

Dispatch Discussion Leads to County Wide Law Enforcement Conversation

(KLZA)-- Falls City Mayor Jerry Oliver, City Administrator Gary Jorn along with Police Department officials and Richardson County Sheriff Don Pounds attended the Richardson County Commissioners July 18th meeting.

Richardson County has expressed an interest in recent years, in renegotiating the contract for the Falls City Police Department to serve as the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for 911 Calls. Commissioners are concerned about the annual fees for service, which are in the neighborhood of \$125 - \$134,000. The agreement calls for each entity to pay half the costs.

City Administrator Gary Jorn said its possible the County is actually saving money under the agreement that has been in place for in the neighborhood of 30 years. He said the City is actually picking up part of the cost for 911 dispatching. Jorn said the last time he looked, the County was using less than one-cent of the County levy for dispatching.

The County is responsible for providing 911 service in Richardson County. However, through the agreement, the Falls City Police Department dispatches 911 calls for the County and the City.

With the new Richardson County Law Enforcement Center now open. Sheriff Don Pounds has expressed his wish to bring the PSAP to the Law Enforcement Center and do the 911 dispatching. That would mean the County would receive the 911 service charges paid by phone customers. Those fees, now collected by the City, are estimated to be around \$45,600 annually.

During the July 5th Commissioners meeting, Chairman David Sickel said he is not happy with the amount the County is paying for the dispatching, and feels services are being duplicated, costing taxpayers extra money.

During the meeting on the 18th, Sickel said its time to discuss County-wide-law enforcement, noting patrons are asking him why it's not being done in Richardson County, believing it would be a chance to save money.

As the meeting ended, Commissioners and City representatives agreed to have Sheriff Pounds schedule a meeting with Nemaha County, Nebraska Sheriff Brent Lottman and the Nemaha County Commissioners to discuss their county-wide law enforcement agreement.

It's anticipated that meeting will be in the latter part of August.

Many Signals Communications