

## SERS – SNOHOMISH COUNTY 911 MERGER STEERING COMMITTEE

### Meeting 3

Monday, March 12, 2018

Kinard Room - Sheriff's Office - 4th Floor of the County Courthouse

2:30 – 4:15 P.M.

[NOTE NEW START AND END TIME TO ACCOMMODATE COUNTY LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION that same afternoon from 1:30-2:30.]

### Proposed Agenda

1. Welcome/Review of Today's Agenda (2 min.) Karen
2. Approval of Meeting Summary from February 26/Meeting 2 (3 min.) Karen
3. Communications and Other Updates (10 min.) All
  - Website
  - Employee Survey
  - Staff meeting on schedule/critical path issues
  - SERS staff assurances
4. County Council Law & Justice Committee Discussion (25 min.) All
5. Review of results of Board Survey, next steps (15 min.) Karen
6. Review of results of Employee Survey (10 min.) Karen
7. Scoping discussion: Tasks associated with incorporating SERS funding allocations and assessments into a merged agency (15 min.) Terry
8. Brainstorming: critical path issues/questions for timing of merger (20 min.) All
9. Next Agenda (5 min.) Karen
  - Review of Employee survey results
  - Consolidation/Merger timing discussion w/Radio Project staff
10. Adjourn

## SERS-SNO911 Merger Steering Committee

Meeting Summary for February 26, 2018/ 2-4:00 p.m.

Location: Snohomish County Admin Conference Room-6A02

Note: *Follow-up action items are noted in italics.* Decisions are underlined.

### Meeting Attendance:

| Committee Members  |   |                |   |                                |   |
|--------------------|---|----------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Jon Nehring        | x | Bryan Stanifer | x | John Dyer                      | x |
| Pam Pruitt         | x | Tom Mesaros    |   | Joanie Fadden (for Ty Trenary) |   |
| Ty Trenary         | x |                |   |                                |   |
| Guests             |   |                |   |                                |   |
| Susan Neely        | x | Brian Haseleu  | x | Richard Schrock                | x |
| Staff Support Team |   |                |   |                                |   |
| Ralph Krusey       | x | Terry Peterson | x | Sharon Brendle (notetaker)     | x |
| Kurt Mills         |   | Karen Reed     | x |                                |   |

1. **Welcome:** Karen called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
2. **Review of Today's Agenda:** Karen went over the agenda and spoke briefly about the survey that was recently distributed to board members at SERS and SNO911.
3. **Bryan Stanifer moved to approve the meeting summary from February 12. The motion was seconded by Pam Pruitt and approved unanimously.**
4. **Communications and Other Updates.**
  - **Website.** All postings will be made to the SNO911 website. There will be a link from the SERS website to the SNO911 website postings.
  - **Binders.** Meeting packets will be emailed prior to the meeting. Hard copies will be provided at each meeting. Committee members are free to arrange their binder as they wish.
  - **Committee appointments.** SNO911 has formally selected Chief John Dyer, Councilmember Tom Mesaros, and Sheriff Ty Trenary as their representatives to this committee. Joanie Fadden was selected as an alternate for the Sheriff, and may vote only in the absence of the Sheriff. In discussion it was agreed that participation in meetings would be allowed under special circumstance at the Chair's discretion.
  - **Legal Counsel.** SNO911 approved attorney Deanna Gregory as legal counsel for the SERS-SNO911 Merger Process. Brad Cattle will represent SERS.
  - **Boards Survey.** This has been distributed. Karen developed the list of questions. Responses were due today.
  - **Meeting date changes.** The meeting scheduled for 4/9 will need to be moved. April 2nd was agreeable to all. *Joanie Fadden will be asked to confirm a meeting space.* The Sheriff offered one of their conference rooms.

