



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

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September 14, 2024

City of Spokane
808 W Spokane Falls Blvd
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Dear City of Spokane,

The ongoing discourse between the City of Spokane and our regional communication system, Spokane Regional Emergency Communications (SREC), has raised several concerns that we feel need to be addressed directly. Our primary focus remains on providing exceptional public safety services, and we are committed to ensuring that this remains our top priority.

1. The Effectiveness of Our Regional Communication System

Our system, which operates with the collaboration of 21 top-tier agencies (including the City of Spokane Fire Department), has been functioning exceptionally well. The claims that suggest otherwise are not supported by the operational results and feedback from the involved experts. It is disheartening to see suggestions of inadequacy when the system's performance speaks volumes about its effectiveness.

2. Concerns Over Increased Government Involvement

The City of Spokane's proposal to gain control over this well-functioning system raises concerns. We believe that introducing additional layers of government oversight, particularly from those less familiar with public safety operations, could jeopardize the high level of service currently being provided. This is not about resisting change but about protecting the quality of public safety services that our community relies on.

3. Financial Considerations

There seems to be a misunderstanding or misrepresentation regarding the financial management of the system. Here are some clarifications:

- **User Fees and Reserves:** User fees are not allocated to reserves but are specifically designated for operational costs.
- **Funding Allocation:** The 1/10 of 1% tax is dedicated to critical areas such as CAD systems, radios, and new facilities, ensuring that our technology and infrastructure are up to date.
- **Contributions:** The City's financial contribution to the system is actually decreasing (down 3.1% since 2019), while the county's contribution is increasing (up 1.4% since 2019), per WA Department of Revenue. This reflects a shift in funding responsibilities and should be understood in the broader context of regional financial dynamics.

4. The City's Proposal for Bonds

We are puzzled by the City's desire to issue bonds when a strategic plan is already in place to manage and utilize existing funds effectively, as stated at the SREC Board meeting on August 29, 2024. Issuing bonds could impose additional tax burdens on our community, contrary to our goal of cost-efficiency and fiscal responsibility.

5. Call for Constructive Engagement

If the City of Spokane believes it can enhance public safety by creating an independent system, we welcome that initiative. However, if the current system is indeed performing with "issues" as suggested, it raises questions as to why the City would want to join it, per the City of Spokane SREC Analysis report. Our stance is clear: our system is operating effectively, and we are not inclined to negotiate based on political motivations.

In conclusion, our dedication to maintaining a top-tier communication system remains unwavering. We are committed to serving the public's safety and ensuring efficient use of taxpayer resources. We urge the City of Spokane to consider these points carefully and work collaboratively to support the ongoing success of our regional communication system.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



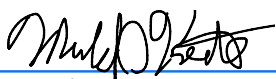
[John Guarisco \(Sep 14, 2024 11:29 PDT\)](#)

John Guarisco
Fire Commissioner – Board Chair



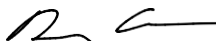
[Patrick Burch \(Sep 14, 2024, 12:13 PDT\)](#)

Patrick Burch
Fire Commissioner – Board Vice Chair




[Mike Kester \(Sep 14, 2024, 13:37 PDT\)](#)

Mike Kester
Fire Commissioner



[Brian Asmus \(Sep 14, 2024, 13:39 PDT\)](#)

Brian Asmus
Fire Commissioner



[Rick Freier \(Sep 14, 2024, 13:42 PDT\)](#)

Rick Freier
Fire Commissioner