

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 7, 7:00 P.M.

The Special Meeting of the Wadena County Board of Commissioners was held on Wednesday January 7, 2009, at the MN State Community & Technical College, Wadena Campus, Room M33, 405 Colfax Avenue SW, Wadena Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Dave Schermerhorn.

Also present: Commissioners William Stearns, Rodney Bounds, Ralph Miller, and Lane Waldahl, Emergency Management Director Scott McKellep, Wadena County Assistant Highway Engineer Jeff Adolphson, Wadena County Sheriff Mike Carr, Auditor/Treasurer Char West, Contact Radio representative Jay Eckel and representatives from Wadena County City Councils and Emergency Response Teams.

Mr. McKellep informed those in attendance that the purpose of the meeting was to present information pertaining to the Wadena County GeoCom Radio Report. He pointed out that the Study was done with grant funds and that GeoComm had been contracted to do the Study. Mr. McKellep introduced Lex Rutter, GeoCom Consultant, Mark Englund, Otter Tail Sheriff's Department Investigator and Tom Justin, St. Cloud Police Department.

Mr. Rutter provided a power point presentation outlining the Wadena County Report. He stated that the Federal mandate was to change from using current VHF to Narrow band as of January 1, 2013. Mr. Rutter stated that the purpose of the study was to 1) determine the current system status, 2) provide options and 3) develop a budget.

Mr. Rutter reviewed the radio systems currently used and what system would be used in the future. He pointed out the following requirements and choices;

- Change all land mobiles below 512 MHz from 25 to 12.5 KHz
- Take all current VHF Wide Band off air by January 1, 2013
- No exceptions
- Substantial fines
- Non-compliance

Mr. Rutter reviewed the following Options pointing out that doing nothing was not an option.

Option #1 \$450,000 – replace existing equipment and reprogram those capable of narrow band – no upgrades. Would have to do something in 7 to 10 years, but allows the County to legally stay on the air.

Option #2 \$879,000 - replace equipment and analogue system, increases area coverage.

Option #3 \$1,663,000 – in 7 to 10 years will have to do this anyway - converts to digital –new radio P25 analog and digital. Longer term solution; 15 years or more; requires additional local operating funds for maintenance; have to replace

all pagers and portable radios and add an additional tower site.

Option #4 \$4,220,000 to \$2,000,000 – ARMER (Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response) – 800 MHz communications system. Multiple public Safety emergency responders share information via voice signals on demand.

Mr. Rutter reviewed Wadena County's topography and the current VHF radio equipment locations in Menahga, Sebeka, Verndale, Wadena and the Wadena County Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Justin reviewed the City of St. Cloud's use of the ARMER system and its benefits.

Mr. Englund informed the audience that the Otter Tail Board of Commissioners had committed to going to the ARMER system and had set up a Committee to research funding for the system.

Discussion was held on the use of FEMA grants by the cities to replace current pagers and radios and the use of a special levy for County funding.

Mr. McKellep stated that they would meet and develop a cost for each agency.

Chairman Schermerhorn adjourned the Special Board of Commissioners Meeting at 9:37 p.m.

Charleen West, Auditor/Treasurer

David Schermerhorn, Chairman