

City / County dispatch agreement making progress

(KLZA)-- Falls City Council members discussed a draft agreement for the City to dispatch both emergency and non-emergency calls for Richardson County when they meet Tuesday evening.

Richardson County has notified Southeast Nebraska 911 in Beatrice that they will not renew a dispatch agreement with the organization to dispatch 911 calls when the current contract expires July 31.

The draft of the agreement was proposed to automatically renew annually, unless either Richardson County or the City gives notice to terminate the agreement with 180 days notice required before the termination date.

Council member Don Ferguson said he felt the agreement should be five years in length. Ferguson said the longer agreement would lend to stability due to the possibility of a change in City Council members or County Board members due to elections.

The Council voted to send the agreement back to City Attorney Mike Dunn and have it amended to be a five year term, followed by annual renewals. The vote was 7-0 with Council member Joe Buckminster absent.

Once the agreement is amended, it will be presented to the Richardson County Commissioners for their approval.

If the agreement is approved by both parties, the City would hire two additional dispatchers to give them a total of eight, so there would be dual dispatching capabilities. Richardson County would pay the cost of the training of the new dispatchers, estimated to be \$63,900.

If the agreement moves forward, the city and county would split the cost of dispatching in the future.

City Administrator Anthony Nussbaum said he feels the combined dispatch is a win-win situation for Falls City and Richardson County and the citizens.

An Advisory Committee would be formed that would include one representative for each entity served by the Falls City 911 Center.

Based on last years city budget, Nussbaum estimated that with the additional two dispatcher salaries, the annual budget would be around \$446,500 which would be split between the city and county, coming to around \$224,000 each.

It was noted that getting an agreement finalized as soon as possible is important with the need to hire two new dispatchers. It requires approximately six months of training for a new dispatcher to become 911 certified.

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