

After Agenda

**Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Work Session
Monday, November 3, 2014
9:30 AM
119 E. Solomon St., Meeting Room 108**

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session in Room 108 of the Courthouse Annex, Monday, November 3, 2014, beginning at 9:30 a.m. with Chairman Samuel Gardner presiding. Commissioners Raymond Ray, Rita Johnson, Gwen Flowers-Taylor and Bart Miller were present. Also present were County Manager William P. Wilson Jr., Communications Systems Manager, Mike Windham, Administrative Services Director, Jinna Garrison, County Attorney, Jim Fortune, and Executive Secretary, Kathy Gibson, to record the minutes.

- I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER)** led by Chairman Samuel Gardner.
- II. INVOCATION** – led by Chairman Samuel Gardner.
- III. PLEDGE TO FLAG** – led by Commissioner Bart miller.
- IV. AGENDA ITEMS**

- 1. Discuss 800MHz user fees with regards to the City of Griffin.

William Wilson, County Manager, stated that the first attachment to the agenda was an update on Phase II of the 800 MHz system and asked Mike Windham, Communications Systems Manager to review the progress on Phase II implementation of the 800 MHz system.

Mike Windham stated that we purchased a hardware and software upgrade to Phase II at the time of the initial contract with MA-Com in March, 2007. He reported that Phase II consists of upgrading all of the hardware infrastructure at all five tower sites and a software upgrade to all of the end user radios. Mr. Windham advised that at this time all of the Phase II hardware has been installed at the sites and is up and running along with the older Phase I hardware. Mr. Windham further stated that approximately half of the radios have been upgraded with the new software. He stated that all of the County radios have received the software upgrade and the City radio upgrades will begin next week.

Mr. Windham then stated that once all system testing is complete there will be a scheduled cut over to the new hardware. This will be done during a period of low radio activity and with prior notification to all of the agencies involved. The migration from the older hardware to the Phase II hardware is intended to be seamless to the end users. Mr. Windham advised all of the software is backward compatible so if a problem should arise during the cut over, use of the older equipment is still available and can be utilized until the problem is corrected.

Commissioner Johnson asked Mr. Wilson to explain the reasoning behind the different methodologies outlined in the county's Memorandum of Agreement to the City of Griffin.

Mr. Wilson stated that Methods 1, 2 and 3 are based on the number of units being used by each user group. Method #4 was formulated through a request by the City of Griffin for a push to talk, where actual usage of each device is captured and the City would be charged by the number of times a unit was "pushed" or used. Method #5 is the proposed method from the City of Griffin.

Mr. Wilson stated that the City of Griffin is under a few misconceptions as to 800 MHz and these are reflected in their Method #5.

- There is a big divide between the city and the county on the difference between emergency 911 communications and 800 MHz. The city feels that they should only be charged for the non-public safety portion of the 800 MHz radio system.

They feel that since 911 is public safety that they should not have to be paying for public safety again under the 800 MHz system. They are not seeing the two systems as separate and are using that rationale for not wanting to pay for their public safety groups who utilize the system.

- The City feels that they should only be charged for 3 tower sites since two of the tower sites are outside of the city and utilized by the county.

Mr. Wilson then advised the total usage by group based on the push to talk numbers of the 800 MHz service for the period November 2013 thru June 2014 was:

- County Usage 46.32%
- City Usage 37.98%
- EMS Usage 7.7%
- Other Usage 12.93%

Mr. Wilson stated that currently the County pays 100% of the system for the five tower sites that make the system work. Maintenance or repairs for each individual radio is paid by the entity utilizing the equipment

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that the City's stipulation that any revenue received from renting space on the towers should go toward maintenance costs prior to the city having to pay for their usage of the system is unreasonable. She stated that we don't try to tell the city how to spend the revenue they receive off water and electricity, we simply pay our portion of these bills, so the City should not be able to dictate to us how we spend any revenue received off the cell towers. The city should pay for their usage of this service as the county pays for the usage of the utilities furnished by the city.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked that conversations be started with other counties who share their 800 MHz system with cities to see how they have addressed the issue of cost sharing.

Jim Fortune, County Attorney, stated that the city maintains they only need three towers and that is all they use. He further stated that if the system were reduced to three towers the service would suffer, the ability to utilize the five towers available enhances the service they are currently using.

