



Warren County Department of Public Safety

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Senate Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee

Senate Communications & Technology Committee

Senate Law & Justice Committee

Hearing on the status of the Statewide Radio P25 Project

Good Morning Chairman Vulakovich, Chairman Costa, Chairman McIlhinney, Chairman Brewster, Chairman Aument, Chairman Haywood and Members of the Committees. My name is Todd Lake, Director of Public Safety for Warren County, Pennsylvania. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the impending relationship between the Pennsylvania State Radio Network and Warren County.

Warren County has an aging radio system including some high use base station radios that were purchased in the late 1980's. Most of our system is connected with aging and issue latent "old" copper line circuits. Over the years Warren County has had excellent cooperation with our State and Federal partners to be able to communicate with the 911 center. Now our 911 Center has the capability to communicate with our local Fire, Police, EMS, surrounding Counties and the State Police, PennDOT, DCNR, State Parole, Game Commission, Fish and Boat Commission and on the Federal side with the US Forest Service Law Enforcement Division. The problem lies in that any interoperability amongst the first responders needed to be coordinated through the 911 Center by patching radios together in the dispatch consoles. First Responders from different disciplines didn't have direct connectivity with an interoperable channel to use.

A new reliable, interoperable communications system amongst public safety users within Warren County, as well as establishing better interoperability between neighboring counties and state agencies was in need. Replacing the entire system of Dispatch Consoles, Tower Site Base Stations, and end user equipment such as, bases, mobile and portable radios had a ballpark figure of 6 to

7 million dollars. This didn't include upgrading to better connectivity to our tower sites, such as fiber and/or microwave connections. Warren County's tax base could not absorb that type of cost.

Working with Major Stackhouse, Director Barnham and Motorola Solutions we have come to the solution of a County and State partnership using the State Radio Network. Warren County will need to upgrade its dispatch consoles to an IP based product and then be able to connect into the State Radio network. Once we have that connectivity we can have full communication with State Agencies using the State system. At that point we can begin the replacement of the end user equipment of first responders. The bottom line for this to be completed is about 1.8 million dollars. That is a cost savings to the tax payers of at least 4 million dollars. Besides the one-time cost of the system savings, there is going to be substantial savings for the County in reoccurring connectivity and maintenance cost associated with the system.

The only thing that Warren County is not going to be upgrading is the voice paging system to the volunteer fire departments. We are going to be keeping our high-profile sites to be able to do voice paging for up to a couple years. The hope is to be able to transition to the public safety grade FirstNet digital system. As that system gets fully implemented and robust the need for volunteers to carry multiple pieces of equipment will become obsolete.

As some of you may know, Warren County is one of ten counties in the Northern Tier 911 County Consortium. Our Consortium on the 911 side has saved State tax payers millions of dollars by our forward-thinking members and our consultant MCM Consulting. When connectivity is made between the StarNet and our Regional ESINet there will be many more cooperative avenues opened up. This includes being able to have equipment installed at PSP Barracks for our regional telephone system. Calls can be transferred directly and not reenter the "public" side to the telephony world where there is a chance of them being "lost" Another cooperative initiative could be a fully functional or view only CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) workstation for situational awareness.

Ever since the pilot program started in Warren County I have been fielding calls from other Counties asking how the cooperation with the State Radio Office has been. I am extremely pleased to report to you I am not sure how it could be any better. On behalf of myself and my County Commissioners we look forward to this partnership lasting on and on.

It has been an honor and privilege to provide testimony before your committees.

I would be happy to address any questions.