

Washoe County, Nevada
Regional 911 Emergency Response Advisory Committee
Guidebook

February, 2013

Background of the Regional 911 Emergency Response Advisory Committee (Committee)

As stated in the Emergency 911 Review and Audit Report developed in 2007, the Board of County Commissioners established the Enhanced 911 Fund in December 1995 coinciding with their approval of a telephone line surcharge for each access line, trunk line and mobile telephone. The intent of the surcharge was to establish a reliable revenue stream for the enhancement of telephone emergency reporting capabilities. This surcharge was to be adjusted annually based on the unencumbered end-of-fiscal-year balance in the Enhanced 911 Fund, but never to exceed 25-cents per month for each mobile telephone and access line. To provide appropriate oversight for expenditure requests related to this fund, and to ensure sound fiscal decision making, the Commissioners established the Regional 911 Emergency Response Advisory Committee (hereafter Committee).

Authority of the Committee

The Committee is tasked with making funding recommendations to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) for expenditures from the Enhanced 911 Fund. The allowable expenditures of these funds are clearly defined by Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 244A.7641 through 244A.7647.

Per discussions with the Washoe County legal counsel for the Committee, the authority of the Committee was identified as residing within the weight of their recommendations to the BCC. Any entity or individual requesting a funding recommendation from the Committee should provide enough information and justification for the expenditure for the Committee to make the funding recommendation. It is well within the authority of the Committee to withhold their recommendation(s) for a lack of information or justification.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the Washoe County E911 Emergency Response Advisory Committee is as follows:

“The Regional 911 Emergency Response Advisory Committee, in accordance with guiding statutes, strives to provide citizens with automatic telephone number and location connectivity with local public safety answering points. The Committee and local PSAPs are committed to the research and the application of technology necessary to enhance call handling.”

Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 244A.7641 through 244A.7647

The Committee was developed based on State legislation designed to provide a funding source to enhance 911 services. The State surcharge legislation identifies:

- How the Counties collect funds
 - Surcharge or special tax authority
- Maximum rate each County can collect per access line per month for surcharge
- Maximum allowable amount of the fund balance
- What the funds can be used to purchase

- Master plan development requirement
- Penalties for delinquent payment
- Committee development
- Dispute resolution

In the following section of the document, we have included some relevant excerpts from the NRS legislation.

Recent Updates

The surcharge language of the NRS was updated in 2009. The two primary changes to the legislation were to:

- Update the definition of telephone system equipment to reflect the new Internet Protocol (IP) based and Next Generation 911 technologies rather than the previous limitation of discreet phone circuits
- Increase the maximum allowable fund balance to \$1,000,000.00 from \$500,000.00

The updated language broadens the definition of how the funds can be used. Previously, the legislation was more specific to discreet phone circuits, whereas now, the language is broad enough to include IP technology as well as other methods of transmitting information between the user and the emergency responder.

Allowable Expenditures

The NRS surcharge legislation specifically defines how the 911 surcharge funds can be used. Per the NRS:

“NRS 244A.7641 Definitions

4. “Telephone system” means a system for transmitting information between or among points specified by the user that does not change the form or content of the information regardless of the technology, facilities or equipment used. A telephone system may include, without limitation:

- (a) Wireless or Internet technology, facilities or equipment; and*
- (b) Technology, facilities or equipment used for transmitting information from an emergency responder to the user or from the user to an emergency responder.”*

“NRS 244A.7645 Establishment of advisory committee to develop plan to enhance or improve telephone system; creation of special revenue fund; use of money in fund.

3....The money in the fund must be used only:

- (a) In a county whose population is 45,000 or more but less than 700,000, to enhance the telephone system for reporting an emergency, including only:*

(1) Paying recurring and nonrecurring charges for telecommunication services necessary for the operation of the enhanced telephone system;

(2) Paying costs for personnel and training associated with the routine maintenance and updating of the database for the system;

(3) Purchasing, leasing or renting the equipment and software necessary to operate the enhanced telephone system, including, without limitation, equipment and software that identify the number or location from which a call is made; and

(4) Paying costs associated with any maintenance, upgrade and replacement of equipment and software necessary for the operation of the enhanced telephone system.”

“NRS 244A.769 Features of system. The system may include:

1. The automatic tracing of the telephone number and location from which a telephone call is made and the transmission of that number or location to the answering location of the system; and

2. Any other feature which enables the system to operate more efficiently and effectively.”

It is important to point out that the reference to transmitting information between the user and the emergency responder does not identify who the user is intended to represent. It is possible that the user is intended to represent the caller, requesting emergency assistance. For the purposes of this analysis, and with the consensus of the interview participants including the Washoe County Deputy District Attorney, that is the assumption used in this review.

Another item that is important to point out is the reference to allowable training costs in the fund. The language which states “Paying costs for personnel and training associated with the routine maintenance and updating of the database for the system” is very narrow and specific. If the Committee wishes to use the surcharge funds for training outside of this definition, the legislation may need to be updated.

Fund Balance

The State legislation specifically identifies the maximum allowable fund balance. Per the NRS:

“NRS 244A.7645 Establishment of advisory committee to develop plan to enhance or improve telephone system; creation of special revenue fund; use of money in fund.

4. If the balance in the fund created in a county whose population is 45,000 or more but less than 700,000 pursuant to subsection 3 which has not been committed for expenditure exceeds \$1,000,000 at the end of any fiscal year, the board of county commissioners shall reduce the amount of the surcharge imposed during the next fiscal year by the amount necessary to ensure that the unencumbered balance in the fund at the end of the next fiscal year does not exceed \$1,000,000.”

