



WESTCHESTER COUNTY  
**FIRE ADVISORY BOARD**

4 Dana Road, Valhalla, NY 10595

**Henry P. Bergson**  
hank@hbergson.com  
President

**George Tockstein**  
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Vice President

**David Klaus**  
dpklaus@us.ibm.com  
Secretary

**Westchester County Fire Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
September 27, 2018**

Attendance: Hank Bergson, Commissioner John Cullen, Chief Michael Volk, Director of Fire Services Bill Dingee, Tom Raffaelli, Dave Klaus, Lawrence Lee, George Tockstein, Joe Olenik, John Caparelli, Howard Stern, Rich Lyman, John Flynn

Excused: Ken Hoffarth, William Rosa, John Marshall, Robert Outhouse, Absent – Joe Iantorno

Chairman Hank Bergson opened the meeting at 7:30 PM. There was a motion made and seconded to approve the March minutes, all voting aye. Since this is the September meeting there needed to be an election of Officers for the Board. Hank asked if anyone was interested in any of the officer positions. No one was interested. There was a motion to nominate the existing officers, Hank Bergson Chairman, George Tockstein Vice Chairman and Dave Klaus Secretary, the motion was seconded and all in attendance voting Aye.

There was a presentation of the Radio System Project. **See below:**

**Radio project status update 9/27/2018 – Tom Raffaelli – Information Technology.**

A presentation slide with a blue background. At the top, the title "Radio Projects Status" is written in white. Below it, the date "September 27, 2018" is displayed. The presenter's name "Thomas Raffaelli" and contact information "914-995-5912" and "trr1@westchestergov.com" are listed. At the bottom, there is a note "Project updates are **bolded**". On the left side of the slide is an image of a black handheld radio, and on the right side is an image of a black base station or control unit.

**Radio Projects Status**

September 27, 2018

Thomas Raffaelli  
914-995-5912  
trr1@westchestergov.com

Project updates are **bolded**



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## Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant SICG Round 3

- Funding:
  - NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES)
  - DES obtained award of \$5,991,125.
- Scope:
  - Finalized microwave network\* (Allow for system redundancy)
  - Links to Rockland, Putnam, and Orange Counties (Future system capabilities)
  - Installed VTAC National Interoperability system.

\*Will complete microwave network in future project./
- Current Status:
  - **All systems are active and in service**
  - **Project closeout in progress**



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Microwave links provide redundancy to the fiber connectivity.





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## Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant (Formula Based Grants)

- Future Funding: The County has applied and received additional funding.
- Projects: Provide all-band mobile radios in the Fire/EMS Coordinator and Special Operations vehicles.
- Provide all-band mobile radios to FD chiefs and EMS units that frequently provide or receive cross border (Putnam, Conn., Etc.) mutual aid in support of radio interoperability.

(Radios will be compatible with new and old systems.)





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## New Radio System Near Term Challenges

1. Most County radio infrastructure reached end of life, including:
  - \* Fire/EMS/DOT UHF trunk system.
  - \* 60 Control dispatch / paging consoles.
  - \* County Police dispatch and interop systems (F1/F3).
  - \* Voice Radio network for the DPW&T CAD/AVL system.
- \* **Solution:**
  - \* 1. County has negotiated a "Best Efforts" maintenance contract extension with Motorola until Dec 2019.
  - \* 2. **County is replacing all affected systems**



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## New Radio System Near Term Challenges

### 2. T-Band (UHF) frequencies will be withdrawn in 2023.

- \* Used in 11 metropolitan areas nationwide.
  - \* 30M people covered by T-Band services.
- \* Current federal law says all public safety users must vacate these frequencies.

#### \* Solution

- \* H.R. 5085 was introduced by Representatives Eliot Engel and Lee Zeldin on February 27, 2017. If enacted as drafted, the Act would repeal section 6103 in Title VI of P.L. 112-96 which would allow us to stay on T-Band.
- \* A Senate bill (S.3347) was introduced by Senator Markey and Co-Sponsored by Senators Schumer and Gillibrand "to repeal the section of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 that requires the Federal Communications Commission to reallocate and auction the T-Band spectrum".
- \* County has a contingency plan to replace the affected systems with an equivalent system utilizing 700 MHz frequencies (decision to be made in 2020).



