

**WHAT-COMM COMMUNICATIONS CENTER
ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD
MINUTES
May 26, 2022
Meeting held Via ZOOM**

Present were:

Administrative Board Members: Bill Elfo, Sheriff, WCSO; Seth Fleetwood, Bellingham Mayor; Tyler Byrd, Whatcom County Council Chair of the Finance Committee; Larry Hoffman, Fire Chief District 7; Scott Korthuis, Lynden Mayor; Satpal Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive; Jeff Hindman, Fire Commissioners Association Representative; Chief Florence Simon, Bellingham Police Department and Dan Hammill, City of Bellingham Council Chair of the Public Safety Committee.

Absent: Bellingham Fire Chief, Bill Hewett and City of Bellingham Councilmember, Dan Hammill.

Other Panelists in attendance:

Bellingham Fire Department, Prospect Division Chief, Dan McDermott; Bellingham Deputy Chief, David Crass, Director of WHAT-COMM; Alysn Everbeck, Deputy Director of WHAT-COMM and Forrest Longman, Bellingham Deputy Director of Finance, Bellingham Assistant Fire Chief David Pethick standing in for Bill Hewett

Opening comments:

Sheriff Bill Elfo called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

Sheriff Elfo asked the public if they had comments. There were no public comments made.

Approval of the Minutes

Approval of meeting minutes from the January 27, 2022, regular meeting.

Discussion: No discussion.

Sheriff Elfo called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Scott Korthuis motioned that the minutes be approved, and Seth Fleetwood seconded the motion. Sheriff Elfo called for a vote to approve the minutes. None opposed. Minutes approved.

PROSPECT Communications Remodel Update

Presented by Dan McDermott

Division Chief, Dan McDermott indicated that the remodel constituted making space for additional dispatch positions, for a total of 8 positions. The updates included the new equipment that the Administrative Board approved which is the Avtec Radio system, a new logging recorder and new console furniture. He expected that the remodel project would be completed in about 2 weeks.

Capital Planning Committee Update

Committee members are County Councilmember, Tyler Byrd; Lynden Mayor, Scott Korthuis and Bellingham Deputy Finance Director, Forrest Longman.

Mayor Scott Korthuis shared a Capital and Facility Plan Report. The report outlined equipment needs and expected costs as well as the need for a new facility and its estimated cost. The document also outlined a list of different funding mechanisms.

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The committee recommended the following funding mechanisms:

Equipment Funding

Excerpt taken directly from the presented committee document. "The committee recommends that we fund the \$220,000 per year as a budgeted normal expense for the operation of the entities. To get an adequate fund balance, the Committee recommends that for the first ten years of this reserve fund, we add \$120,000 per year so after ten years the fund will have adequate reserves".

It is expected that these funds will cover required equipment on a regular and planned refresh/replacement cycle. The resulting cost is \$340k per year for 10 years and then \$220k each year after.

Facility Funding

Excerpt taken directly from the presented committee document. "After reviewing our options, the group decided that using the communication sales tax to pay for the facility would be the best option."

"The current WhatComm facility has come to the end of its useful life. WhatComm continues to grow as the population in the county grows and there is increased demand on the services and personnel. The cost of a new facility is unknown, but it is thought to be in the \$20 million range. This cost would cover a building that could house both WhatComm and Prospect should there be a desire to co-locate or consolidate these services".

It is expected that 2024 would be the earliest expectation of going out to the public for a vote on adopting the communication sales tax.

There was much discussion about the funding mechanisms recommended, and continued discussion about co-locating or consolidating Law and Fire/EMS services.

After discussion was finished, the following motions were made:

Bellingham Mayor Fleetwood motioned to support that the City and County convene to further discuss a master facility plan that will include WhatComm building needs, and Scott Korthuis seconded the motion. Sheriff Elfo called for a vote: None opposed. Motion carries.

Lynden Mayor Korthuis motioned that the recurring amounts of 120k + 240k as outlined by the committee, be approved; or whatever the Finance Department recommends will best meet the needs for equipment replacement.

Sheriff Elfo called for a vote: None opposed. Motion carries.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 1:56pm.

Next scheduled meeting is Thursday September 29, 2022, at 1 pm. The meeting is currently scheduled to be held via ZOOM.