

Knox Regional Communications Center Executive Board

Wednesday
August 24, 2016
3:00 p.m.

A meeting of the Executive Board of the Knox Regional Communications Center took place on **Wednesday, August 24, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.** in the Knox County Commission Hearing Room.

Executive Board members in attendance: Adam Miceli, Rockland Fire/EMS; Camden Fire Chief Chris Farley; Ruston Barnard, Rockland Fire/EMS; Craig Cooley, Rockport Police Department; Rockland PD Deputy Chief Chris Young; Knox County EMA Director Ray Sisk (*arrived at 3:41 p.m.*); and Jesse Thompson, Union EMS.

Others in attendance: Knox Regional Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, Knox County Administrator Andrew Hart, and Administrative Assistant Candice Richards.

- I. 3:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 3:01 Action Items:**
 1. Approval of Board Minutes of July 27, 2016.
- III. 3:05 Discussion Items:**
 1. 2017 KRCC Budget Draft Review
 2. Discuss Executive Board Meetings with Center Staff
- IV. Other Business**
- V. Adjourn**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chief Farley at 3:07 p.m.

II. Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes of July 27, 2016.
 - Jesse Thompson motioned to approve the minutes. Rusty Barnard seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

III. Discussion Items

1. 2017 KRCC Budget Draft Review.

Director Lothrop did an overview of elements from his draft budget for 2017:

 - Laurie Bouchard has done a market review of salaries by checking on comparable positions in other counties and municipalities in Maine and then the position classification committee reviewed the results. Dispatchers will be changing from Grade 10 to 11, and the supervisors are going from Grade 13 to 14, which is closer to what other counties are paying. NCEU has not yet approved the job descriptions for dispatcher and dispatch supervisor but that will be discussed with them, along with the Grade changes. Administrator Hart is still trying to get that scheduled with the union, hopefully in September. The increase in pay will take place as soon as approved by the union and Commission. It won't have to wait until a new budget year because with the vacancies that the department has had this year, there is money in the personnel services budget lines to cover the increase for the rest of the year.

- The county administrator has not yet put the deputy director position in the budget draft since it's still being discussed.
- Contractual services is pretty much the same as last year with some minor differences. Went up about \$7,000 total.
- Pay increases are a major part of increase to budget
- Capital items will come from undesignated fund balances so will not be included in assessment to the towns:
 - Option A: IP monitor for Coggins Hill - \$5,167.00 (*currently in the 2017 budget*)
 - Option B: Adding DMR to Consoles - \$1,682.50
 - Option C: Redundant Microwave Path - \$8,191.00 (*currently in the 2017 budget*)
 - Option D: Critical Spare Equipment - \$37,315.00 (*currently in the 2017 budget*)
 - Option E: Battery Replacement Plan - \$8,539.00
 - Option F: Add Hatchet Mountain Simulcast Site - \$104,585.00
- Briefly talked about changes in technology (cell phones etc.) that will increase work load and costs at the Center in the future.

Computer Equipment & IT Issues

One of the issues that came up when the Executive Board met with the staff was that they need new computer monitors because they have a hard time seeing clearly. The employees claim the monitors don't refresh fast enough or get fuzzy. Staff do equipment checks every week but no one has mentioned anything to Director Lothrop about needing new monitors. Director Lothrop said that the issue there is actually the internet, which is currently being worked on to get that fixed. Knox IT is looking at Redzone Wireless, which would will double the Center's internet capacity. Right now the internet speed is dead slow during the day and the screen freezes. It takes too long to go to the next box on a screen that dispatchers should be filling in answers to questions during a call. It was noted that when the GIS person in EMA is doing mapping, that slows down the whole network as well. It was suggested that Director Lothrop send the staff an email asking to know what's wrong with the computer monitors or any other computer equipment to get some feedback. Administrator Hart was asked to find out from the Systems Administrator what it would cost to have designated internet for the KRCC so that the other departmental usage of the internet wouldn't impact the Center. There were some concerns about IT presenting a road block to making necessary changes even though Director Lothrop had offered to help pay for the upgrades. Administrator Hart commented that he wasn't opposed to the idea but wanted to make sure that he would be able to defend it to the Budget Committee, and make sure the County is making the right purchase decisions.

Assistant Direction Position

Administrator Hart asked if the Executive Board wanted him to put the assistant director position in the budget for 2017. If so are, a job description would need to be created and then the Position Classification Committee would have to meet and determine what Grade the position would be in. Executive Board members thought that this was already being worked on because of a prior meeting that the Executive Board had with Administrator Hart and HR consultant Laurie Bouchard, at which Ms. Bouchard had indicated that she would start working on a job description. It was noted that both the dispatchers and the dispatch supervisors supported the creating of the deputy director position at the meetings they held with the Executive Board. Director Lothrop was asked to check with Ms. Bouchard to make sure she hadn't actually already done a job description, and if she hadn't, Director Lothrop will check with other counties to get job descriptions for similar positions, and work to draft a job description himself. The Executive Board will then review the draft before it goes to the Position Classification Committee to determine what Grade the position will be. It was noted that dispatch employees supported the position being non-union.

Tentative Budget Approval

Director Lothrop asked the Board for tentative approval of the KRCC budget draft pending the discussed changes so he could proceed in the right direction. He noted that the Commission will be reviewing the draft with the Commission on September 29th and with the Users Group in October.

- Craig Cooley motioned to put in the three capital items in the 2017 budget draft, as well as the new deputy director position. Adam Miceli seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

2. Discuss Executive Board Meetings with Center Staff.

The Executive Board members that had met with KRCC staff talked about how the meetings went. Some of the issues mentioned:

- Computer monitors
- Internet issues
- Wages
- They said no one looks at the equipment checks (Director Lothrop said that he does)
- They don't necessarily know what Linwood sees – they think maybe their complaints or concerns don't make it past the supervisors
- Lack of consistency in leadership – this would be addressed with the deputy director position
- SOP manual not complete yet (they didn't seem to be aware it's being worked on)
- Communication between levels is not always what it should be
- Staff are afraid to do something because they're afraid they'll be written up
- Very mixed bag of views on the current union

The suggestion was made to Director Lothrop that he sit down with each dispatcher and ask "is there anything we can do at your work station to make your job better?" Sometimes employees just need little things done that can make the overall morale higher. Director Lothrop said that he could do that.

Some of the other ideas mentioned by Executive Board members included doing positive write-ups when employees have done well (instead of just negative ones), and give employees closure after they've handled a big incident, or an upsetting one, so the dispatchers will feel closure about the stressful incident. It was noted that the Executive Board had strongly made the suggestion to the dispatch staff that they research getting their own union separate from the Jail because the dispatch staff are outnumbered by jail staff and don't get anything they want. Director Lothrop commented that he had been told that the staff asked for some informational meetings with a different union that only includes communications employees.

IV. Other BusinessUpcoming Meetings

The next Users Group meeting is on October 19th at 3 p.m. Another Executive Board meeting was not scheduled.

V. Adjourn

- Craig Cooley motioned to adjourn. Jesse Thompson seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Richards
Administrative Assistant