

**JOURNAL OF JOINT CITY-COUNTY COMMISSION SPECIAL WORK SESSION
May 3, 2016**

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 3:00 p.m.

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kelly, Bill Bronson, Bob Jones, Fred Burow and Tracy Houck.

CITY STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Jennifer Reichelt; City Attorney Sara Sexe and Assistant City Attorney Joe Cik; Fiscal Services Director Melissa Kinzler; IT Systems Administrator Tom Pike; Fire Chief Steve Hester; Police Chief Dave Bowen; Communication Supervisor Bill Hunter; and, City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

COUNTY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Briggs, James (Jim) Larson and Jane Weber.

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT: IT Director Shawn Higginbotham, Deputy Sheriff Dave Phillips, and Undersheriff John Stevens.

**** *Action Minutes of the Great Falls City Commission. Please refer to the audio/video recording of this meeting for additional detail.* ****

City Attorney Sara Sexe provided a brief litigation update regarding New World/Tyler Technologies. A lawsuit was filed and a 90-day notice was provided to Tyler Technologies, the successor to New World, Inc. The City's retained attorney Bob Griffen has worked with Tyler Technologies on a stipulation to dismiss the lawsuit without prejudice based on Tyler Technologies' agreement that venue for the litigation would be in Montana. Tyler Technologies has advised that the City of Great Falls is one of 28 priority clients, that Tyler Technologies is trying to work on the 90 known deficiencies or defects with the software, and that it thought 40 of the deficiencies could be fixed within the time remaining in the cure period. If the City hears very soon that there has been significant progress in curing those 90 issues, it would be willing to give Tyler Technologies some leeway in terms of trying to repair the issues that are causing significant performance issues.

She summarized that Tyler Technologies has admitted that it will not be able to cure all of the issues within 90 days. They also promised that if the City decided to move on with a different vendor, they would do what they could to assist the City in terms of transitioning to a new vendor.

City Manager Greg Doyon added that the City and County will need to have a discussion about the addendum and who is responsible for what in terms of the impact if the City and County were to separate from Tyler Technologies. Both entities will need to protect its ability to make sure it had time to transfer to another vendor.

Commissioner Joe Briggs reported that the County has started building the requirements/needs list and doing the systems analysis required.

1. DISCUSSION ON INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR DISPATCH SERVICES

Police Chief Dave Bowen provided and discussed an Emergency Communications Center Strategic Outline for fiscal years 2017 through 2021.

Manager Doyon commented that staffing at the dispatch service has been a challenge, in part because of the nature of the work. The City was having a hard time with recruitment. A wage modification was made, and based on the number of calls another dispatcher was authorized to be hired.

Commissioner Weber suggested that Chief Bowen provide a budget update/breakout to the County within the next four weeks.

Manager Doyon summarized that the expired City/County Interlocal Agreement was sent to the County for comment. The County expressed fundamental business management concerns and indicated a need to get both Commissions together to address those concerns. Manager Doyon recommended discussing management control first. He commented that the City does want to work with the County and it makes sense to do that on many levels. But the City does want to maintain control of the 911 Center.

Commissioner Briggs summarized a series of complaints about dispatch from the Sheriff's Office about the operations. He was told the concerns have not been addressed. The officers continue to tell him that they are treated as "second class citizens" as far as a response goes from dispatch. He further expressed concerns regarding changes that have been made in the expense pattern, such as employee raises, that the County wasn't made aware of. He discussed items that are the County's responsibility and grants that are not included in the cost allocation system. His opinion is the County is sent a bill that it is expected to pay without any input and no acknowledgment of the additional funds that the County provides through grants that the City is not eligible to receive.

Commissioner Weber clarified that the County grant funds provided to the City do not come from the tax payers, and that those funds are benefitting the City and County constituents as a whole because it is for public safety.

Commissioner Briggs again reiterated that he wants the County grants accounted for in the budget.

At a meeting held at the 911 Center a couple of years ago, Manager Doyon informed the County that if issues were not getting resolved to talk to him. Chief Bowen commented that the feedback he was getting is there has been open communication. He thought the problems were handled.

Undersheriff Stevens commented things have gotten better, but he doesn't believe they are where they should be. He noted that he and Communication Supervisor Hunter have an excellent line of communication. But, he still feels the County is secondary when it comes to dispatch.

