

**RIVERCOM ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD MEETING**  
**Wenatchee City Council Chambers, Wenatchee, Washington**  
**Wednesday, December 10, 2008**

Board Present: Dennis Johnson, Mayor, City of Wenatchee; Dane Keane, Douglas County Commissioner; Wayne Barnhart, Councilmember, City of East Wenatchee; Jim Brown, Sgt, Wenatchee Police Department (Users Group).

Ex-Officio Members Present: Tom Robbins, Chief, Wenatchee Police Department; Ron Hupp, on behalf of Sheriff Harum, Chelan County Sheriff's Office; Harvey Gjesdal, Sheriff, Douglas County Sheriff's Office; Dennis Ashmore, Chief, Chelan County Fire District 7; Keith Vrandenburg, Mayor, City of Entiat.

Present: Millie Tirapelle, Wendy Perry, Susan Nova, Jerry Corder, Monica Miller, Renee VanBuskirk and Karen Bull, RiverCom; Doug Hall and Merle Root, Day Wireless.

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Introductions: Members and attendees were introduced.

Approval of the Meeting Agenda: The agenda for December 9, 2008 was approved by consensus.

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes for October 8, 2008 were reviewed by the Board.

**Motion: Councilmember Barnhart moved to approve the October 8, 2008 minutes, Sgt. Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Voucher and Payroll Approval: Phil Mosher reviewed the November 2008 vouchers for the Board.

**Motion: Commissioner Keane made a motion to approve vouchers and payroll for October and November 2008, motion seconded by Sgt. Brown and it passed unanimously.**

Board Chairman's Report: Chairman Johnson read a letter of appreciation from the RiverCom Administrative Board and Employees for outgoing Commissioner Dane Keane. The letter thanked him for his positive contributions as a founding member of the RiverCom Board and praised him for his foresight and common sense. Commissioner Keane was also given an engraved clock in appreciation of his service to the Board.

Director's Report:

Site Updates:

Director Tirapelle commended the RiverCom Technical Division for the amazing amount of work accomplished over the last year by Jerry Corder, John Fleckenstein and Ron Kuch.

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*Blag* – Director Tirapelle reported that the new tower has been installed. Some of the radio equipment has been moved, with the majority of the work scheduled for next Spring. The final bill for the project is included in the vouchers for this month.

*Keystone* – The building expansion has been completed and the metal debris has been removed from the site. The final paperwork for this project has been submitted to the Department of Natural Resources. (DNR).

*Round Mountain* – The antenna has been re-located (higher) on the pole and stabilized. Some minimal work will be needed in the Spring to finish the project.

*Lower Badger* – The power source has been reworked. There is now plenty of generator capacity for the long-term running.

*Upper Badger* – RiverCom will purchase and locate a temporary radio equipment facility at the Douglas County PUD site over the winter months.

911 Funding:

The equipment that controls the radio portion of the RiverCom consoles was acquired from the consolidating agencies and dates back to 1997. The equipment is obsolete and starting to fail. Last month one controller stopped working. Jerry's group worked for a week trying to fix it. Motorola said they were unable to make the repairs, but offered the name of a retired consultant who spent a week rebuilding it. Our technicians now have the instructions to make the repairs themselves, but the concern is that the equipment is simply wearing out. Director Tirapelle complimented Jerry Corder for the professional job he has done this year.

The State E911 Program Office commissioned a study by Kimball and Associates to determine how much it costs to operate E911 statewide. They determined the cost to be \$174 million of which \$113 million is born by the local entities. Over the years the effectiveness of the telephone tax dollar has diminished by 34%. The study recommended the telephone tax should be increased to \$1.65 per broadband device. The International Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) legislative groups have drafted a Bill, with the backing of WA State Senator, Brenda Fraser, to raise the tax. The telephone company lobbyists must support the Bill in order for it to be successful. The telephone companies said they will support the Bill if, 1) salary assistance is eliminated and 2) one pay-point is established. The State E911 Program has already been paring down funds available for salaries over the last few years. State E911 salary assistance for RiverCom is \$756,963 annually. Currently, there is a local County Ordinance that allows the local telephone tax revenue to be paid directly to each County. The APCO/NENA lobbyist feels the Bill should change the "tax" to a WA State "fee". All funds, local and state, would be subject to OFM's 20% administrative charge. There is concern that if the revenue became a WA State "fee" it could be easily redistributed to cover general budget shortfalls. Also, Director Tirapelle expressed concern that at the last hour elimination of salary reimbursements could be the carrot that gets the increased tax/fee Bill passed.

