

# **2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan for Klamath 9-1-1 Communications District**

10-16-2019

## **Current Situation**

The Klamath 9-1-1 Communications District remains the primary Public Safety Answering Point for Klamath County. It additionally provides dispatch services for over 30 different public safety agencies. The Funding for the District is through two primary streams, a portion of the state excise tax (\$.75 per phone line) which totals about 350,000 annually and will be increasing and Property Tax. Our fixed rate property tax .1541 per assessed 1,000 which totals about 780,000 annually, and a renewed 5 year operating levy which expires June of 2024 for .08 per assessed 1,000 which generates about \$375,000 annually.

We are housed in a purpose built, modern facility completed in the spring of 2011 and funded through a USDA Rural Development guaranteed 40 year loan. The annual payments are \$84,343 and we have built up the required reserve fund ahead of the 10 year requirement. This is the building reserve fund at \$84,343. The District has paid 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  payments of the 40 payments required to purchase the building. This constitutes the only debt carried by the District.

We currently fund a full time Director, full time Operations Manager, full time Business Manager, full time Communications Supervisor, full time Lead Dispatcher, 9 full time Dispatchers, 5 half time Dispatchers. The passing of HB 2005 updating ORS 652.220 along with an internal look at the effectiveness of our organizational structure caused us to review both the structure and the positions within it. We found in general that our administrative positions were underpaid compared to counterparts in similar organization. Our middle management and supervisory positions did not have a financial lure internally due to contractual increases in our CBA positions and were pinched at the high end due to our relative low Director salary. Additionally, we have had successes in training and developing staff, however we have not kept up with attrition. Half of our dispatch staff was hired during the last 5 years, and the operations manager position was vacated and filled again in that same period.

After addressing our pay structure the successful recruitment of the Operations Manager and Communications Supervisor positions have laid the foundation for our continued goals in recruitment and training. Five of our dispatchers expressed interest and are currently engaged in the responsibility of contributing and participating in developing and implementing our new training program.

We have collaborated with our public safety partners over the last decade or so to fund and develop our CAD and Radio Systems. Hardware updates, and continued software maintenance support were funded through the passing of the operating levy.

The radio system is maintained by KIRG and we have updated our radio consoles. These systems are kept current, supported and operationally sound.

Our phone system is funded through the state 9-1-1 program and was replaced in July of 2017. Our administrative phones were separated from the project per state requirements. We purchased an administrative phone system as part of that project. Our building security includes video, door lock, glass break and fire alarms and suppression systems. The security system has been updated, the video system has not. It is considered a secondary project in priority at this time, however will need updating.

During the last 5 years we have deployed an administrative network including firewall and have scaled down our CAD network to just CJIS programs. The Administrative network provides integration and firewall protection for all systems. Our CAD servers have all been migrated to virtual servers on two redundant host machines. Our logging recorder was replaced in November of 2016 on a 5 year partnership program which included updates and maintenance as well as QA capability and staff trainings via 8 hour web based courses. There are renewal options in that agreement or we may choose to “shop” for a different system when our partnership expires.

We also have some miscellaneous equipment for operating and maintaining our business and facility. We are responsible for the maintenance and repair on these systems. For that reason we have built our equipment reserves to the current balance over \$670,000.

The District had identified statutory concerns in previous plans. These concerns have not materialized, however still exist. The first was consolidation which has not been much of a political topic over the last 5 years. There is still consideration of consolidation, however, as technology brings us closer together there may be resources to be leveraged for our District should we lose the funding to maintain the provision of our levels of service. The second was relating to the powers of the governor to identify a public safety crisis and impose a tax on the jurisdiction. We have not seen this happen, however, loss of funds may open the discussion and its considerations.

The District has set the current goals in this plan to address goals that were not met in the previous plan, as well as, to position the District to continue to serve its community maintaining local control, whether it's as a public safety dispatch center (our current role of a PSAP and dispatch center) or a regional PSAP and local dispatch center.

## **A Look Forward**

As Klamath 9-1-1 Communications District looks forward to the future operations of the countywide Communications Center, we have identified the following areas which will have significant importance as the District moves through the next five years.

### **Opportunities –**

- Pursue contract services with neighboring public safety such as Lake County, Crater Lake National Park, and Northern California etc. This carries over from the last plan, however is problematic because with the added resource comes equal or greater added responsibilities.
- Pursue single item/project alternative funding (Grants)

- Position our community, organization and facility to be a viable choice if consolidation is legislated.
- Achieve and maintain user and public support
- Relieve the District of long term debt by paying off the Building loan.