Mr. Windham stated that the five towers make the system a complete system and allows for the possibility should one tower go down the system can continue to provide coverage for the entire area. Clarity could be affected until the tower is back on line but service would not be interrupted.

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Windham also advised that specialized bidirectional amplifiers had been placed in the basement of the hospital, at the jail and in One-Griffin Center to insure that access to the system is available from all locations. The maintenance costs of this equipment is included in this methodology.

A poll of the commissioners was taken and consensus of the board was that Methodology #4 is the method to be sent back to the City. The board feels that we have gone above and beyond in trying to provide for and work with the City on these services. Our position should be that the 800 MHz system is a complete system of five tower sites and that you pay for what you use based on push to talk utilization.

Consensus of the board is to:

1. Go with Methodology #4, including all 5 tower sites.
2. That an Intergovernmental Agreement be prepared based on this methodology and that the costs for the system go back to 2011.
3. That a letter be drafted from the Chairman of the County Commission to the Chairman of the City Commission, to explain the items discussed during the meeting:
 - ✓ 800 MHz and emergency communications are two different systems. 911 is the service provided to receive emergency calls, the avenue for dispatching those calls, in this case is the 800 MHz system, to the appropriate agency is not one in the same.
 - ✓ City workers do utilize the system from outside the city and no matter the percentage, the system is there and can be utilized from anywhere in the county. No one charges for a "piece of a system" and we are not going to price the system based on "pieces".
 - ✓ The system is a complete 5 tower system and is available and utilized as such.
 - ✓ The county does not try to allocate revenues received by the city on their utilities and therefore will not accept the city's direction as to how revenues from the cell towers should be utilized.

The board requested a summary of how other counties who share their systems with the cities within their borders allocate costs and to obtain the guidelines that they utilize for cost allocation.

Once all of the information is collected, the information is to be provided to the board and another meeting or work session be set. There was also discussion of a

joint meeting with the city possibly with a facilitator to keep the discussion on track.

2. Review of Financial Policies and Procedures concerning issuance of RFP's and a review of the Managed IT Services RFP issued in July, 2014.

Mr. Wilson advised that the Board at a Special Called Meeting on September 15, 2014 tabled this matter for an indefinite period of time. Vice Chairman Ray and Commissioner Johnson requested a work session and that is what brings us here today.

Mr. Wilson advised that since that meeting he has had several informal conversations with Jack Poland, IT Director for the City of Griffin, and he has attended a demonstration with OSSI, the company that provides CAD service for the City of Griffin. We have included CAD and the telephone system in the 2014 SPLOST.

Mr. Wilson stated that we are looking at the possibility of linking the county's 911 Center to Griffin Police Department through the City's fiber optic network and in so doing making the fiber network available to the Jail, Water Department Animal Control, Correctional Institution, Public Works and connecting them, because at this time we do not have any direct links to our departments. This would facilitate two or three things:

- ✓ It would allow us to have one internet service provider, versus individual service providers for each location.
- ✓ Transmission of data would then be routed over a secure fiber optic network and not over the internet.
- ✓ VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) phone service would then be available to the county which would reduce our telephone bills significantly as all telephone calls would be routed through the City's fiber optic as well. Mr. Wilson stated that the last update to the telephone system was in the 1990's.

Mr. Wilson advised that these discussions are very preliminary as they have only been between him and Mr. Poland. Kenny Smith is aware of the discussions, but no City commissioners have been involved in the discussions. It is hoped that if the SPLOST passes, that we can then present a proposal to the City and the County for the fiber connection to the 911 Center.

Mr. Wilson stated that once we are connected to the City's fiber optic network, we will be able to back up our systems off site at the city police department on Poplar Street. Having a back-up system off site will ensure that should a catastrophic event occur, we will have our systems and records at a different location so they can be accessed and protected.

Chairman Ray stated that on September 15th the matter before the board was tabled regarding the Managed IT Services RFP and he was unsure what had been done that was not in compliance with the financial policies and procedures adopted earlier this year by the board. His goal is to determine what action was taken that

was not in compliance with the financial policies and procedures and get the matter settled and moving forward.