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Mayor Johnson asked if the Association of Washington Counties had been contacted. Director Tirapelle said the APCO/NENA legislative group is scheduled to meet with the interested parties on January 21, 2009.

Director Tirapelle is Vice-Chair of the State E911 Policy Committee. The committee will be developing the funding policy for regionalized 911 centers. Director Tirapelle requested that the RiverCom Board meeting be moved up a week in January so that she can attend the next State 911 Policy Committee meeting.

Commissioner Keane informed the Board that Mary Hunt is the new chair of WSAC. His concern is that this has become a financial issue without consideration for the loss of life that may occur. Director Tirapelle noted that some of the smaller counties that previously stood beside us on funding issues are no longer active due to the passage of their local 1/10 of 1% sales tax. Mayor Johnson suggested that Director Tirapelle meet with Mary Hunt. The RiverCom staff will also meet with the Douglas County Commissioners.

Director Tirapelle stated that the RiverCom User Group spent most of their meeting yesterday looking at the language for the 1/10th of 1% sales tax measure. The language would need to be accepted by the RiverCom Board and then go to the two Boards of County Commissioners for placement on the ballot.

Administrative Service Manager Report:

Budget Update:

Wendy Perry reported that even though we did not have a Board meeting last month, the vouchers were routed to the members for signatures. The totals for payroll including benefits were: \$193,530.02 for October and \$199,932.45 for November, which included the comp-time, buy out on December 5th. The total voucher amount for October M & O was \$59,081.24 and Capital was \$50,870.19. Totals for November M & O are \$32,584.14 and for Capital \$226,040.12. The Capital items for both October and November included large bills from Valmont for the Blag Mountain Project. Expenditures from the General Fund total 86.9% of the budgeted amount. Expenditures from the Capital Project Fund, without the Valmont expenditures included, total 41.5% of the budgeted amount. After posting the Valmont bill (which was received today) Capital expenditures will be at 91.64% and General Fund expenditures will be at 87% of the budgeted amount. Included in the Board packets was a copy of the RiverCom bond payment wire sent in November to the Bank of New York.

Mayor Johnson commended Administrative Services Manager Wendy Perry and staff on the great job keeping the budget on target for the year at approximately 87%.

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**Staffing Update:**

Wendy Perry said Jessica DeMyer has completed the in-house training academy and did very well. She is now assigned to on-the-job-training (OJT) with one of the Shift Supervisors. Jessica has worked in many multi-tasking positions, most recently at Central Washington Hospital Admitting, and her husband is a Deputy for Douglas County. We have one more candidate moving through the background process; upon completion we will be fully staffed.

The Board discussed meeting with other government agencies and supporting RiverCom by appearing before the legislature regarding the funding issues. Councilman Barnhart recommended that Director Tirapelle present the funding information to the East Wenatchee City Council and other local agencies. Commissioner Keane said that gathering citizen testimonies as to how they have been helped personally by RiverCom would be of great value.

User Group Update: Jim Brown and Phil Mosher said that the majority of the discussion at the last User Group meeting was regarding the 1/10 of 1%, which will be discussed further in this Board Meeting by Director Tirapelle.

