with Erik that it could be Mary P or her designee.

* **Motion for Mary Phillippi to assume role of Secretary: Scherling / Dardis second, no further discussion, motion carries.**
1. **2023 MEETING SCHEDULE AND LOCATION**

Scherling discussed days of week that might work for the group, Carlson suggested the second Thursday at 10am worked well for most this time, suggested meeting monthly. Erik advised that JPA indicates Authority Board must meet no less than quarterly. Carlson and Ebinger suggested meeting monthly due to the facility construction, Scherling agreed. Erik also reminded that the JPA also identifies the ability for alternates to attend which will help with the frequency of meetings.

* **Motion for monthly, second Thursday at 10am meeting: Campbell, second by Scherling, no discussion, motion carries.** Next meeting February 9th at 10am.

Location: Scherling recommends somewhere with ability to have teams meeting, perhaps RRRDC, Mary advised that the capability to host virtually isn’t there at RRRDC. Campbell also advised that perhaps it can be hosted at location of Chair until ability to meet at RRRDC.

* **Motion for Board Chair to host meeting at their facility: Campbell, Kolpack second, Ebinger added that the location should include the ability for virtual meeting option, motion carries**
1. **COMMITTEE MEMBER APPOINTMENTS TO BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Carlson asked how Erik and Mary would like to proceed. Erik advised that per JPA, Budget and Finance consists of the Finance Director and an Authority Board member from each entity. Nominations can be done at this meeting or done in writing and recognized at the next meeting. Erik advises that it was assumed or structured that a member would be the finance director but the JPA could be amended if needed. Carlson suggested Fargo review and make a motion to amend as needed and Mahoney advised they will add their finance director for now. Erik suggested they can have their city administrator attend as well.

Moorhead: Jenica Flanagan, Ryan Nelson

Clay: County Auditor Lori Johnson, Commissioner Campbell

Cass: TBD

Fargo: Finance Director and TBD

West Fargo: ~~Tina Fisk~~, Mayor Dardis – Revision following meeting to be Finance Director Judy Afdahl – via email to Director Phillippi

1. **COMMITTEE MEMBER APPOINTMENTS TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Erik advises the members would typically be Chief’s or Department Heads for Police and/or Fire, Sanford will also have a representative that is non-voting member. Carlson suggested if names are known to provide them now to move forward with scheduling meetings. Scherling advised they don’t know who the second is yet. Erik advises there’s nothing required to motion or approve now for these members. If known now then can document or follow-up and present/share at the next meeting.

Ebinger commented that Clay is ready for their members appointments.

Scherling asked if it’s known when they will meet, Mary advised that there is no meeting scheduled at this time since members have not been identified. Cass will add to Monday agenda and follow up with Director Phillippi when determined.

Moorhead: MPD Chief Monroe, MFD Chief Wallin

Clay: BPD Chief Voxland, Clay Sheriff Empting

Cass: TBD

Fargo: FPD Chief Zibolski, FFD Chief Dirksen

West Fargo: WFPD Chief Otterness, WFFD Chief Fuller

1. **ANNUAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST DOCUMENT**

RRRDC has a document that was used for the previous BOA drafted by Erik Johnson, reviewed by Erik with the updated JPA in mind and Director Phillippi can send to Board Members to sign for next meeting.

1. **FACILITY UPDATES**

The center’s location is 300 NP Ave in Fargo, ND. The building is a shared use building which include businesses and residents. The building was built in 1920 and a space was renovated in 2003 as a dispatch center. The dispatch space was purchased in 2014 after leasing for 11 years.

The current facility has eight (8) dispatch consoles. There are an additional four (4) consoles located in a storage closet at West Fargo Police Department that can be pulled out and set up as a back-up center, if needed.

Based on 2018 workload, a 2020 facility and staffing report recommended that a minimum of nine dispatchers should be on console many hours. There are not adequate consoles or space to meet the recommendations for minimum staffing. Per the study, by 2035, at least 14 consoles will need to be staffed to accommodate peak staffing levels.

