

Kentucky County Dispatchers Lobby to Replace Outdated Kit

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(TNS) — The Owensboro-Daviess County Central Dispatch oversight committee will recommend to the city and county a 2018-19 fiscal year budget \$14,000 lighter than the prior year's.

But in it, once again, officials are requesting thousands of dollars worth of Project-25 radio equipment that Daviess Fiscal Court denied during the last round of budget talks this time last year.

"We are truly at a code-red situation with our P-25 system," said dispatch Director Paul Nave. "We've had failures with some of our servers once again this year. Because of that, we're really hopeful that the government bodies can see the need for this maintenance and upgrade. The longer we push this off, the higher our costs will be in the long run."

Project 25 refers to a suite of mobile digital radio frequency standards for public safety organizations. Compliance with federal equipment guidelines ensures that first responders can easily communicate with safety and security personnel from anywhere in North America.

Last year, the City Commission and Fiscal Court authorized the joint organization to replace outdated computer-aided dispatch software and hardware for the upcoming fiscal year, but only the city offered additional funding for radio upgrades.

"My recommendation was to approach those expenses a little slower," said Judge-Executive Al Mattingly, after approving the county's \$65.7 million total budget. "We could put some money aside, perhaps."

Nave has recommended \$405,150 for the radio equipment next fiscal year.

The oversight committee on Thursday approved an amendment to the budget recommendation transferring \$325,000 from dispatch reserves to pad the department's computer-aided dispatch equipment escrow fund before the purchase expected later this year. Another \$21,000 will purchase a radio distribution amplifier for the Daviess County Airport Fire Station.

That will leave \$133,821 in dispatch reserves, which does not include a surplus expected at the end of this fiscal year in June. That's more than enough, officials said, to cover any unexpected costs.

Cost savings for the upcoming fiscal year will come from separating the department's CAD and phone vendor maintenance costs.

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