



MEMORANDUM

TO: Government Oversight Committee

FROM: Alice Fulk Wisner

DATE: June 6, 2018

RE: 911 Wireless Surcharge First Calendar Quarter Report (January to March 2018)

The Legislative Services Agency has received the first calendar quarter report for 2018 from the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department (HSEMD), as required in Iowa Code section [34A.7A\(3\)\(b\)](#).

During the 2014 Legislative Session, [HF 644](#) (E911 Surcharge Equalization Act) imposed a \$1 surcharge on both wireless and wireline 911 programs. This quarter, the HSEMD received \$7.4 million in revenue from the 911 wireless surcharge and interest. Of this amount, \$584,000 was received through prepaid wireless card revenue, an increase of \$25,000 (4.5%) compared to the previous calendar quarter. A total of \$46,000 in interest was earned during this quarter, an increase of \$6,000.

Iowa Code section [34A.7A](#) specifies the priority order for expenditure of the surcharge funds collected. The total expended this quarter was \$5.9 million. Listed below, by priority order, are the amounts expended:

- \$4.4 million for the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), no change from the previous quarter. The funding formula allocates 60.0% of the total surcharge generated during the quarter to the PSAPs according to the following formula: 65.0% based on the square mileage of the local 911 service area and 35.0% based on the volume of wireless 911 calls received. There are currently 113 PSAPs providing 56,276 square miles of coverage. In this quarter, the PSAPs received 202,805 wireless calls, a decrease of 17,490 calls compared to the last quarter.
- \$206,000 for wireless service provider cost recovery. This is the amount claimed by the wireless carriers. From the total revenue received by the HSEMD, 10.0% is allocated to wireless carriers for cost recovery associated with providing wireless 911 Phase 1 (tower address, callback number) service. The difference between the actual amount expended (\$206,000) and the 10.0% allocation (\$738,000) is transferred to the surplus fund.
- \$1.3 million for wireless transport costs and automated location information costs, a decrease of \$131,000 compared to the previous calendar quarter. Of this, \$174,000 was for costs incurred by the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) for transporting calls from the selective router to the PSAPs; \$477,000 for contracted costs through Telecommunication Systems, Inc. (TCS), for automated location information (ALI), data center facilities and backup Internet Protocol (IP) connectivity, and maintenance agreements for hardware and software; \$190,000 was paid to GeoComm for Next Generation 911 Geographic Information

Systems (GIS) work; \$21,000 for aerial photography; \$316,000 for local PSAP Text-to-911 network costs; and \$100,000 for GIS grants to local PSAPs.

The total operating surplus available in the Wireless Surcharge Carryover Fund and other accounting units was \$18.1 million at the end of the first calendar quarter, an increase of \$1.5 million compared to the previous calendar quarter. Of the total surplus available from the Fund, \$8.7 million is currently obligated for the following:

- \$1.9 million for network capacity increases. Network capacity must be increased when there is a continued long-term increase in 911 calls that causes calls to roll over to other PSAPs or administrative lines.
- \$6.0 million for the Next Generation (NG) 911 GIS Project, including statewide imagery. The money is to be used to upgrade the system to provide the PSAP with the address of the caller. A total of \$10.0 million is projected to be expended for this project over five years.
- \$231,000 for Text-to-911 costs incurred by the local PSAPs for connectivity with the NG project.
- \$547,000 for GIS grants to the PSAPs.
- \$44,000 for public education undertaken by the 911 Communications Council and its travel expenses.

In 2016, several changes were made in [HF 2439](#) (E911 Emergency Communications Funding Act) relating to the 911 Wireless Surcharge Fund, the most significant being that beginning in FY 2017, the carryover amount would be limited to \$3.5 million annually to reflect the estimated need in the event of a manmade or natural disaster that would result in widespread network failure, and the initial distribution of funds to PSAPs will be 60.0% of the total amount of 911 surcharge generated per calendar quarter. However, bringing the carryover amount down to \$3.5 million was not achievable because of the limitations on distributions to the PSAPs through the formula and the cap of \$4.4 million for local PSAP consolidation grants.

In 2017, [SF 500](#) (911 Emergency Telephone and Internet Communication Systems Act) made several changes relating to the 911 emergency telephone communication system and the 911 Surcharge Fund. The most significant changes in relation to funding were to allow the 911 Program Manager to provide grants for the purpose of developing and maintaining GIS data to be used in support of the NG 911 network, require the HSEMD to develop a plan to combine the wireline 911 network with the NG 911 network, and change the amount of funds available for local PSAP consolidation grants from \$4.4 million to \$7.0 million while specifying that these consolidations will be physical rather than virtual.

In 2018, [HF 2254](#) (911 Emergency Telephone Systems Act) removed the cap on the amount of funds available for local PSAP consolidation grants. The Act also eliminated the wireline network and created a shared service environment that the HSEMD will operate and maintain. Public Safety Answering Points can voluntarily opt in to utilize this shared service, which will create equipment and operational cost savings at the local level.