

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
**INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION**

Date: October 2, 2013

To: Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr., Co-Chair, Finance, Personnel and Audit Cte  
Supervisor David Cullen, Co-Chair, Finance, Personnel and Audit Cte  
Supervisor Theo Lipscomb, Sr., Chair, Judiciary, Safety, and General Services  
Cte

From: Chris Lindberg, Chief Information Officer, IMSD

Subject: Informational Report: Public Safety Radio System Migration (WO614 –  
Build Out Ten Sites to Digital)

**ISSUE**

Milwaukee County, through the Department of Administrative Services – Information Management Services Division (IMSD), provides oversight and management of the Milwaukee County public safety radio system. The system is an analog 800MHz trunked simulcast radio system that provides support to the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department, Milwaukee County Transit System, Department of Public Works, Zoo, Parks and first responder agencies (police/fire/EMS) of seventeen municipalities throughout the region. The system began as a single site, 8-channel, analog trunked system. Between 1993 and 2000 the system ultimately grew to its current state, a nine site, 14 channel system with approximately 4,200 subscriber radios.

Due to age and outdated design, the Milwaukee County radio system has become both difficult and expensive to maintain. Many system components of the current radio system are no longer manufactured nor supported which renders Milwaukee County at a critical point where the radio system must be replaced. As part of the approved 2010 and the 2013 Capital Budget, the County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive approved capital project WO614, Build-Out Ten Sites to Digital.

**BACKGROUND**

Over the years, IMSD has been actively exploring opportunities with the City of Milwaukee, surrounding counties and the state of Wisconsin in order to promote interoperability and intergovernmental cooperation in the public safety communication arena. Early on, it was discovered that Waukesha County is on track to replace its aging radio infrastructure and migrate to the same technology, an 800 MHz digital simulcast trunked radio system, within a similar time frame as Milwaukee County. Through initial analysis by Waukesha and Milwaukee Counties of cross border communications (and later validated by the communications consulting firm), it was concluded that a regional approach to 800MHz trunked radio would enhance the safety of Milwaukee and Waukesha County agencies by providing borderless radio system coverage. Studies indicated that a resulting unified system would not only promote interoperability and intergovernmental cooperation, but also expand wide-area coverage, improve reliability, and likely do so at lower end-user operating and programming costs than if the two systems remain isolated.

In May of 2012, the County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive authorized

IMSD to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and partner with Waukesha County Department of Emergency Preparedness/Radio Services (Waukesha County) to jointly retain the services of a communications consulting firm. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued and Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties contracted with CDX Wireless Inc. (CDX). CDX was contracted to understand and document Milwaukee County and Waukesha County public safety communication requirements, to describe alternative radio infrastructure design and implementation concepts, to develop documentation for the technical specifications, to calculate budgets (both capital and on-going) and to draft and assist in administering a RFP for the replacement of each aging radio system.

### CURRENT STATE

In November of 2012, CDX completed the study of the Bi-County radio system and an RFP was let on April 12, of 2013. The RFP was sent to nine (9) radio vendors, advertised through the Daily Reporter and posted on the Milwaukee and Waukesha County Websites. Three respondents representing four different manufacturers of radio technology submitted proposals. Proposals were rated based on technology, cost, experience/qualifications, implementation and thoroughness in response as it relates to project plan and support.

Upon review of the proposals during September, 2013, it was determined that Motorola, Inc. was the responsive, responsible vendor who scored the highest total on the evaluation criteria.

In August, 2013, at the direction of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Council of Milwaukee County (ICC), Milwaukee County was asked to participate in communication sessions along with three (3) municipal mayors (or their representative), representatives from the Milwaukee County fire association, Milwaukee County police association and staff members from the State Department of Transportation and the Office of Justice Assistance to:

- gain an understanding of the state radio system (WISCOM) and to evaluate potential opportunities,
- to educate participating committee members on the proposed Milwaukee/Waukesha Bi-County radio system

The major outcome from these meetings was the cementing of Mutual Understandings and Agreements between Milwaukee County and WISCOM (Attachment A) and the affirmation that Milwaukee County is on the right path with the Bi-County radio system. At the final meeting Milwaukee County communicated, and re-affirmed with the participants, the intent to continue the radio replacement/digital migration path with Waukesha County.

IMSD has prepared a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document that addresses, at a high level, the radio project goals, County and WISCOM communications, Interoperability, potential system costs, governance of the Milwaukee County system, and general information regarding WISCOM and their radio supplier, EF Johnson. This document has been included for your review. Please see Attachment B.

NEXT STEPS

Over the next few weeks, IMSD, with the assistance of the Department of Administrative Services and Corporation Counsel, will negotiate a procurement contract with Motorola Inc. It is anticipated that the contract will be complete and submitted to the County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive for approval in the December cycle.

RECOMMENDATION

The Chief Information Officer respectfully requests this report to be received and placed on file.

Prepared by:

Approved by:

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Laurie Panella, IMSD

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Chris Lindberg, IMSD

Deputy Chief Information Officer

Chief Information Officer

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