

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Commission,) Application No. 911-046/
on its own motion, seeking to) PI-167
investigate costs and options)
for the statewide maintenance of) FINAL ORDER
Geographic Information Systems)
(GIS) Data necessary for the)
provision of Enhanced Wireless) Entered: November 3, 2010
911 Service.)

BY THE COMMISSION:

On April 27, 2010, the Nebraska Public Service Commission opened the present docket on its own motion, seeking to investigate costs and options for the statewide maintenance of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Data necessary for the provision of Enhanced Wireless 911 Service.

The Commission sought to explore alternatives to ensure that this data is maintained in the most efficient and cost effective manner and requested comment regarding a variety of issues.

Written comments were filed on behalf of the Alliance Police Department, the Office of the Chief Information Officer for the State of Nebraska, the Boone County Sheriff's Department, the Columbus Police Department, GeoComm, the GIS Council of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission, and GIS Workshop.

E V I D E N C E

Hearing was held on October 5, 2010. Testimony was offered by Sue Vanicek, director of the Nebraska Telecommunications Infrastructure and Public Safety Department (Department); Mary Ann Agler, dispatcher for the Lincoln County 911 center; Marcus Tooze, CEO of GIS Workshop; Stacen Gross, regional manager with GeoComm; Sheriff Nels Sorensen from Jefferson County; Dale Casper from Franklin County; Captain Todd Thalken from the Columbus Police Department; and Captain Jeff Morris from the Saunders County Sheriff's office.

Ms. Vanicek testified that PSAPs may be able to pursue maintenance contracts on a statewide basis; however, staff did not believe that the Commission had the authority to do so on their behalf. She further testified that utilizing a time and materials basis for the maintenance of GIS data may be an alternative but certain guidelines would have to be established to ensure the timely maintenance of data. Ms. Vanicek further suggested that PSAPs may wish to pursue joint maintenance contracts in conjunction with other PSAPs through interlocal agreements to reduce costs. Finally, Ms. Vanicek stated that

staff was unaware of any state agency with the personnel capable of providing 911 data maintenance services to PSAPs.

Representatives of the PSAPs testified regarding the quality of the data services their PSAP receives from their vendors and the fact that they do not have staff capable of handling the same tasks. Each also expressed concern regarding any state agency's ability to provide the same quality of service and not having any choice in vendors.

Both Mr. Tooze and Mr. Gross expressed concern regarding a state agency providing GIS maintenance for GIS data. Each testified that neither the GIS Council nor the Office of the CIO have the resources to provide 911 GIS data maintenance to PSAPs statewide. The databases at issue are built and maintained specifically for the purpose of 911 dispatching. The maintenance of 911 GIS data differs from GIS data used for other applications. Mr. Tooze and Mr. Gross stated that maintenance costs are personnel driven as a minimum staff of highly technical and skilled individuals is required regardless of the size of the county and number of updates it may have. The GIS vendors stated that based upon their experiences working with various PSAPs, they are better able to assess the time necessary to provide the service. Each expects the costs to decrease for some PSAPs and increase for others.

O P I N I O N A N D F I N D I N G S

To date, public safety answering points (PSAPs) have been responsible for the maintenance of their own GIS data. Douglas, Sarpy and Lancaster Counties each employ in-house personnel to satisfy this function. Other counties have entered into contracts with private vendors to handle this function. Many of these contracts will be expiring within the next year.

Prior to the adoption of the permanent funding mechanism in Docket No. 911-019/PI-118, the Enhanced Wireless 911 Fund (Fund) paid one hundred percent of the cost of these contracts. Pursuant to Docket 911-019/PI-118, GIS data maintenance costs are treated as shared costs between wireless and wireline 911 service and will be subject to the wireless/wireline allocation factor or the PSAP's individual wireless/wireline call ratio.

The maintenance of accurate GIS data is vital to the operation of the enhanced 911 system. It is equally important that this service be done in the most cost effective manner for PSAPs.

The Commission explored various options for the provision of maintenance in an efficient and cost effective manner. We have received positive comments regarding the various vendors currently providing maintenance services and have also received comments that PSAPs wish to maintain control over the choice of vendors for this service.

Based upon the comments and testimony received, it appears that PSAPs are satisfied with the vendors currently providing GIS maintenance services to PSAPs. It does not appear that any state agency possessing the necessary personnel to maintain GIS data specifically for 911 purposes currently exists. Furthermore, the Commission does not have the statutory authority to enter into a statewide contract on behalf of PSAPs for the maintenance of GIS data. Therefore, it appears that utilizing private vendors continues to be the preferred option.

The Commission encourages PSAPs to explore cooperative options with surrounding PSAPs and their respective vendors in an effort to reduce the overall costs of providing enhanced wireless 911 service, including the maintenance of the wireless 911 GIS data.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that it does not have the authority to enter into a statewide contract on behalf of individual public safety answering points for the provision of maintenance services for 911 GIS data necessary for the provision of Enhanced Wireless 911 Service.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that no further action is necessary at this time and the above-captioned docket be, and is hereby, closed.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 3rd day of November, 2010.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Chairman

ATTEST:

Executive Director