County of Los Angeles
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"To enrich lives through effective and caring service"

April 9, 2013

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Tom Tindall
Director

Subject: **STATUS REPORT ON RECONFIGURATION OF THE COUNTYWIDE INTEGRATED RADIO SYSTEM (CWIRS)**

This is a status report on the Internal Services Department's (ISD) project for frequency-band reconfiguration of the Countywide Integrated Radio System (CWIRS) under the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) nationwide mandatory re-banding program for 800 MHz channels.

Since our last memorandum to your Board on October 25, 2012, ISD has been in negotiations with Sprint Nextel to replace and upgrade CWIRS at no cost to the County. On April 1, 2013, Sprint Nextel offered a $20 million settlement. ISD is now in negotiations to complete details of the settlement agreement. If successful, we plan to seek your Board's approval for the settlement agreement in May 2013.

Background

CWIRS is a County radio system used for mobile communications by a number of departments, including Health Services, Public Works, Probation, Animal Care & Control and ISD. In addition to serving the day-to-day operations of its user departments, CWIRS is the County's primary disaster recovery mobile communications system in a major emergency incident.

About fifteen years ago, public agencies throughout the United States using the 800 megahertz (MHz) radio band frequency started to experience radio interference caused by adjacent frequency use by Nextel Communications, Inc. (now, Sprint Nextel). To eliminate this interference and allocate frequencies for more efficient use, the FCC issued orders in 2004 requiring all 800 MHz licensees, including the County, to move to new frequencies. The FCC also ordered Sprint Nextel to provide funding to all licensees for such reconfiguration.

The Opt-Out Upgrade

Sprint has offered an "opt-out" settlement, whereby a three-way accord is established among the County, Sprint Nextel, and the FCC, and all parties agree to settlement payments. This settlement provides the County with flexibility to upgrade CWIRS to meet the national Project 25 (P25) land mobile radio standard. P25 will enhance system compatibility and interoperability with other and future state-of-the-art public safety/service communication systems, including the planned Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System (LA-RICS).

In particular, on April 1, 2013, Sprint Nextel offered a $20 million settlement payment to re-band and simultaneously upgrade CWIRS. Additionally, Sprint Nextel offered to provide 6,247 new P25-ready radios, and Harris, our current CWIRS contractor, will upgrade 1,494 existing radios to the P-25 standard at no cost to the County.

ISD's next steps will be as follows:

1. Negotiate a contract and scope of work with Harris for a P25 upgrade and full system re-banding; and

2. Negotiate an FCC Frequency Reconfiguration Agreement (FRA) with Sprint Nextel, including the terms and conditions associated with the negotiated opt-out agreement.

Upon completion of the above, ISD will seek your Board's approval of the opt-out agreement.

Sprint Nextel's offer requires County acceptance by June 1, 2013. This time frame will provide Sprint Nextel with access to the required radio frequencies within 28 months after contract execution, pursuant to a mutually agreed upon schedule. Therefore, ISD will seek to conclude negotiations during April 2013, and request your Board's approval in May 2013.

We will continue to update your Board as any significant developments occur. If you have any questions, please contact me at (323) 267-2101. Your staff may also contact John Geiger at (323) 267-3443 or Robert King at (562) 940-2907.

TT:JLG:IT

c: ISD Board Deputies
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