

**Minutes of February 17, 2006 Meeting**  
**North-East King County Regional Public Safety Communications Initiative**  
**Steering Committee**

Attendance:

Jean Best, KCSO	Dave Gans, Bellevue PD
Jeff Blake, Kirkland Fire	Ed Holmes, Mercer Island PD
Tracy Burrows, Kirkland	Rosemarie Ives, Redmond
Diane Carlson, Bellevue CMO	William Kenny, Kirkland
Chris Caviezel, Snoqualmie Pass F&R	Alan Komenski, Bellevue Police
Jeff Chen, Medina PD	Walt Mauldin, Mercer Island Fire
Jane Christenson, Redmond	Jim Montgomery, Bellevue PD
Forrest Conover, Bothell PD	Mark Nelson, ADCOMM
Rich Conrad, Mercer Island CMO	Steve Sarkozy, Bellevue CMO
Stan Conrad, Issaquah Police	Lee Soptich, EFR
Mike Eisner, Bellevue Fire	Dave Ramsay, Kirkland CMO
Ron Elsoe, Mercer Island	Karen Reed, Consultant
Gene Markle, Kirkland Police	Ron Zsigmondovics, Bothell Fire

The meeting was called to order at 8:30, with attendee introductions. The minutes of January 20 were approved without change.

At the recommendation of the Governance and Finance Committee, the group reviewed the Statement of Values and Principles for the project and confirmed them without change.

Tracy Burrows reviewed progress on the project. The scope of the project has expanded to include the preparation of more detailed budget and staffing information than when the initial scope of work was drafted. This greater level of detail is necessary for the agencies to be able to make an informed “go/no go” decision on Norcom. To develop the information needed for the go/nogo decision, the consultants have prepared an additional scope of work to: complete the Norcom budget; complete briefing materials; commence employee communications roll-out; and support steering committees and subcommittees at a cost of \$45,000. Ms. Burrows presented information about how the costs of the additional scope of work would be allocated and also presented an amendment to the Joint Powers Agreement to enable this additional work to go forward. The group agreed to the additional scope of work. Rosemarie Ives suggested that no more work be done on the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) until the budget work is completed and the group agrees to move forward on the ILA. It was requested that participating agencies review, sign and return the amendment to the Joint Powers Agreement as soon as possible.

Mark Nelson reviewed the Facilities Review Process. The review criteria are separated into two parts: (1) objective, strictly measurable criteria; and (2) more subjective, values-based criteria. Bellevue stated that it would be submitting a cost range for the facilities proposal. Redmond stated that the purpose of the cost information was to give the steering committee a sense of the range of facilities costs—not necessarily to base the selection of a specific site. Rich Conrad stated that if a facilities solution emerges from the proposals, then we should feel comfortable recommending it. If not, then the information will give us examples of the range of potential sites. Rosemarie Ives noted for the record that CB Richard Ellis, a large commercial real estate firm, was not aware of the request for cost information for the Norcom facility.

Bill Kenny reviewed the Employee and Labor Relations policy. He noted that there are a number of lessons learned about employee retention from Mercer Island's experience. These lessons include the importance of early and continuous communications with dispatch employees and the employees' need for certainty in their job future. The Human Resources committee recommended that a job guarantee at Norcom be offered to existing dispatch staff. Given Norcom's staffing needs, this guarantee would not result in any overstaffing. Jeff Blake emphasized the need for getting information out to dispatch staff quickly. The group agreed that we need an active communication strategy for the existing dispatch staff.

The group discussed the position of the Manager of the Norcom operation. There was agreement that, for this position, the selection committee should have the flexibility to select the best person for the job. Jim Montgomery stated that the existing manager should be given a preference because he is experienced and knows the issues and the operation.

Karen Reed reviewed the analytical approach to the budget comparisons that are being prepared, including a consideration of the current costs of the dispatch operations, the costs that will be retained by the existing dispatch agencies once Norcom goes into effect, and the costs of the Norcom operation. There was a discussion of current ValleyCom costs. The 2005 cost/call for ValleyCom range from \$17.50/call for owners to \$22.50/call for subscribers. This compares to approximately \$35/call at the Bellevue dispatch center. Much of this difference can be attributed to the difference in the costs of a fire call vs. a police call. Police calls are less expensive to dispatch. ValleyCom is an operation that is more heavily weighted toward law enforcement calls, so the cost per call is less.

ValleyCom may also cost less because it provides a different level of service. There was a sense that our agencies demand a higher level of service than the south County cities. At ValleyCom, the level of traffic is higher and the talk on the radio is more limited. The group was reminded that the Fire Agencies are already operating in a consolidated fashion and that it was not possible to obtain additional efficiencies in fire dispatch staffing without lowering the level of service.

There was a discussion of the cost of a higher level of service. If the costs of Norcom are substantially higher than existing costs, the elected officials will likely not support the transition. Stan Conrad pointed out that level of service is critical and that there would be a value to the police agencies who currently have dispatch centers in that their management resources would be freed up to focus on core law enforcement functions.

The group requested that the budget scenarios include (1) existing staff levels; (2) staffing levels recommended by the Fire and Police subcommittees; and (3) other scenarios that may be more efficient.

It was agreed that the finance committee would continue to work on refining the budget numbers, with a tentative date of reviewing the budget information with the steering committee in early March.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.