

Facility Planning Workshop
of the Policy Board
August 12, 2013

Summary Report

Attending: Pat McCarthy (Pierce County Executive), Joyce McDonald (Pierce County Council), Paul Pastor (Pierce County Sheriff), Joe Lonergan (Tacoma City Council), Marilyn Strickland (City of Tacoma Mayor), Michael Brandstetter (Lakewood City Council), Grant Blinn (West Pierce Fire & Rescue Commissioner), Ron Lucas (Town of Steilacoom Mayor), Rob Masko (Operations Board Chair - PCSO), Faith Mueller (Operations Board Vice-Chair – TFD), Andrew Neiditz (SS911), Joe Quinn (SS911), Rebecca Hendricks (SS911)

The special meeting was called to order at 1:40pm.

- Executive Director Neiditz introduced Operations Board Chair Rob Masko and Vice-Chair Faith Mueller who were in attendance.
- Mr. Neiditz reviewed the purpose of today's meeting. The purpose is not to make a decision or take a vote, but rather to engage the Policy Board in the discussion regarding facility planning. The PSAP Advisory Committee (PAC) and the Operations Board have reviewed several different options prior to bringing the models to the Policy Board. The PAC has been meeting for several months and participated in multiple reviews and value engineering, resulting in reductions of square footage and overall cost.
- The big debate on the facility issue is whether to have two separate and distinct PSAPs (law enforcement/fire), or to have one co-located facility with a back-up. One model, the hybrid campus model, being brought forward today is a compromise in the debate. This model is cost efficient, combines elements of both operating models, and seems to have satisfied most PAC members.
- Mr. Neiditz introduced the facility planning project team: Mark Mears, South Sound 911 project manager, Kevin Kearns, iXP consultant, and Peter Rasmussen, Architects Rasmussen Tribelhorn present at today's meeting. ADCOMM is also part of the consultant team. Mr. Kearns provided the Board with a brief background on the experience of the consultant team. Mr. Kearns has been personally involved with the construction of approximately 6 communication centers, Mr. Rasmussen has worked on 9 and is currently working on a project in Yakima, and ADCOMM has provided engineering services on 24 northwest dispatch centers.
- Mr. Kearns gave a PowerPoint presentation on the facility planning process to date.
- Boardmember Brandstetter asked what process was used to bring the space down in the successive reductions. Mr. Kearns responded that the first round involved re-thinking growth in the administrative and information services (IS) functions. The subsequent rounds reduced conference, training and collaboration space. The emergency operations center (EOC) break-out rooms will provide the primary conferencing space for the PSAP area (when not activated). Further reductions were achieved by reducing break areas and re-envisioning bathrooms and locker rooms.
- Chair McCarthy asked how many employees will be housed in the facility, and if the space allows for growth. Approximately 250 employees will be in the facility and it does allow for growth.

Boardmember Brandstetter asked if the 250 includes all partners. Mr. Neiditz confirmed that it does, and it even includes Puyallup even though their membership is not yet official.

- Boardmember Strickland wondered if it makes more logistical sense and would be safer with two buildings. Mr. Kearns explained there are good arguments for both models; however, most jurisdictions do not have total redundancy and there are very few example in the country. New communications centers are planned and engineered with a level of redundancy onsite. Most jurisdictions go with one solid, hardened facility and another competent back-up. If South Sound 911 goes with the co-located PSAP, a back-up will be needed.
- Boardmember Lonergan asked if the models included the public functions of South Sound 911. Mr. Kearns acknowledged they do and that is a very challenging issue because of the different population and business needs. Mr. Lonergan is concerned that having both the communications center and the public access could increase security risks. Mr. Kearns believes a benefit of the hybrid campus model is that it lowers the risk as the communication center is not attached to the dispatch center, and the design and topography can maximize safety.
- Chair McCarthy asked why the single building is more expensive than the hybrid campus model. Mr. Kearns explained that communication centers cost more as there are increased standards, building codes, etc. that must be complied with. The admin/IS building is still secure, but doesn't require the same level of redundancy.
- Boardmember Brandstetter questioned why both buildings are on the same campus. Mr. Kearns replied that costs would be higher if two parcels had to be acquired; it is more efficient to have one "building footprint." Mr. Brandstetter commented that the admin/IS building doesn't necessarily have to be a new building, but could be a renovated building. Mr. Kearns agreed, but pointed out that if the buildings are too far apart the square footage of each will go up because the PSAP will need IT and other support functions and staff that are currently only housed in the admin/IS building.
- Chair McCarthy is struggling with the square footage of the admin/IS/records building. She commented that the County is planning construction of a new admin building with 1000 employees and the cost is estimated at less.
- Boardmember McDonald asked if the cost was factored at a standard design bid build costs. Mr. Kearns acknowledged it is. The cost estimates assume a traditional approach to construction.
- Boardmember Lucas asked several questions.
 1. Is the fitness area new, and when does staff use area? Mr. Kearns commented that a fitness area is part of every communications center he sees and staff uses before or after work, it is not on paid time. LESA previously had a fitness area but it had to be repurposed due to lack of space.
 2. Mr. Lucas asked for some explanation/reasoning for the EOC. Mr. Neiditz admitted that the EOC is not an integral part of a communications center. Tacoma feels the need to have a municipal EOC to have parallel, complementary operations to the County EOC. A number of cities have opted out of the County DEM contract. Mr. Neiditz has had a number of discussions with the Tacoma City Manager and the Tacoma Fire Chief, and he believes with the new leadership at DEM the issue should be revisited. The EOC is currently a placeholder and is not developed or equipped.
 3. Mr. Lucas would like information on the staff support and shared space. This includes restrooms, lockers, storage, janitor closets, maintenance work rooms, kitchen, and bunk areas.