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## New Radio System

### Near Term Challenges

3. VHF (Low Band) Paging system requires modernization and expansion.

- \* Limited availability of Low Band pagers and base station transmitters.
- \* Poor signal saturation locally.
- \* **Solution:**
  - \* **Install a replacement system using existing, licensed County UHF frequencies.**
  - \* Replacement system included in the radio replacement plan
  - \* **Full in-building coverage will be achieved by 2026**
  - \* Will not address other paging bands or independent systems.





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## New Radio System

### Near Term Challenges

**Paging system:**

New and existing systems will be simulcast until agencies have replaced equipment or the existing system fails and cannot be repaired.

**Agency Planning:**

Many agencies have started to upgrade paging equipment to UHF. Agencies should start to budget for new paging equipment for future implementation.

**Options:** Agencies may consider available options for early in-building coverage.







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## Replacement System Construction Stages

\* **Stage 1 & 2 2018-2020**

- \* Approved for \$47M
- \* Replace and expand:
  - \* Fire/EMS/Transportation UHF Trunk System
  - \* 60 Control Dispatch Consoles
  - \* Fire Paging System (Low Band Replacement)
  - \* Voice Portion of Transportation CAD/AVL System
- \* Replace in kind:
  - \* County Police Dispatch and Interop System (F1/F3)
- \* Replace all mobiles, portables and control stations currently in service
- \* Utilize existing nine sites plus add eight sites to achieve on-street portable radio coverage
- \* Implement new paging system (multi site / multi frequency).



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## Replacement System Construction in Three Stages

- \* **Stage 3 (2021-2026)**
  - \* Move to 700 MHz if T-Band will be reallocated.
  - \* Additional sites will be added to optimize critical “in-building” portable coverage for light and medium buildings (including paging).
  - \* Large buildings may require individual solutions.
  - \* Invite local police departments on to the trunk system
  - \* Decommission low band paging system when all users have moved to the new system or when base stations cannot be repaired or replaced

NOTE: Fire Ground Frequencies & Operations Remain Unchanged



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## Timeline

- \* RFP responses received on January 16, 2018
  - \* Harris, Inc.
  - \* Motorola Solutions, Inc.
- \* Response analysis in progress
- \* Vendor selection in Third Quarter of 2018
- \* Stage 1-2 completed by September 2020



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## Resources:

- \* Project updates posted on DES website:
- \* <https://emergencyservices.westchestergov.com/radio-systems-updates>
- \* DES is working with the Fire and EMS Advisory Board on this project.





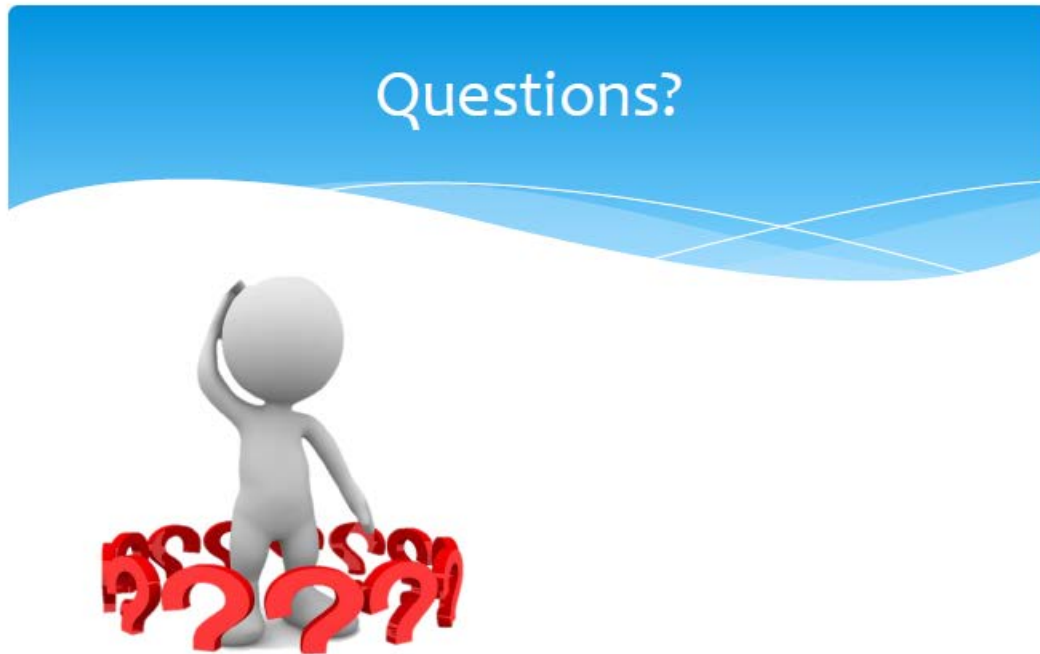
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The presentation will be available on the website