RRRDC leases parking spaces in a lot in close proximity to the center. This parking lot is not secure and is not well lighted during the overnight period. We have had a number of security incidents both within our building and the outside area.

RRRDC is currently in the process of working with SEH related to Phase 2 Architectural Services for design and construction of a new facility. No agreement is in place and conversations continue related to costs and services to ensure that the facility meets the needs of our community in a financially responsible manner. A meeting is planned for January 17th with the SEH project manager. More discussion needs to be done prior to bringing this forward to the Authority Board.

The land lease with Sanford is still also in discussion. A meeting was held on January 5th to discuss terms of the land lease with Sanford. Attorneys for both RRRDC and Sanford are working through the agreement. It is expected that when a document has been created that is acceptable to both legal teams, it will be brought to the Authority Board for a decision for moving forward.

1. **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

**Budget and Finance:**

The RRRDC budget for 2023 is set at $5,248,665 for RRRDC operations. This amount is divided based upon the 2020 census metro cog formula. In 2023, an additional $513,911 special assessment to the agencies for the Tyler Technologies software maintenance is made through the RRRDC, this funding formula is based up mobile licenses at the time of signing of the software contract. RRRDC has started working with Cass County to move from City of Fargo as fiscal agent to Cass County, per the JPA.

**Staffing:**

RRRDC is authorized for 50 employees: three administrative personnel which includes a Director, Assistant Director and Radio Systems Coordinator; nine (9) Shift Supervisors and thirty-five (38) Communication Operators.

Additionally, three (3) Public Safety System Administrator, who are city of Fargo employees, are funded within the RRRDC budget to serve RRRDC consortium members with IT support for the Tyler Technologies product. All IS positions are filled.

Currently RRRDC is staffed with 32 full time shift supervisors/communications operators and one part time employee who works a 62.5% schedule. Fully staffed is 47 full time shift supervisors/communications operators. Staffing shortages have been an issue for the dispatch center for many years and have become more serious in the 2021 and 2022.

Staffing of dispatch centers is a problem across the nation. According the APCO 2018 Project Retains Study the national average turnover rate for dispatch centers is 28%-29%. The average turnover rate for RRRDC is 19.8%, however in 2022 RRRDC had a turnover rate of 31%. Approximately 70% of the employees who left RRRDC in 2022 were employees in the training program and had an average tenure of 2 ½ months. Trainees often site the reason for leaving as the stressful work and schedule. The average years of service of those working the dispatch floor is 9.75 years and the median is 7 years.

Six job offers have been made for open positions. RRRDC has an extensive hiring process to including a background check, polygraph, psychological, medical and drug screen. This is standard for dispatch centers. One new employee has successfully completed the background process and will be starting on January 23rd. Five other offers are in the beginning stages of the process and pending successful outcome of the background will start at the end of February.

The training program at RRRDC is a 22 week long of on the job training. Trainees go through several phases to include orientation, telephone and radio training. After the first 15 weeks employees are able to work some consoles on their own.

A 2020 staffing study performed by Matrix Consulting Group recommended said that by 2035, more than 70 communications operator/shift supervisor positions may be needed to adequately staff the center so reaching full staffing is a priority so we can continue to provide service to the community and responders.

**Equipment:**

**Telephone:** RRRDC personnel answer 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls and provide public safety emergency and non-emergency dispatch services for law enforcement, fire and EMS.

A Positron VIPER call taking system is used to receive emergency and non-emergency telephone calls. RRRDC has been taking text to 9-1-1 calls since 2016. The system is a multi-node configuration with a connection to the VIPER in Grand Forks, ND.

In 2021 RRRDC processed:

* 115,308 9-1-1 calls
* 163,639 incoming calls on administrative lines
* 68,003 outgoing calls
* 249 Texts to 9-1-1

**Radio:** RRRDC dispatches for 57 agencies, including 7 City Police Departments, 2 County Sheriff’s Departments, 3 City Fire Departments, 26 Rural volunteer Fire Departments, 18 Rural Volunteer Emergency Medical Services Providers and Sanford Ambulance – a total of 57 agencies.