Commissioner Johnson stated that at the meeting on September 15th there were a lot of things that were said and a lot of confusion particularly involving Liberty Technology. She simply wants to revisit the matter to find out what is real and what is not real so that we can move forward.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor expressed her concern with the process after receiving an email from a local company who wouldn't submit a response or a bid and made accusations that the RFP had been tailored around services and certifications that would only qualify Liberty Technology for the contract. She further stated that it came to light that evening that although Mike Windham is more than qualified to run the 800 MHz system, he was not qualified to write this RFP. So he and William utilized Liberty Technology to format and come up with the requirements for the RFP. She stated that she felt this was a conflict of interest due to the fact that Liberty Technology has been handling all of our IT services since 2011. She stated she felt that, that was inappropriate. She stated that she felt that they should not have assisted in writing the proposal if they were going to put a bid in for the RFP.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor further stated that she had done an Open Records Request with the City of Griffin to find out what communication had taken place between the County Manager and their IT department. She stated that as far back as 2011, Jack Poland, head of the IT Department at the city, had stated that the City could run our emails at little or no cost to the county. She stated that she realizes that in the policies and procedures there is no directive as to working with another government agency prior to putting something out for bid. Commissioner Flowers-Taylor further stated that she didn't understand why we haven't explored the services that we can obtain through the City of Griffin.

Mr. Wilson stated that Commissioner Flowers-Taylor is correct that he and Mr. Poland had talked approximately a year ago about working with the City for IT services. He advised that the City is running Outlook 2013 and all of the County computers are currently operating on Outlook 2007. This is the software that we use for email, calendars and other tasks. Many of our operating systems have to be upgraded to Windows 7; but we still have some computers that are still running on Windows XP.

Commissioner Ray stated that if you go back and look at the night of September 15, and you review the Financial Policies and Procedures for an RFP, the guidelines for the RFP as established in the Financial Policies and Procedures were followed. The RFP was successful as we had six vendors who did respond to the RFP, who could meet the requirements as set out in the RFP. It is evident that we did not fail and neither did the Financial Policies fail.

Commissioner Ray stated that we went to the internet and pulled a basic RFP, then we went to the company currently providing the services, which is Liberty Technology. Commissioner Ray stated that a lot of innuendos have been made

regarding our going to the current provider to get information on services currently being received and the hardware/software being used. He further stated that the bottom line is we did not violate the financial policies set forth for generating an RFP. It is not a failure of our policies and procedures or the fault of the county if a business owner determines that they are not qualified to bid on an RFP request because of certifications. We have services currently that are based on our equipment and software needs and are receiving a level of service commensurate with these needs.

Mr. Wilson stated that Liberty Technology had no part in writing the RFP. He stated that he and Mr. Windham wrote the RFP based on an RFP they found on the internet that was created in Washington State. The only information received from Liberty Technology was what services they are currently providing to the County and those services were inserted into the RFP. Liberty Technology had no part in the writing of this RFP, they did not review the RFP. The only information received from Liberty was how many computers were being serviced, the operating systems on the computers that would have to be maintained and a list of services they currently provide and this information was inserted into the part of the RFP that says what we want.

After discussion Commissioner Johnson stated that she doesn't believe that the problem is with Liberty Technology the problem is with the perception of Mr. Wilson and his relationship with Liberty Technology. It has been explained to us how and why Liberty Technology is our current IT provider. Liberty was there when we needed them and have been there through the years.

Chairman Gardner stated that we are trying to do the right thing and trying to do it as effectively and efficiently as possible, but perceptions are what they are. He then asked where we want to go from here.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor requested that we ask Kenny Smith, City Manager of the City of Griffin, if it would be okay for Jack Poland to review the Managed IT RFP based on his knowledge of the county systems and that we review any suggestions made by Mr. Poland and then reissue the RFP.

Consensus of the board was to work with the City in incorporating services that they can provide at a cost savings to the County and that working to that effect be included in the RFP and wording to the effect that notice will be given to the current provider should we choose to switch over to service from the City.

Consensus of the board is to enter a motion to reject the RFP's at a regular meeting in the future. Mr. Wilson will draft an email to Kenny Smith regarding our request that Jack Poland review the RFP.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second by Gardner/Miller to adjourn at 11:26 a.m. Motion carried unanimously by all.