

**MILWAUKIE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MARCH 6, 2000**

The meeting came to order at 6:10 p.m. in the City Hall conference room

Council present: Mayor Tomei and Councilors Kappa, King, and Lancaster.

Staff present: City Manager Bartlett, Assistant City Managers Bennett and Richards, Police Chief Kanzler, Dispatch Supervisor Gossett, and Information Specialist Wheeler.

Dispatch Recommendation

Bartlett said the process to determine the most effective and cost efficient way to provide dispatch services began in June 1998. The purpose for Milwaukie's considering alternate service providers is to reduce expenses through economy of scale. The Milwaukie center currently provides dispatch service to police. The volume of calls dropped after Clackamas County Communications Center (C-COM) began dispatching fire calls. The City needs to look at something in a cooperative venue. He discussed the current dispatch service proposals and noted that the city attorney would be advising Council on legal issues.

Kanzler outlined the assets that the Milwaukie dispatch center provides: minimal staff turnover, a team environment, and a high level of expertise. The facility has state of the art equipment with room for expansion. On the downside, the staffing level is low. He discussed purchasing mobile digital computers (MDC) to increase officer effectiveness and to provide critical decision-making data. The cost of the system would be consistent throughout the proposals.

C-COM's strengths are its ability to expand, the data link to Washington County Communications, and computer-aided dispatch (CAD). The primary weakness is its staffing level which is currently at about 74% capacity. His main concern was with the pricing formula which is based on population rather than the number of calls. This method does not reward crime prevention efforts.

Councilor Kappa asked Kanzler to comment on the administrative support services offered by the Sheriff's office substation.

Kanzler said, at this time, there is no charge for the service, and Gladstone and Oregon City are using it on an as-needed basis. There could be a problem in that there is no official agreement that outlines service expectations. As yet, there have been no discussion with the Sheriff's office.

Kanzler continued. C-COM has a solid assimilation plan, but he was concerned about being able to follow it because of the staffing level. In the event of natural disasters, C-COM would not dispatch Milwaukie Public Works because it has no routine voice dispatch. He also thought C-COM's estimated MDC cost of \$4,500 per unit was low. Kanzler saw no cost projections for upgrades that would be passed on to C-COM users.

The Lake Oswego Emergency Communications (LO-COM) operates a state of the art CAD system that provides management reports. The center has consistently low turnover and provides detailed customer service training. LO-COM's proposal also contains a five-year plan that outlines anticipated equipment and replacement expenses. LO-COM is completing its transition to 800 MHz, and MDCs will be part of the data link. He discussed staff transition and training and noted that the first year cost would be approximately \$128,000. LO-COM will maintain two consoles in the Milwaukie dispatch center for backup.

Kanzler identified LO-COM's weaknesses. The facility is adequate now, but it should be evaluated for expansion if work loads increase. The Milwaukie facility could be utilized to provide service net activities such as tows, warrant conformations, and public works notifications, but there is no agreement regarding compensation. If this were the case, two dispatchers would work in Milwaukie, and Lake Oswego would maintain the consoles.

Bartlett suggested the City Council might consider scheduling a hearing in March to gather public input on the proposal. He further noted that C-COM may raise concerns that Milwaukie acted in bad faith by reaching the current recommendation to contract with the City of Lake Oswego for dispatch services.

Councilor Lancaster asked why Clackamas County Fire District #1 decided to go with C-COM.

Bartlett responded that the CCFD #1 Board made the decision in May 1999 based on C-COM making charter changes that benefited the Fire District.

Councilor Lancaster understood that Milwaukie made heavy expenditures to bring other jurisdictions into its dispatch center.

Bartlett said the June 1998 business plan was to develop a contract with CCFD #1 and utilize the Portland backbone, but that did not happen. The anticipated grants and funding did not come through, so Milwaukie is no longer in the position to build out a system it would control.

Councilor Lancaster noted the current low turnover in Milwaukie's center and asked if one could reasonably expect that to continue.

Kanzler believed the low turnover was a result of a successful environment, and he saw the same level of commitment in Lake Oswego. LO-COM has two to three dispatchers on duty at all times.

Les Youngbahr, Lake Oswego Police Chief, added that the minimum staff level is two dispatchers on duty. If Milwaukie contracts with LO-COM, the additional call load would have to be evaluated.

Councilor King asked how many people LO-COM served.

Youngbahr said the center serves about 72,000 people.

Councilor Lancaster referred to the 5-year costing chart and observed that Milwaukie's year one operating costs were estimated at about \$900,000.

Bartlett said that was correct, and the CAD system would be an additional \$121,000 to any of the scenarios.

Councilor Lancaster asked what the annual upgrade costs would be.

Kanzler said the Oswego package identified 60% for ongoing, day-to-day costs and 40% toward an appropriations account for upgrades and maintenance.

Councilor Lancaster asked Kanzler to address Lake Oswego's fee structure.

Kanzler said LO-COM calculates the fee based on the number of calls. The Milwaukie dispatch center gets about 13,000 emergency calls annually.

Councilor Lancaster observed that a successful community policing program could drive the call load down and result in lower costs if Milwaukie contracted with Lake Oswego. He asked when the LO-COM 800 MHz system would be operational

Youngbahr said he just received City Council approval.

Councilor Lancaster noted that the stakeholders had a long list of concerns at the beginning of the process.