The radio system in use at RRRDC is a Motorola MCC7500 system. This is the system is a State of Minnesota system and is used in Clay County, MN. It is also used in Cass County, ND with a special agreement with the state of Minnesota. Using the same radio system allows for interoperability with all agencies we serve.

**CAD:** Computer Aided Dispatch is provided by Tyler Technologies (formerly New World). In 2008 the CAD/RMS system was acquired by the city of Fargo using 2007 COPS Technology Grant funds obtained by specifically for use in the RRRDC consortium. The system is comprised of modules for CAD, Records, Fire, Civil, Mobile and Jail. Ownership of the system was transferred to RRRDC in 2020 per an agreement made at contract signing.

**Other:** RRRDC uses Medical Priority Dispatch Systems for processing all medical calls and providing Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) instruction.

NICE Inform is used for recording telephone and radios. Per policy, RRRDC does not own these recordings; they are owned by the jurisdiction in which the call originated. RRRDC does not release any recordings, except under subpoena, to anyone other than the agency who owns the call. RRRDC provides member agencies with audio recordings of their calls. In 2021 RRRDC provided 3190 recordings to agencies.

Internal Call Guides are in use for line of questioning and dispatch guidelines. These call guides are set by the RRRDC Law Enforcement Operations Committee and Fire/EMS Operations Committee. An SOP and Employee Policy also guide the employees.

A UPS and generator are in place as back up for electrical systems.

Everbridge mass notification system is funded under the RRRDC budget however system management is the responsibility of the Emergency Managers of the agencies served.

Mary invited Authority Board members to tour the dispatch center and do an observation. Carlson thanked Mary and recommended to members that have not been up to the dispatch center to do so. Carlson commented positively on the tree of life display. Mary explained the process of obtaining leaves for child deliveries or lifesaving awards.

Scherling asked about security concerns mentioned, Mary advised the current location is a mixed-use building that is open to the public, only locked after hours. Transient individuals have been found camping in the building, recent incident of an employee being touched by someone outside the building, RRRDC does have security cameras.

Scherling asked what starting pay is and about benefits offered. Mary advised it is $23.60 and that benefits are reviewed frequently and employee feedback is that they are very pleased with benefits offered. HR is handled in house and works with MRA, an HR consultant group, as well as Vaaler for benefits administration.

Scherling asked about the last COLA, Mary explained COLA calculation and for 2023 was to be 3.5% but previous BOA increased to 4% due to economic factors.

Scherling asked about what policies should be reviewed by the Authority Board. Erik advised that the previous policies rolled over and will remain in effect but it would be good for a review of the policies by current members for familiarity.

Scherling suggested administration of benefits or other efficiencies could tap into member agencies. Mary shared that RRRDC is a small group for insurance policies which results in lower cost premiums that larger agencies RRRDC serves.

Mary has pulled policies that reference BOA and suggested those be reviewed first. Carlson suggested sending out via email. Mary will send out and make a note of which reference BOA.

Campbell – Suggested that Budget and Finance allow for virtual meeting option be available as well. Carlson requested agenda item be added for an update of executive and budget and finance meetings and keep as a reoccurring agenda item. Campbell commented that budget and finance needs to authorize budget by certain date, may not need to update at following meetings. Ebinger commented that a stipulation that if committee meets, an update should be provided to Authority Board.

Scherling commented that with SEH presenting at next meeting, perhaps holding on reviewing BOA policies.

Ebinger shared experience of working with joint dispatch center and initially was not for it but during his tenure as Moorhead Police Chief changed his view and thinks the collaboration and service that is provided as well as cost savings to the communities has been incredible. Ebinger appreciates the effort of all as well as Cass County to move this project forward. Scherling commented about sitting on Association of Counties and the collaboration locally is remarkable. Carlson added that Cass/Clay is a beacon of collaboration through the country. Campbell agreed that there are a number of collaborations that benefit the community as a whole.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

Campbell made a motion to adjourn; Kolpack seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Meeting adjourned.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, February 9th, 10:00am at Cass County Commission Room 105W**

*Meeting minutes by: Amanda Glasoe, RRRDC*