Items to note:

- SSIG Grant – this is adding microwave connectivity to all towers and added VTAC to 7 sites. This connected Rockland, Putnam and Orange County to the system. Microwave connectivity keeps the towers accessible if Lightpath fiber optic goes down.
- Motorola will maintain the County Radio System on a best effort basis through December 2019.
- T Band is scheduled to be withdrawn in 2023, there is Congressional and Senate support to save T-Band.
- The Low band paging system is going away and will be replaced by licensed UHF frequencies the County owns. The County will continue to page Low Band on a best effort basis until departments tell them to stop or equipment won't work.
- Fire ground Frequencies and Operations remain the same.



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- The County so far will replace all Portables, Mobil & Control stations that are in use now with new Radio Equipment as the system rolls out.
- Stage 1 & 2 were merged to try to accelerate the pace.
- Looking to have on street portable coverage by 2020.
- Stage 3 – scheduled to add 6 tower sites per year, for a total of 18 additional, these are sites that the County will need to get a presence on, meaning they are not on or have access to these sites at this time. When Stage 3 is complete the County should have in building coverage on Light and Medium constructed buildings. Once stage 3 is completed they can then assess Heavy Building coverage.

There was a question if the County can try to accelerate getting access to the new sites. Commissioner Cullen said that this is a problem and the Steering Committee has acknowledged it. There is now a Real Estate Planning Committee and they are working with the County and Local Planning agencies to try to shorten the process. Hank asked if the Board can help in any way to please let us know. Hank thanked Tom and Chief Volk for the presentation and their work on the project.

## **DES**

Commissioner Cullen and Bill Dingee reported there is a Career Fire Fighter Class running, there are 29 Candidates in the class and it should complete near the end of January 2019. Engine 7 is almost ready for final inspection at the Vendor, the rig has been moving along well. This will replace the existing Engine 7.

Advanced SCBA and Confined training props are almost completed. The Fire Blast trailer is in service. We now have 3 or 4 places to have live burns in the yard. The Backyard phase 2 is almost done in design and will go to bid.

On 10/21 at 10 AM, DES will have the Fallen Fire Fighter Ceremony. Four names will be added to the Memorial this year. Departments that have FF's added have been notified and will be in attendance. There is a Committee and a protocol for adding Fire Fighters to the Memorial. Information will be on the Website soon.

On October 26<sup>th</sup> there will be a State Mobilization and Mutual Aid Drill, paid departments and Police will participate. They meet at Yonkers Raceway and then go to Randall's Island. Location may change in 2019.

Captain Glen Cappello retired in the Communications Division. They hope to have the position filled by end of year. The budget for 2019 has been submitted and they will meet with the budget Sub-Committee & Director in October. The budget was held pretty much flat for 2019.



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Capital projects have been submitted and they include finishing the refurbishment of the DES building, storage building, restroom renovations, roadwork, paving and drainage work.

There was a question if there has been any discussion about adding Yonkers Fire Department to 60-Control dispatch. Hank said nothing has been brought to the Fire Advisory Board. Commissioner Cullen said there has been some preliminary discussion at this time. They are looking at compatibility of the system Yonkers uses with the County's system and then also capacity of the County. There is a lot of infrastructure that would need to be put in place. John said the County is working with Municipalities within the County to see what levels of consolidation is workable.

60 Control is dispatching 52 of the 58 Fire Departments and 31 of 50 EMS agencies within the County.

There was a motion made and seconded to adjourn the meeting, all voting Aye. The meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM. The next Fire Advisory Board meeting will be held on November 15<sup>th</sup> at DES at 7:30 PM.