**Challenges –**

- Insufficient Funding if renewal of 5 year operating levies fail.
- Recruiting and retaining qualified staff.

**Strengths/Capabilities –**

- Experienced, qualified, motivated employees and leadership
- Dedicated Board of Directors
- Successfully achieved goals: Facility, funding, equipment, levy renewal etc.
- Personnel expenses managed through use of Half and Part Time Employees
- Succession planning being addressed through pay analysis and restructuring our organizational chart.
- Local government oriented Budget Committee
- Local and statewide partnerships with other agencies

**Weaknesses/Vulnerabilities –**

- Inadequate number of staff:
  - o Always scheduled at minimum staffing
  - o We are typically the “loss of one dispatcher” away from crisis levels
  - o We are meeting minimum requirements of training, but struggle to provide more, hindering our training in advancing technologies and leadership.
  - o We are completely reliant on outside vendors and contractors for our facility and information systems.
- Backup plans are limited to individual systems; there is no back up dispatch center.
- Long term debt commitment for building.

**Our Mission, Purpose and Values –**

**Mission –**

To provide efficient emergency communications service to the public and emergency service providers throughout Klamath County.

**Purpose –**

To provide professional and effective emergency call taking and emergency services dispatching by decreasing the reporting and response times during emergency situations.

**Values –**

We honor and value our service to the public  
 We value our partnerships with other agencies

We are a dependable and reliable resource for the public and our partner's agencies  
We value the safety of our partner agencies and the public  
We strive for appropriate and sustainable funding to accomplish our mission and purpose

## **Vision for the Future** –

In order to conduct our mission and fulfill our purpose, the Board of Directors and the administration of Klamath 9-1-1 Communications District believe the following actions will achieve our vision:

### **Funding** –

- The continued receipt of the statewide 9-1-1 excise tax (which is increasing due to legislative change resulting from the passing of HB 2449)
- The continued receipt of the countywide permanent tax, and miscellaneous receipts
- The continued receipt of an operating levy that adequately funds the needs of the public 9-1-1 call taking and public safety dispatching.
- Continued collaboration with public safety partners for grants that benefit the public safety system.

### **Facility** –

- Pay off the building loan within the next 5 years
- Continued care and maintenance of our facility
- Continue to utilize our facility for public safety and other meetings
- Plan for and begin to develop a backup center (fixed or mobile) that can be utilized if our facility would need to be evacuated for any reason.

### **Workforce** –

- Fill the funded dispatch staff to appropriately handle the center's busier call volume periods, maintain minimum and advanced levels of training, enhancing citizen and responder safety.

### **Technology** –

- Utilize resources such as vendor provided IT services when local employment pool does not support specialized positions.
- Engage at the state level in projects and activities to maintain knowledge and awareness.
- Formalize in planning scheduled equipment maintenance and replacement now that those are happening prior to failure.

## **Strategic Objectives, Strategies and Goals**

**FUNDING** – The District identifies that funding remains critical for the pursuit of maintaining and filling staff positions. Funding was identified in all other unachieved

goals. With funds through the 5 year operating levy and management's focus on the previous strategic plan most of the goals were achieved. The first increase to the State 911 tax in decades will help offset rising costs. Increases in the quarterly distribution by 33% should become available in July of 2020, and a second increase of 25% in July of 2021. The Districts strategy remains to place the highest priority on maintaining funds through the renewal of the operating levy.

**STAFFING** – Through Organization “RE”-organization the District is showing signs of success based upon two priorities. Continue to fill essential front line positions. Evolve and grow the organization through filling in gaps in supervision and management.

**EQUIPMENT** – We have been successful in maintaining operability of our essential equipment. We are in position to cycle equipment responsibly to avoid end of life failures. The needs of the Equipment reserve are becoming clearer. We have identified that with our forecasting and leveraging prior year's carryovers this fund could contribute significantly to paying off the building debt. Paying off that loan in the next 5 years would save the District \$700,000 - \$900,000 in interest by eliminating the requirement to make annual payments of \$84,343 until 2051.

**FACILITY** – We have satisfied the needs addressed in the previous plan in regards to our facility and the associated reserve account. We can say that our work with documenting equipment and life cycle replacement and our organization reorganization studies are precursory to the ability to build a backup center. Additionally, the Board has acknowledged that reducing or eliminating long term debt commitments must be addressed prior to entering into the long term recurring costs associated with a backup center. That process is underway, however has not quite become a project. System backup, redundancy, and efficiency have improved in the CAD, Radio, Phone and overall technology aspects of the center.

**OPERATING LEVY** – The District has evaluated the costs of meeting these funding requirements and successfully renewed the \$0.08 operating levy through June of 2024.