Manager Doyon again extended the offer to Undersheriff Stevens that if he isn't getting the satisfaction at that level he needs to bump it up to his level.

Commissioner Briggs suggested that the same methodology as what other equipment is allocated at could be used to determine the value of the use of each other's equipment to perform operations.

Mayor Kelly suggested that past costs/events be set aside; that the parties move forward from here on an active level basis based on the things the parties need to do going forward and based on the fact that each party brought a lot to the table in the past. He further suggested starting a new spreadsheet with a fair allocation of expenses going forward based upon the needs.

Commissioner Jones commented he doesn't think there is anything that can't be overcome. The City and County have been great partners for many years. The focus is public safety and the public upon which we serve. He liked the idea of having a user group/advisory board of those who participate in the Center's operations, either delivering goods to the Center or the Center providing information back to them, so that they can appropriately respond, and also have input in the direction in which the Center is going. Further, that the group/board participates in the budget early on before the preliminary budget goes to the City and County Commissions.

Manager Doyon inquired if the County did have input in the budget would the County take input on its 911 quarters usage.

Commissioner Briggs suggested the creation of an independent entity formed by the County and City Commissions so that the employees don't work for either side. He is not proposing the County run dispatch. But, in his research, for the most part in Montana dispatch is run by counties or by a third party entity formed by all of the groups that use the dispatch. He asked of Manager Doyon why it was so important that the City control dispatch.

Commissioner Jones explained the history of how 911 evolved. It has come a long ways. He believes the partnership can work without creating another entity.

Chief Bowen commented that there is a desire on everyone's part to move forward. But the two are at an impasse with regard to control of the budget.

Manager Doyon commented that the County indicated it had issues with some things in the outline. The City wants to continue to advance the way it does business. He recognizes that it may cost a little bit more to do that. If that is the case but it is going to enhance public safety or the safety of officers, then the City is willing to make that investment. He is not sure he is hearing that from the County.

Commissioner Briggs commented that, for example, interoperability renders a large percentage of County area uncovered by radio. That is an operational deficiency with the interoperability system as it exists. He doubts the City Commission would want to help pay for the expansion of the trunking system throughout the low density population areas of the County. Another issue he mentioned was Next Generation 911. There was a draft Interlocal Agreement that had language regarding the user groups having some level of authority over the budget, but that language was struck by the City. That is why he proposed the creation of the third party entity. He, again,

asked why the City feels it was so important that dispatch be City employees.

Manager Doyon responded that he believes the City would do it more effectively, adding that the County's different form of government generates some different characteristics and attributes within the employee pool.

Commissioner Weber suggested the concept be more like how the Airport Authority functions.

Manager Doyon pointed out that the authority in the City Charter is delegated to him to compose the budget.

Undersheriff Stevens suggested that, as a start, the proposal drafted by the users go to the Commissioners for review.

Chief Bowen commented the draft allowed for the advisory board to vote on the budget. Although it sounded good in theory, he wasn't sure voting on the City's budget as an advisory board could be done legally. He expressed concerns about a board run facility.

Manager Doyon suggested that the City/County convene an advisory board and begin meeting on a monthly basis. He also suggested that the City/County Commissions receive a copy of a draft Dispatch Service Agreement previously prepared by City and County personnel for consideration. Finally, Manager Doyon suggested a joint session on the dispatch budget for both Commissions.

Communication Supervisor Hunter likes the idea of a board consisting of all the users to be able to resolve any differences.

Commissioner Briggs commented that City/County computer support and legal support could be provided to that third party, joint entity.

Commissioner Houck recommended that the advisory board prepare task lists of concerns. Commissioner Weber agreed and she elaborated that it might help with better communication from both sides.

Commissioner Larson commented that Undersheriff Stevens' statement that the County is getting second place as far as dispatchers go troubles him.

Undersheriff Stevens commented that he will go back to the advisory board to try to find the agreement. He further reported that he doesn't believe there are any new issues since they came up with a document both parties agreed upon.

In response to Commissioner Larson's concern, Communication Supervisor Hunter explained that the City handles about five times the number of calls that the Sheriff's Department does. The City has one dispatcher. The County has one dispatcher. On occasions, the County may be asked to hold until a call is concluded.

Manager Doyon concluded that he takes his cues from the decision makers and there was consensus to stay under the current model.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal Joint City-County Commission special work session of May 3, 2016 at 4:14 p.m.