



## **LOMBARD POLICE DEPARTMENT**



DATE: August 24, 2010

TO: David A. Hulseberg, AICP, ICMA-CM  
Village Manager

FROM: Raymond J. Byrne  
Chief of Police

**SUBJECT: DuPage County ETSB Radio Interoperability Project**

### **Introduction**

Since 2006, the DuPage County Emergency Telephone System Board (ETSB) has been researching the feasibility of a county-wide interoperable emergency radio network. In theory, this system would allow all DuPage County emergency response agencies (police, fire, EMS, sheriff) to communicate on a digital system, and perhaps more importantly, to communicate with each other. Communications interoperability has been a desired public safety goal since the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> and natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina exposed the weaknesses of first responders to talk to each other.

As you might imagine, this has proven to be a long and complex process involving technology, financing, intergovernmental cooperation, and federal grants. There are many stakeholders involved in this endeavor to include police departments, fire departments, fire protection districts, the DuPage County Sheriff's Department and the DuPage Mayors and Managers Association. It is a multi-million dollar project that is now reaching a critical point in terms of its moving forward. In order to be successful, the project will require a commitment from most public safety agencies in DuPage County. On the other hand, the more agencies that participate should help to keep costs down and increases the overall goal of true communications interoperability.

The ETSB is now requesting that municipalities and fire protection districts indicate their desire to participate in the radio interoperability project by signing a letter of intent. The letter is non-binding and subject to the approval of an actual intergovernmental agreement. However, based upon the number of letters of intent received, the ETSB will be able to make a decision about moving forward with equipment purchases and the intergovernmental agreement.

### **Executive Highlights**

In order to better understand the scope and purpose of the project, it would probably prove beneficial to provide information on some of the key components:

- Public safety agencies in DuPage County communicate on a variety of public safety bands (UHF, VHF, 700 or 800 MHz). Agencies on different bands cannot communicate with each other. This project would migrate all agencies onto a digital 700/800 MHz system within a statewide radio network known as STARCOM21. STARCOM21 is an existing statewide radio system that would be expanded to include all of DuPage County.

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- The ETSB is proposing to pay for significant equipment upgrades for dispatch centers including dispatch consoles as well as additional towers to expand the STARCOM21 radio network. They would also pay for an initial purchase of portable radios for all first responders in the county (estimated to be approximately 2,700).
- STARCOM21 is a Motorola communications system that requires monthly airtime fees for radios. The ETSB will pay these airtime fees for the first four years the system is in operation.
- DuComm, the village's dispatching center, stands to be a significant benefactor under this proposal. DuComm has an infrastructure that is old and outdated. Under the interoperability project, DuComm would receive a new radio console system (almost \$1,750,000 in equipment).
- One of the lingering issues DuComm has been trying to address is the lack of an adequate back-up facility. A STARCOM21 system will improve overall back-up communications for DuComm and eliminate obstacles for further consolidation into DuComm or the creation of a second facility.
- The DuComm Chief's Operations Committee (police and fire) have endorsed the proposed interoperability radio system for DuComm. DuComm's Executive Director, Brian Tegtmeier, fully supports the proposed project and will support it as a member of the ETSB. DuComm's ultimate participation in the project is subject to the approval of the DuComm Board of Directors.

### **Recommendation**

Interim Fire Chief Bill Balling and I recommend that the Village Board approve the Letter of Intent indicating our desire to be a part of the radio interoperability project at this time. This is a non-binding commitment that will allow the ETSB to make a determination as to what, if any, next steps are to be taken. There are still many financial aspects to be considered before signing any intergovernmental agreement. If an agreement and the financial aspects can be resolved, our community and the county stand to gain a superior, state of the art technology and communications system. It would represent a major upgrade in dispatching and first responder capabilities. There are a myriad of backup materials available for review on this project. If you should have any questions, or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.