

City of Decorah Public Safety Committee
Monday, November 18, 2019 – 5:00pm.

The City of Decorah Public Safety Committee met on Monday, November 18, 2019 at 5:00pm. Chairman Steve Luse called the meeting to order and the following answered roll: Ross Hadley, Johanna Bergan, and Andy Carlson. Mayor Lorraine Borowski and Emily Neal were also in attendance.

Others in attendance: Winneshiek County Sheriff Dan Marx, Fire Chief Mike Ashbacher, Jeff Ode, Zach Kerndt, First Assistant Chief Jeff Clement, Kyle Kohls, City Clerk / Treasurer Wanda Hemesath, and City Manager Chad Bird.

Agenda

1. Update on city / county dispatch services

Sheriff Marx opened by stating the transition of dispatch to the County Emergency Management Commission is continuing to move with the Wednesday, November 13 vote of the EMC to accept the dispatch operations and to formulate a plan to levy a county wide tax for operations and capital equipment for the 911 communications aspect.

Marx and Borowski noted the next steps include notification to the employee union bargaining group that the city intends to discontinue dispatch operations.

Luse and Borowski stated the city, county, and EMC will need to enter into at least one, but maybe two 28e agreements to make the transition complete. Marx noted the two issues to codify in a 28e include forming a joint management team for the transitional period and operations of the center and one for the ongoing financial support and management.

Marx and Borowski discussed conversation about forming a joint management team through 28e by January 1, 2020 to assist with the transition, then the other 28e would come by July 1, 2020 to codify the financial aspects of the agreement.

Marx and Borowski shared that the management team, mostly Sean Snyder worked up this overview (below) of the discussions so far.

- 1. The city of Decorah initiated discussions with the Winneshiek County Emergency Management Commission to assume management of the Decorah Communications Center in an effort to provide for more efficient operations and equitable financing of dispatching services throughout Winneshiek County. This center provides for all 911 emergency, as well as non-emergency calls, throughout the county.*
- 2. The Winneshiek County Emergency Management Commission is comprised of each Mayor from the incorporated communities within Winneshiek County, the county Sheriff, and one member of the Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors.*
- 3. The current operational annual budget of the Decorah Communications Center is based off a "annual call for service model" split between the Decorah Police Department and the Winneshiek County Sheriff's Office.*
- 4. Not all emergency response departments contribute to the annual operating dispatch budget.*
- 5. A new proposed model would allow for a more equitable cost share between the city of Decorah, the Winneshiek County Sheriff's Office and the Winneshiek County Emergency Management Commission.*
- 6. Through a countywide EMA levy, we would increase property taxes by 18 cents per thousand across Winneshiek County. In doing this 18-cent increase, we are now able to make dispatch more equitable and improve our current 911 system infrastructure. This infrastructure includes four potential 911 communication towers and all of their equipment.*
- 7. Both the city of Decorah and the Winneshiek County Emergency Management Commission continue to look for ways to create a better continuation of government.*

Luse closed this portion of the committee meeting by thanking all those involved for their time.

2. City vehicle and equipment use policy

Bird reviewed this item initially and stated he had completed a review of both the equipment policy and the vehicle use policy with the City's worker's compensation insurance carrier and the City's property and casualty / risk management insurance carrier. Bird confirmed both entities and the City Attorney's office recommended language that would provide for use of fire apparatus for funerals but were firm that city vehicles should not be for personal use. Specifically, risk management and work comp representatives stated they do not recommend use of fire apparatus for weddings.

Bird noted he amended the policies and kept notations or changes in red.

Neal asked why the fire department couldn't use trucks for weddings and could there be guidelines developed? Borowski asked if there could be a formalized approval process.

Luse stated he would stand by the insurance representatives and consultants and their position on personal use.

Hadley advocated for a dispatch protocol that should be implemented to record when the trucks go out of the station.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 5:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