Kanzler felt the systems were compatible, and the concerns were addressed. Law enforcement provides dispatch, and fire calls would be forwarded by direct connection to C-COM for dispatch.

Gossett added that dispatch stays on line during the transfer to determine if police response is also necessary.

Youngbahr said LO-COM is dispatching for three fire districts, and it has an excellent relationship with C-COM.

Councilor Kappa commented that staffing seems to be a recurring issue. Whether perceived or real, there seem to be issues between C-COM and other dispatch centers. He asked how calls would be monitored.

Youngbahr did not think there would be any problem in the transfer based on LO-COM's long-standing relationship with C-COM.

Bartlett said the key point is that there is a quality assurance program for dispatching. There is a de-brief on all anomalies, and tapes are reviewed to determine if corrective actions need to be taken. This is an industry in which actions are measured in seconds, so the ability to look at response data is critical.

Councilor Lancaster asked Kanzler to discuss LO-COM's deficiencies further.

Kanzler said the main drawback is the size of the facility, and that may be addressed in the future. That deficiency would be offset by the workplace atmosphere.

Gossett commented that, although nothing compares to having one's own center, costs are an issue. She was satisfied that the level of service in Lake Oswego would be comparable and supported Kanzler's findings.

Councilor Lancaster asked what would prevent moving a substantial portion of LO-COM to Milwaukie.

Kanzler said that idea has only been discussed briefly.

Youngbahr added that initial talks were about a redundant CAD system, but it would not be unreasonable to think of moving.

Dana Robinson, C-COM, responded to Kanzler's comments. She discussed the pricing concerns and said the structure could change based on other agencies' needs. She did not agree that staffing would impede the cross-training process. C-COM could supply ancillary dispatching to other departments including public works and code enforcement. C-COM does not do records functions, but the Sheriff's office does provide those services currently at no charge. She is working on the challenges of maintaining a consistent staffing level.

Councilor Kappa asked Robinson to address funding for an 800 MHz system.

Robinson said \$1.5 million has been secured, and C-COM is seeking funds for phase 2. Participants would pay for the initial start up. She asked if LO-COM's prices were firm.

Youngbahr responded that there was nothing contractual at this time.

Robinson discussed 800 MHz costs, amortization schedule, and benefits of a shared CAD system. She added that the price of \$4,500 per MDC was correct.

Councilor Kappa asked at what point in the budget would the impacts of this decision be felt.

Bartlett said the impact would be felt in the 2000 - 2001 fiscal budget.

Washington County Commuter Rail

Roy Rogers, Washington County Board of Commissioners, and Kathy Lehtola, Director of Land Use, provided information on the Washington County commuter rail project. This is a partnership between the County and cities to identify commuter options to reduce traffic congestion. The commuter trains share existing heavy rail lines. Milwaukie, being located on a rail line, would be a logical extension of commuter rail service. The group watched a video of the Washington County project.

The current 18-mile project between Wilsonville and Beaverton is part of a broader transportation system that can serve many needs. There are only five stops, therefore, it is faster than light rail service. He noted that a majority of Clackamas County residents travel elsewhere to work. **Rogers** is working to direct some funds to Clackamas County for commuter rail, and he invited the Milwaukie City Council to look at the project. The existing network, including the trolley line, is viable, but the area has to make its interest known.

Rogers noted there has been a lot of emphasis on light rail, but there are limitations to its continued development. We need to look at other cost-effective alternatives to create connectivity in the region. A lot of resources have gone into developing the commuter rail project, and private investment is interested in development and redevelopment opportunities.

Kathy Lehtola said Metro 2040 figures have been used for modeling purposes and indicate that ridership will double. Almost 1.25 million trips would be off the roads annually. Commuter rail offers both a trip option and the ability to add capacity back to our road system.

Councilor Lancaster asked when Milwaukie could become directly involved if funding was available.

Lehtola said the Beaverton to Wilsonville route should be in operation in 2004. The region would have to make the other decisions as part of the current South Corridor Study. The track is there, but its condition is unknown.

Mayor Tomei asked how many trains used that particular track through Milwaukie on a daily basis.

Bartlett said there are about two round trips per day.

Lehtola added that, although the freight business is growing, the companies do realize there are opportunities in partnering.

Rogers wanted to make it clear that he was not trying to pre-empt the Clackamas County Commissioners.

Mayor Tomei asked how Lake Oswego residents were responding to the suggestion.

Rogers said Lake Oswego was not in this study. He added that tracks go from Salem to Astoria. The project has also been successful in partnering with ODOT.

Bartlett explained that the commuter service could probably not go farther north than Tacoma Street.

Councilor Lancaster saw commuter rail as a viable alternative that needed to be explored to the maximum. He believed the reduction in the number of car trips would indicate the project's success. The two most important words would be "convenience" and "affordability."

Lehtola said the system must be perceived as seamless by the riders. The tickets are intended to be affordable in order to give people a true transportation option.

Direction on Dispatch Service Options

The Council agreed it was important to investigate the feasibility of saving a substantial amount of money. Members agreed to hold a public hearing on the proposal in April so that budget issues could be addressed in May. They also wanted to understand the legal implications and give ample time to hear public comment and provide information.

The meeting ended at 8:10 p.m.

Pat DuVal, Recorder