4. Mr. Lucas would like a list of the specific legal requirements for construction. Mr. Kearns confirmed that would be included in the final report.
 5. Mr. Lucas is under the impression that the IT space should be shrinking because of advances in smaller technology. Mr. Kearns explained that in communication centers the individual servers are smaller, but now there are clusters of servers and space isn't reduced. There are also a plethora of systems, including those for data and phone, which are on a 3-5 year replacement cycle, so space is needed to be able to stage and switch out the equipment.
- Boardmember McDonald asked if a 24-hour shift requires extra space. She is concerned with dispatchers working 24-hour shifts and hopes that will change in the future. Mr. Neiditz commented this is one of the many organizational issues. Currently we have dispatchers on 8, 12 and 24 hour shifts. Tacoma Fire and Fire Comm both have 24 hour shifts in their collective bargaining agreements and South Sound 911 is inheriting those contracts.
 - Chair McCarthy voiced her support for 24 hour shifts and the fitness center. She is struggling with the EOC, because she feels it is redundant of the County EOC. She would like to see South Sound 911 build a collaborative relationship with DEM.
 - Boardmember Brandstetter believes the public has an expectation beyond something new and better technology, but also efficiencies. He appreciates the challenge of bringing groups together with different contracts, but trusts that with time, finesse and political will, efficiencies can be achieved.
 - Operations Chair Masko sees that everyone seems to be in agreement on the EOC, so the right people need to come together to make it happen.
 - Chair McCarthy asked about costs for other facilities in the region. Mr. Kearns voiced concerned that some may be focusing on numbers only and not realizing the comparisons are not "apples to apples." For the King County facility, if all costs are included and the escalation costs of construction are factored in, it is essentially the same numbers. A lot of jurisdictions are not even able to really state what the total project costs were because it was not tracked that way. Mr. Neiditz commented that the costs publicized may only be construction costs and may not include land.
 - Mr. Neiditz informed Board that the "delivery process" for construction has not been decided. He is meeting with the National Development Council on 6320 funding (public/private partnership) next week. Janet Caviezel has been running scenarios on debt service. There is currently no agreed-upon timeline for the facility, but Mr. Neiditz feels that the agency needs to commit to the project by the end of summer.
 - Mr. Lonergan asked when the consultant's final report will be distributed. Mr. Kearns said it should be ready in about two weeks.
 - Chair McCarthy was not aware that others had been on site visits, and would like Policy Board members to attend a visit. She is concerned with the rumor that South Sound 911 is building a "Taj Mahal" and wants to dispel that notion.
 - Boardmember Lonergan has been hearing that the public expects two facilities. He doesn't know if that actually reflects true sentiment, but does believe that the public wants effective and efficient services that work. Boardmember Pastor shared that the original idea was a single co-located facility, but at the time it didn't seem possible to unite police and fire, so two facilities were proposed. Chair McCarthy understood the rationale for two facilities was to achieve redundancy and if redundancy can be achieved, then a single facility meets that need.

Mr. Neiditz believes attitudes have changed. The hybrid campus model allows the fire PSAP to be somewhat separate to allow for the distinct nature of fire dispatch. Mr. Neiditz understands fire and police dispatch are not interchangeable and is sensitive to those concerns. He feels that the hybrid model can work.

- Operations Vice-Chair Mueller reminded the Board that the Tacoma Fire dispatch is bargained work and the members were instrumental for South Sound 911's inception.
- Several members engaged in a discussion of the work flow of call-taking/dispatching. Ms. Strickland would like a simple flow chart of how call answering works and where the calls go. Staff are planning to bring forward a reporting update and can include that information.
- Mr. Neiditz recapped the requests/concerns from today to include:
 1. Further discussion on EOC
 2. Square footage on admin/IS building
 3. Potential site visits
- Chair McCarthy revisited the issue of a site visit, and encouraged Policy Board members' attendance. Boardmembers Lonergan, Pastor, Blinn and Lucas volunteered to attend. Mr. Neiditz's office will arrange. Ms. Strickland would like some information on recently constructed facilities, perhaps a virtual tour of the new San Antonio dispatch center.
- Chair McCarthy would like the finance committee to review the numbers, especially in light of the increased cost of the radios project.
- Mr. Neiditz reported that the Operations Board did endorse the hybrid campus model and directed commencement of the site acquisition process.
- Chair McCarthy requested that the Policy Board continue to be informed and that the process should not get ahead of the Policy Board.

Meeting adjourned at 3:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Hendricks