

Finances, Planning and Staff at 911 Meeting

By Greg Wells
CCN – Editor

The Cumberland County 911 Board received an encouraging report on the county's emergency communications system during its quarterly meeting, while also beginning discussions about replacing aging tower antennas that could cost in the neighborhood of \$10,000.

911 Director Greg Cary told board members the system has experienced no major failures and remains operational, although a scheduled power outage revealed a problem with the battery backup serving the radio equipment. Rather than replace the entire unit at an estimated cost of nearly \$1,600, the agency purchased six replacement batteries for \$466 and restored the unit to service.

Cary also reported the county renewed its Active911 service for \$1,140. He said the service recently proved valuable when a radio problem prevented a page from being transmitted during a helicopter landing. Cary was alerted by his phone, allowing him to come to the dispatch center, reset the radio and restore service.

The dispatch center also has a new supervisor.

Sarah Wilson, of Monroe County, has accepted the dispatcher supervisor position following the resignation of Chris Garvey, who left to join the sheriff's office. Wilson had previously worked both full time and on a part-time, as-needed basis with the dispatch center.

Cary said Wilson has previous supervisory experience and the certifications required for the position.

Garvey will continue working with the dispatch center on a

part-time or as-needed basis. Board members also discussed the need to hire one or two additional part-time dispatchers to help reduce overtime and provide additional staffing coverage.

The board also received an update on a large-format map printer purchased for the dispatch center. Cary said the printer has been installed and is working well.

Board members said the equipment can be particularly useful during search-and-rescue operations because dispatchers can produce large maps divided into grids for emergency personnel working in the field. Cary said few, if any, neighboring counties have similar equipment.

Tim Struthers presented financial reports covering the end of the previous fiscal year and the first two months of the current fiscal year.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, the 911 operation reported \$485,126.83 in revenue and \$461,253.43 in expenses, leaving net income of \$23,873.40. Total assets at the end of the fiscal year were reported at \$307,576.54, with no current or long-term liabilities.

July produced \$45,866.69 in revenue and \$43,867.19 in expenses, for net income of \$1,999.50.

August revenue totaled \$13,678.93, while expenses were \$37,392.50. Through the first two months of the new fiscal year, revenue totaled \$59,545.62 and expenses totaled \$81,259.69, producing a year-to-date loss of \$21,714.07. Total assets at the end of August were \$285,862.47, with no current or long-term liabilities.

Much of the board's discussion centered on the communications

tower and its aging antennas.

Cary said the antennas are approaching 20 years old and are not testing as well as they once did. Although recent testing indicated replacement is not immediately necessary, he recommended the board begin planning for the expense in a future budget.

Cary estimated replacing the antennas, coaxial cable and related equipment and labor could cost approximately \$10,000, although he emphasized that figure was preliminary and that he is seeking formal quotes.

The antennas are considered critical because a failure could affect the dispatch center's ability to transmit emergency tones and other radio communications. Cary said dispatchers have handheld radios that provide some backup capability, and the department also has equipment that could be used as a temporary replacement if an antenna suddenly failed.

Board members discussed beginning to set aside money for the eventual replacement rather than facing the entire cost at once. They also discussed establishing a broader contingency or equipment replacement fund for critical communications infrastructure.

Cary said some radio and communications equipment has previously been purchased through grants, but those programs have generally not covered tower antennas and coaxial cable, leaving those expenses to the local 911 operation.

The board took no immediate action on the antenna replacement but asked Cary to obtain pricing information so the expense can be considered in future budgeting.

4-H Earns Top Finishes at State Championship



From Ruby Wright

Cumberland County 4-H Shooting Sports team members delivered an impressive performance Saturday at the Kentucky 4-H State Shooting Sports Championship.

The competition was Sept. 12 at the Blue Grass Sportsmen's League in Wilmore and brought together 1,035 young competitors from across Kentucky. Cumberland County was represented by 13 participants, who competed in

numerous individual and team events.

Clifton Brown led Cumberland County's individual results with state championships. Clifton placed first in BB rifle, 15-18 age group,

Cumberland County also recorded first-place team finishes in BB rifle competition 9 to 11 age groups.

The second day of competition, Sept. 13 at the Miller Welch Central WMA in Berea, saw 1,085 youths participating in

Trap Shooting competition. Cumberland County was represented by 8 participants in 3 different age groups.

Team members are : Clifton Brown 15-18 age group;

Allie Moore, Eli Moore, James Trapp, Kewaun Gibson, Brayden Vibbert, Jayden Wright 12-14 age group;

Maggie Vibbert, Jarred Trapp, Annabeth Drivers, Ava Scott, Kort Metcalfe, Marshall Metcalfe 9-11 age group.



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