

MINUTES OF THE
MAG 9-1-1 OVERSIGHT TEAM MEETING

February 23, 2005
MAG Office Building, Palo Verde Room
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Harry Beck, Mesa Fire Department, Chair	Helen Gandara-Zavala, Scottsdale Police Department
Pat Berkel for Mark Burdick, Glendale Fire Department	Jay Spradling, Tempe Police Department
Mary Millard for Steve Werner, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office	* Lawrence Rodriguez, Tolleson Police Department
Mike Fusco, Emergency Management, Peoria	Susan MacFarlane for the Phoenix Fire Department
* Dave Faulkner, Phoenix Police Department	

* Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.

Attended by telephone conference call.

+ Attended by videoconference call.

OTHERS PRESENT

Mike Benjamin, Phoenix Fire Department	Tom Melton, Scottsdale Police Department
Valerie Day, MAG	
Mary Dysinger-Franklin, Phoenix Fire Dept.	
Dave Eaton, Phoenix Fire Department	

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Harry Beck, at 1:35 p.m. Chairman Beck introduced proxies for the meeting: Pat Berkel for Mark Burdick and Mary Millard for Steve Werner.

2. Call to the Audience

An opportunity is provided to the public to address the 911 Oversight Team on items that are not on the agenda that are within the jurisdiction of MAG, or non-action agenda items that are on the agenda for discussion or information only. Citizens will be requested not to exceed a three minute time period for their comments. A total of 15 minutes will be provided for the Call to the Audience agenda item, unless the Oversight Team requests an exception to this limit. Opportunities for comment on items posted for action are provided at the time the item is heard. Chairman Beck noted that no public comment cards had been turned in.

3. Approval of the August 26, 2004 Meeting Minutes

Mike Fusco moved to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2004 meeting. Jay Spradling seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. System Activation Fee for the MAG Community Emergency Notification System (CENS)

No requests were received for public comment.

Susan MacFarlane updated the committee on the annual report for the CENS program. Ms. MacFarlane stated that CENS was launched 15 times during 2004 for events such as environmental leaks, fires, hostage incidents, and missing children and Alzheimer's patients. She indicated that the program has been effective. After one launch in Apache Junction, residents came out of their homes at 11:00 p.m. to assist public safety personnel in looking for a missing person. Ms. MacFarlane noted that CENS notifications are time sensitive and are more effective if notifications are made immediately. She said that there was discussion to use CENS during the Phoenix water incident. Ms. MacFarlane indicated that the notification would have taken more than 30 hours to call 900,000 phones. In that case, the media was a more effective tool for such a large notification.

Jay Spradling stated that the subgroup of the 911 Oversight Team reviewed the issue of agencies paying for CENS activations. He commented that CENS is an expensive program to maintain and has limited funds. Mr. Spradling stated that the subgroup recommended that an agency activating the CENS system will pay for its activations effective July 1, 2005. In addition, the subgroup also recommended that the 911 office continue pursuing taking over the database. He stated that currently, the cost for the database is approximately \$52,000 per month, and one option to do the work in-house could reduce that cost to \$14,000. Mr. Spradling stated that the cost of a CENS notification at 46 cents per minute is nominal when compared to door-to-door notification by personnel. Ms. MacFarlane noted that the average cost of an activation in 2004 was approximately \$300-\$400 with a completion rate of 68 percent. She added that there is no charge for activations for endangered children and elderly.

Mr. Spradling stated that there are additional opportunities for CENS activations. He indicated that increased awareness among personnel would increase usage of CENS.

Chairman Beck asked Ms. MacFarlane to expand on opportunities to decrease the maintenance cost. Ms. MacFarlane stated that the 911 office is actively negotiating with the vendor on options to reduce the monthly fee. She added that this would mean more work for the 911 team, who is working diligently on wireless implementation. Chairman Beck asked if staff might be needed. Ms. MacFarlane replied that it is too early in the process to know. If MAG 911 accepts control of the 911 database, then staff will be needed to maintain it.

Chairman Beck stated that there could be concerns that the \$52,000 monthly cost could be passed to MAG agencies as an assessment. He commented that it is difficult to say where program funding will be three to four years from now. Chairman Beck stated that it would be a good option to increase awareness of the use of the system. He said that showing a progression in usage is helpful.

Ms. MacFarlane stated that good feedback was received on the leak that recently took place at Fifth Avenue and Monroe Street in Phoenix. She said that the notification went like clockwork and the good publicity increased the awareness of the system, which counteracted the editorial in The Arizona Republic about the water situation.

Mr. Spradling moved to recommend approval that an agency activating the CENS system will pay for its activations and that the 911 Office continue to find cost saving measures so the system will be able to provide service for the citizens of the MAG Region. Mr. Fusco seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Wireless Phase I and II Implementation

Ms. MacFarlane provided an update on the status of implementing Phase I and Phase II in the MAG Region. She said that two selective routers have been installed at Phoenix Fire and the Mesa Command Center and circuits are being brought in to connect to the routers. Ms. MacFarlane stated that connectivity testing might take place in the next week. She stated that Liz Hunt will be training all 1,000 dispatchers in the Valley on wireless routing. Ms. MacFarlane added that the six-week training will begin on March 16 in different geographic locations throughout the region. She indicated that there would also be a makeup session for those who could not attend the session in their area. Ms. MacFarlane advised that some agencies will send a couple of staff, who will then train other staff at their agency. She stated that on April 18, the first wireless carrier, Alltel, will conduct drive testing at their cell towers. Ms. MacFarlane stated that completion of testing is anticipated by May 9. She remarked that staff hopes that staggering the tests among providers will help in avoiding call centers being inundated with calls. She added that MAG 911 is on track for deployment.

