

ITEM#: 12
DATE: 05-25-21

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO PAY STORYCOMM SUBSCRIBER FEES

BACKGROUND:

In December 2018, the City Council authorized the City's participation in StoryComm, an entity created by a 28E Agreement with Iowa State University, Story County, and the Story County 911 Service Board to own and operate a new county-wide radio system. The StoryComm Board of Directors has one member each from the City, Iowa State University, and Story County, and three additional non-voting, ex officio, members who are the permanent members of the Story County 911 Service Board Executive Committee.

Iowa State University agreed to serve as the fiscal agent for StoryComm. As the fiscal agent, Iowa State University sends and receives invoices on behalf of StoryComm, which includes invoicing participating agencies for their share of the costs to operate and maintain the system. As the fiscal agent of StoryComm, Iowa State University will invoice each participating agency annually.

In October 2019, the StoryComm Board set an annual "subscriber fee" to be charged to each active radio on the system, to pay for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the county-wide radio system, not including the radios themselves. **The Board set these fees at \$33.93 per radio, per month, for fiscal year 2020/21, or \$165,726.33 in total for the number of radios operated by the City.** The Story County 911 Service Board pays 50% of the subscriber fees for the public safety (police, fire, and EMS) agencies in Story County. This results in a \$31,760.82 savings for the City in fiscal year 2020/21. **Therefore, the net invoice amount to be paid by the City of Ames is \$133,965.51.**

The City is accustomed to paying a radio subscriber fee. Under a previous vendor and radio contract, in FY 2019/20 the City paid \$18.50 to \$20.50 per radio, per month in subscriber fees and an additional \$23.55 to \$47.50 per radio, per month in rental fees. In total, the City paid \$228,188.22 in radio subscriber and rental fees for roughly the same number of radios the City now owns and operates on the StoryComm system. With the new radio system, there will no longer be a monthly radio rental fee as the City elected to purchase radios in fiscal year 2019/20, as part of the approved City-Wide Radio System Capital Improvement Project. **It should be noted that the table above does not includes costs for radio maintenance, which will be incorporated into future years' payments to StoryComm. It is estimated that this additional radio maintenance fee will be \$108 per year per radio by the third year of operation.**

The table below details the cost for fees to be charged to the City, comparing the previous system's charges in FY 2019/20 with the StoryComm charges for FY 2020/21:

	FY 2019/20		FY 2020/21	
	410 Radios		407 Radios	
EXPENSES				
	Per Radio	Extended Cost	Per Radio	Extended Cost
Subscriber Fee	\$18.50-\$20.50/mo.	\$95,172.00	\$33.93/mo.	\$165,726.33
Radio Rental	\$23.55-\$47.50/mo.	\$153,803.22	-	-
TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES		\$248,975.22		\$165,726.33

FUNDING SOURCES				
911 Service Board		\$20,787.00		\$31,760.82
City Funds		\$228,188.22		\$133,965.51
TOTAL FUNDING		\$248,975.22		\$165,726.33

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Authorize payment to StoryComm in the amount of \$133,965.51 for the annual subscriber fees for radio operation for Fiscal Year 2020/21.
2. Do not authorize payment to StoryComm and provide further direction to City staff.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

As part of the creation and design of StoryComm, it was agreed that all agencies with active radios on the system, including Iowa State University, Story County, the City of Ames, and all local volunteer Fire and EMS agencies within the county would support the ongoing maintenance and operation of the radio system through annual "subscriber fees", which would be invoiced annually to each agency.

Funding for these fees have been included in the departmental operating budgets. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as noted above.