5. **Due Diligence Plan/Task/Timeline.** Terry Peterson spoke about the due diligence plan. Contract review has been started, as well as review of debts, insurance, leases, and licensing. Estimated legal costs for review to be around \$10,000. They will also need to review FCC licenses. He expects to have a report on the first of next month. He was asked if there were any personnel contracts that would also need review. Ralph said that all employees, including the new director, are at-will. Regarding reassurances to current SERS employees, there was consensus to ask the SERS Board to draft a letter. There was also agreement that the SERS employees should be surveyed on their thoughts about the potential merger.
6. **County financing project update.** This item was moved up in today's agenda. There was a discussion about issues related to the ballot measure, voter support, city support and the timeline. Discussion points included:
  - City support will be very important to the success of the ballot measure.
  - Funding of the radio system is more important than the merger. The merger issue shouldn't impact the funding. SERS funding committee will still bring recommendations to the SERS board and those recommendations/decisions will drive the project.
  - Everyone stressed the importance to get the funding issue in front of the County Council for action as soon as possible. *The Sheriff will be working with Councilmember Stephanie Wright to secure a meeting date in mid-March, if at all possible.*
  - The public is concerned on how the radio system affects them. How do we educate the public about the need to upgrade the system.
  - Susan Neely spoke about sales tax and how it's a permanent funding stream, but recommended that decisions will need to be made to determine what percentage of it goes to initial project construction, how much will go to operations, and how much to replacement reserves. She added that the County Council will need a good initial construction cost number.
  - It was agreed by all that Brian Haseleu, Susan Neely and Richard Schrock attend these meetings as non-voting members.
7. **Committee Scope and Purpose Statement and Committee Charter.** Karen spoke about the scope and purpose statement, including the timeline. There was still a question about moving too quickly, but June seems to be the preferred date to finish the committee's work. There was full consensus to move forward with the outlined scope and purpose statement plan, and to present it to the SERS and SNO911 Boards in March.  
In terms of specific items on the work plan, the 5 year integrated budget pro forma will include operating costs for the merger project but not include the radio system upgrade costs which are unknown. *Terry, Ralph and Brian Haseleu will work on developing the budget.*
8. **Committee Ground Rules.** Presented by Karen. There was full consensus to accept these ground rules.

9. **Request legal opinion on process for SERS Board Vote required to merge/consolidate with or be acquired by SNO911.** *Karen will keep Ralph and Jon looped in to the outreach to SERS legal counsel Brad Cattle, to ask for this information.*

10. **Next Agenda:**

- Legal process options for integration - legal structure comparisons
- Review of input from Board Members - survey results
- Consolidation/Merger timing discussion with radio project staff
- Letter of assurances to SERS staff
- Employee survey results
- Additional input from funding committee

**Closing Comments / Adjourn.** The next meeting will be held on March 12, 2018, in the Kinard Room, 4th Floor of the County Courthouse at 3000 Rockefeller Avenue. The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

## **SERS and SNO911 Board Questionnaire – February 2018**

### **Themes from Responses to Questionnaire.**

March 9, 2018

In mid-February 2018, all Board Members and Alternates on the Board of SERS and SNO911 were sent an eight-question survey electronically on Survey Monkey. The intent of the survey was to identify opinions and ideas regarding the potential merger or consolidation of the two agencies.

This document summarizes the input from the survey, without attribution.

#### **Response Rate**

There were 30 total responses. Nine respondents reported that they are on both boards. One respondent is on neither board.

SERS has 11 Board members and 21 Alternates, or a total of 32 potential respondents.

*Response rate: 16 of 32 (including non-board member mayor respondent) (52%)*

SNO911 has 16 Board members and 16 Alternates, or a total of 32 potential respondents.

*Response rate: 23 of 32 (72%)*

#### **Overview of Results**

Overall, the SERS Board respondents raised more concerns about the potential merger and were more likely to seek a slower path to merger than their peers on the SNO911 Board. Public safety staff on both boards were generally strongly in support of a merger, and a faster timeline. Elected officials had very diverse views.

There is general agreement on the benefits of a merger and the types of issues that need to be studied before any merger or consolidation is approved.