Chairman Beck asked the time frame for completion. Ms. MacFarlane replied that would depend on testing times, but completion in mid-summer is anticipated. She added that this might be followed by migrating off Qwest to our own system.

Chairman Beck suggested issuing a press release and/or conducting a public awareness campaign after 95 percent of carriers are on board. Ms. MacFarlane noted that a few of the local television stations are very interested in wireless implementation and have expressed interest in shooting a story.

Chairman Beck asked if 911 would transfer addresses to the receiving agencies. Ms. MacFarlane replied that this will translate on mapping, which has been in place for 10 months. She advised that the 911 Office did this ahead of time so that when wireless implementation came along, staff would be familiar with the technology.

Mr. Melton asked about VoIP. Ms. MacFarlane replied that some offered VoIP. She indicated that a lot of the VoIP companies use Intrado to pass calls along. Ms. MacFarlane stated that VoIP is not regulated by the FCC nor is it taxed.

Chairman Beck asked the status of funding for the project at the statewide level. Ms. MacFarlane replied that MAG 911 has spent the implementation money and we are down to the last \$400,000. She noted that current analysis shows the State 911 fund going into a deficit in 2009. Ms. MacFarlane indicated that MAG 911 is partnering with Pima County and the State 911 Office to start education of legislators in April 2005 to show that the tax cannot be reduced and needs to stay at 37 cents. Ms. MacFarlane stated that Sandra Junck is helping with the coordination. Chairman Beck stated that as the responsibilities continue to grow, the costs will increase. MAG 911 has been as cost effective as possible. Chairman Beck stated that it is time to look at a plan that identifies these points in the next 10 years. He suggested taking a look at the Chicago model, which has its own tax base to support its 911 system. Ms. MacFarlane stated that this is a double-edged sword. As long as MAG's needs are

met, it is good for us to partner with the State; if our needs are not met, we might have to take that route. Ms. MacFarlane added that the MAG region contributes much of the State 911 fund for service in the rest of the State.

Chairman Beck commented that once Phase I and Phase II are implemented, the legislative committee established to review the tax might have questions as to whether to continue the tax. Ms. MacFarlane stated that there will still be ongoing charges, even after implementation of Phase I and Phase II. Chairman Beck stated that education will be needed on that. Many are under the impression that wireless implementation is a one-time expense. Ms. MacFarlane stated that they could be shown the monthly ongoing costs.

Ms. MacFarlane stated that Pima County's wireless implementation is almost complete. By the time the MAG 911 implementation is concluded, the State will be 90 percent complete. Ms. MacFarlane commented that no one is talking about telematics, who want to pass calls along to 911 centers from their call centers. Mike Benjamin stated that a call is automatically generated in an accident. He commented that there has to be a way to exchange data between their centralized centers to 911 centers.

6. Maintenance of the 911 Equipment

Mike Benjamin stated that it has been seven months since the transition from Qwest maintenance to self maintenance. He said that in those seven months, the technical team has responded to more than 800 calls for trouble tickets or service. Mr. Benjamin stated that, in addition, the team is working on the GIS project and cleaning up issues left over from Qwest. He said that the team's goal is to reduce actual problems. Mr. Benjamin stated that a vacant position was filled, but another was generated. The team currently has five techs and one supervisor. He added that the City of Phoenix has issued a hiring freeze. Mr. Benjamin stated that the team is currently working on upgrades to Buckeye, Tolleson, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, and Apache Junction. He commented that if trouble calls can be reduced to the outlying jurisdictions, that is helpful to the team by cutting down on travel time.

Ms. Millard expressed her appreciation for the remarkable job done by the technical team on cleanup. She acknowledged the efforts of Art and Nate. She mentioned the assistance provided in getting their prerecorded telephone greeting set up.

Chairman Beck asked about problems with the reporting mechanism. Ms. MacFarlane stated that we have a 24-hour number that PSAPs can call and have a good tracking system. Qwest tried to provide a report in the past, but it was not comprehensive. Mr. Benjamin stated that it is anticipated that, in the future, the PSAPs will get automatic followups via email. He acknowledged the assistance of the Scottsdale Police Department to field the after hours calls to the technical team. Mr. Benjamin stated that this is not about an individual city, but an effort to ensure that the 911 system works for the entire region.

Ms. MacFarlane stated that the data network cost \$1 million to put together, with an annual ongoing cost of \$400,000. She commented that it might be beneficial to other groups to utilize that platform and an offer has been made to Homeland Security. Ms. MacFarlane commented that this in turn might provide some Homeland Security funds for improving the MAG data network.

Chairman Beck asked if Tucson had gone to self maintenance. Ms. MacFarlane replied that Tucson and the other Arizona locations use Qwest. She added that the Gila River Indian Community had just completed its service plan to become a PSAP and had approached MAG 911 to do their maintenance. Chairman Beck stated that self maintenance was envisioned for a long time, and is demonstrating a great benefit. Ms. MacFarlane explained how the team improved the PSAP facilities in Buckeye to make it a much more enjoyable and functional center. Chairman Beck expressed his appreciation to the PSAP Managers for their work. He said that a system could have all the technology available, but it is the people who make it work.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.