Good of the Order:

Director Tirapelle presented a draft Resolution and Funding Agreement related to the imposition of a one-tenth of one percent sales tax. Both documents will need to be adopted by the RiverCom Board in order to start the ballot measure process. Director Tirapelle confirmed operating expenses such as salaries can be funded by the sales tax revenue. If the tax is passed in 2009, the revenue would be applied to the 2010 budget. In 2010, the State E911 Program will require RiverCom to transition to a NG911 VIPER telephone system (our portion of the upgrades to support VIPER will be approximately \$150,000); the Motorola radio control equipment will need to be upgraded at \$700,000 and in keeping with the Sparling Engineering Study, the next phase of the field radio project will require \$500,000 to \$600,000. The Funding Agreement states that in the first year, 2010, RiverCom would use the tax revenue for both Operations and Capital Improvement projects ; the second year through the fourth year 20% of revenue collected would go toward M&O (thereby reducing User's fees) and 80% would go toward Capital with the caveat that in the second full year of revenue collection, User agencies could apply to the User Committee for shared financial assistance for projects that would facilitate improved integration with RiverCom including radios, repeaters and software not to exceed 15%.

Councilman Barnhart questioned if there was a sunset clause. Director Tirapelle said she had looked at other agencies and only Spokane had added a 10-year sunset clause and the rest were open-ended. Councilman Barnhart questioned the wisdom of using dollar amounts in the funding agreement and recommended that they not be included. Mayor Johnson agreed that 2008 dollars may not be applicable to the dollars when actually received. He also cautioned

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using 100% in the first year, because if something should happen to salaries we may need a portion of the sales tax. Director Tirapelle noted the Funding Agreement language needs to be firm enough to prevent misunderstandings as to its use, as the Board membership evolves.

Director Tirapelle said she will have the documents ready for the Board to take action at their next meeting.

Mayor Johnson said that everyone is going to be faced with funding problems. Mental Health is appearing before the Chelan County Commissioners on Monday to request the 1/10 of 1% sales tax to assist their program. Director Tirapelle said the Chelan County Commissioners recommended including RiverCom and Mental Health together on a sales tax measure. Director Tirapelle said Dennis Ashmore suggested it would be helpful to have some of our Users at the Chelan County Commissioner's meeting to answer any questions they may have.

Mayor Johnson asked what would happen if the tax was approved by only one county. Director Tirapelle said that the money would then have to be applied for services for that one county. The first year the funds would be used for getting the dispatch center stabilized. The second to the fifth year 20% would go toward M&O of the user fees and 80% would go to Capital for the county that adopted the tax. Mayor Johnson suggested that we use a two-year period for Capital improvements, because it may take that long to complete the projects.

Director Tirapelle said that Jim Brown will be leaving the Board and Phil Mosher will be taking his place as the voting member for the User Group. The new chair of the User Group will be Karl Jonasson. Mayor Johnson thanked Sgt. Brown for his contribution to the Board. The grievance hearing will be held at Executive Session following the January 7, 2009 meeting.

Director Tirapelle said that the dispatchers have received a lot of commendations and have done some amazing work using available technology. In one incident while trying to locate a hiker, the dispatchers were able to triangulate the location and plot it on a map for Search & Rescue. She will put a compilation of these incidents in the next Board packet.

Mayor Johnson requested that 2009 Board elections be added to the agenda for January as well as recognition of outgoing Ex-Officio member Doug Williams.

On behalf of the Board, Mayor Johnson offered thanks to all the RiverCom employees for their fine work performed in support of the residents of the two counties. He recalled the past year's fires, the Stehekin plane crash and lives saved.

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Adjournment: The regularly scheduled meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

The next RiverCom Board meeting will be changed to:

**Wednesday, January 7, 2009 at 10:30 a.m.**

RiverCom Administrative Board Members:

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Mayor Dennis Johnson, Chairman

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Commissioner Dane Keane

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Commissioner Keith Goehner

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Councilmember Wayne Barnhart

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Sgt. Jim Brown

Motions:

Councilmember Barnhart moved to approve the October 8, 2008 minutes. Sgt. Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Keane made a motion to approve vouchers and payroll for October and November 2008. Sgt. Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Staff Assignments:

Director Tirapelle was directed to make modifications to the one-tenth of one percent sales tax Funding Agreement, as discussed by the Board, and to redistribute the draft prior to the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.