The maximum allowable surcharge as defined in the State legislation is \$0.25 per access line per month. Currently, Washoe County is collecting the entire \$0.25 surcharge.

Funding Priorities

The following is a list of examples of possible funding priorities. This is not intended to be the finalized list. It has not been approved by the Committee as of the date of the development of this Guidebook. The specific items on the list and the order of the priorities should be determined and adopted annually by the Committee (and updated in this Guidebook):

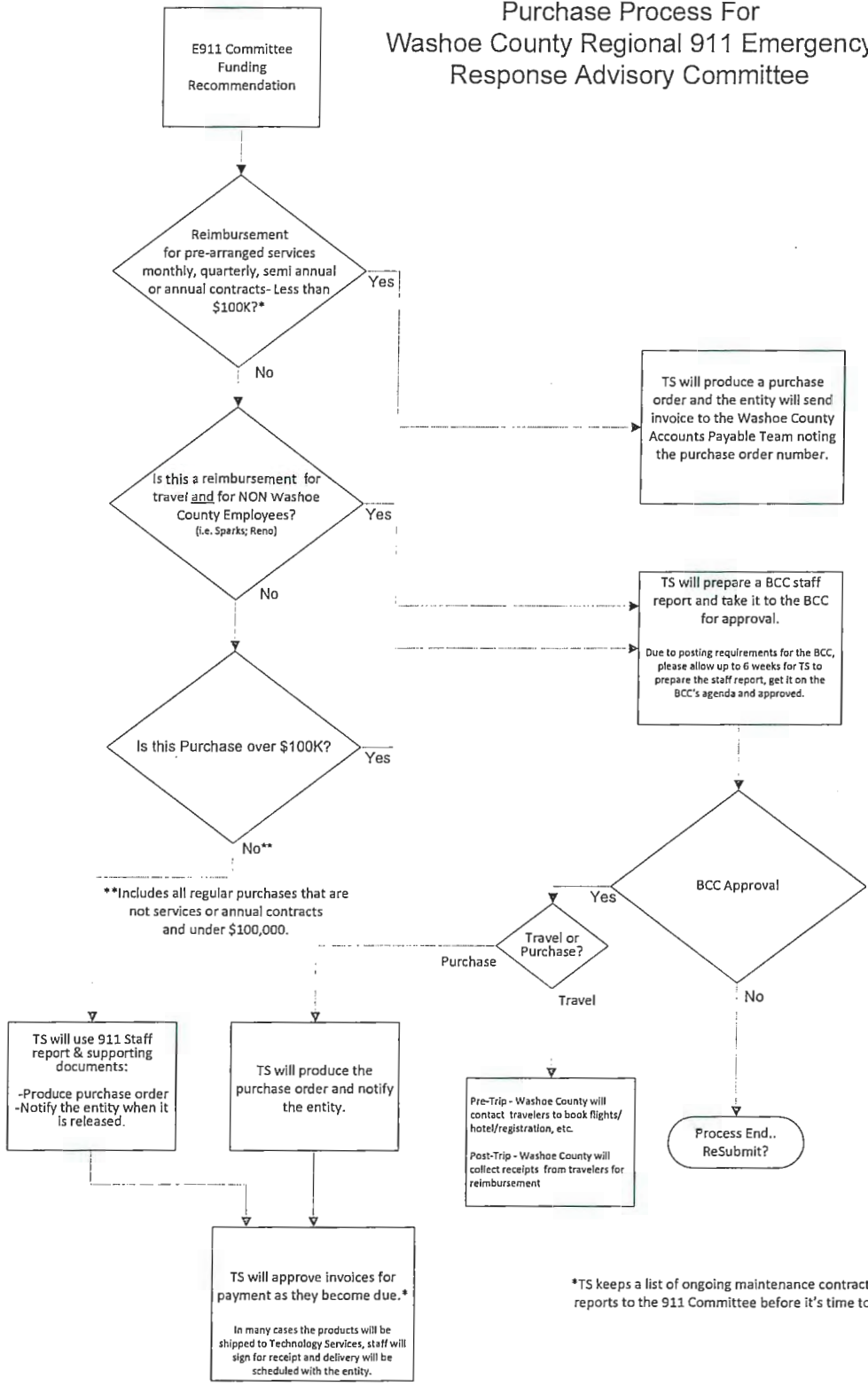
1. NG911 network and services (to include ALI)
2. PSAP call taking equipment
3. PSAP ancillary equipment
4. MSAG Coordinator position
5. GIS staff
6. CAD integration products and services
7. ProQA
8. Emergency Notification System (CodeRED)
9. Training
10. Back-up PSAP equipment
11. Secondary PSAP equipment
12. CAD equipment, services or maintenance
13. Mobile data
14. Public Safety 2-way radios

The categories should be broad enough to encompass various hardware, software, services and any other related items under that general category. The purpose of the priority list is to assist the Committee in the decision-making process rather than to restrict the Committee's recommendation decisions.

Purchase Process

The following diagram outlines the purchase process that follows a funding recommendation made by the Committee. This diagram includes new purchases, previously approved recurring expenditures and travel / training funds. Please note that this is a general definition of the purchase flow for the Committee. The diagram is, to the best of our knowledge, correct as of the date of this document but is subject to change.

Purchase Process For Washoe County Regional 911 Emergency Response Advisory Committee



**Includes all regular purchases that are not services or annual contracts and under \$100,000.

*TS keeps a list of ongoing maintenance contracts and reports to the 911 Committee before it's time to renew.