The most significant substantive disagreement registered relates to the timing of the merger. Several respondents see it as important to accomplish prior to the public radio financing campaign, expressing a view that voters will be more likely to support the measure if they understand it is about supporting 911 rather than "SERS." Others see 2019 or even 2020 as a more appropriate date for the merger, expressing a view that it would be better to wait until the SNOCOM-SNOPAC merger has settled in, or alternately expressing concern about whether merger issues could interfere with the radio system ballot measure. For most of those expressing a desire for later merger timing, it is not clear whether they agree with the current decision making schedule (June 2018) with a later implementation date, or they would also prefer the decisions to be made later.

#### **Survey Question Response Summary**

##### **1. What do you see as the primary benefits of merger SERS and SNO911 into a single agency?**

By far, the most frequently mentioned benefit across all respondents is efficiency. For some respondents, this means a hope that costs will be reduced, but for most, the efficiency benefit observed

relates to having closely related and interdependent public safety functions integrated and managed under one roof. Typical responses mentioned:

- The ability to accomplish greater coordination and reduce conflict across these operations
- Improved oversight and governance
- Streamlined governance and budgeting
- Speaking to the public with one voice
- Improved transparency for the public
- Having a stronger systems approach
- Administrative savings
- Improved administrative support and oversight for SERS
- A financially stronger organization

## **2. Do you see downsides to the merger? If so, please describe.**

There were many responses to this question, no consensus position(s). The most common response (from 8 respondents) was:

- No downsides / None.

The most common downsides mentioned (4 respondents each) were:

- Loss of local control (perceived or actual)
- Political concerns (not specified)

## **3. What questions or concerns do you have about the merger?**

There was no consensus opinion. The most frequently offered questions/concerns were:

- None.
- Will safety be improved for first responders and the public?
- What will the costs be? How will costs be allocated? Will it be cost effective/increase efficiency?

A handful of respondents offered that the need for the merger is not clear to them. There were a range of operational questions around staff capacity, facilities.

## **4. What tasks do you see as particularly important to undertake as the process moves forward**

Again there was no consensus view here, but a range of helpful suggestions. The most frequently mentioned issues were:

- Ensuring **transparency**—for the boards, employees and the public
- Understanding/reviewing the **organizational chart/reporting structure** in a merged agency.
- **Understanding costs**: what they will be, how much savings, how much efficiency, how costs will be allocated, how will budgets and rates work, etc.

- Will **safety / service be increased** for first responders and the public?

#### 5. What information is important for the Boards to see?

Many different suggestions were offered. The two most frequent suggestions were the **organizational chart/staffing plans**, and **financial information** –cost projections, financial planning, funding formula.

A few respondents also mentioned the need to coordinate this work with the radio replacement project.

#### 6. Do you have ideas about the timing for the integration of the two agencies – when should it occur? Are there actions that you think should occur before the *merger happens*? Why?

Nine respondents said **sooner rather than later** or **ASAP/as soon as practicable**.

Eight respondents expressed that this should occur **before the funding package is submitted to the voters**, several noting that the public has a greater understanding of what 911 is than what SERS is.

On the other hand, at least 6 people expressed a preference for a **2019 (or later)** merger date.

Four SERS Board members expressly noted that the work should not be rushed. Most of these respondents noted that it is important for the SNOCOM-SNOPAC merger to be well implemented first before taking on a merger with SERS.

For most of those expressing a desire for later merger timing, it is not clear whether they agree with the current decision making schedule (June 2018) with a later implementation date, or they would also prefer the decisions to be made later.

This is a significant split in position that will need to be resolved.

#### 7. The Steering Committee plans to provide updates to the two Boards each month, and will post its meeting agendas and materials online. Are there other communication strategies you think the Committee should deploy?

Joint Board briefings were mentioned by several respondents. Other strategies noted included:

- Brief employees
- Brief member agency councils and commissions
- Brief Police and Fire Chief meetings
- Conduct a Town Hall to share concerns.
- Occasional press release
- Re-poll the Boards in 60-90 days.
- Alert boards when info is posted online.

**8. Any other feedback or ideas you would like to offer?**

There were only a handful of suggestions, the most common being a theme of not rushing the discussions.

## **SERS and SNO911 Employee Questionnaire – March 2018**

### **Themes from Responses to Questionnaire**

March 8 2018

In early March, 2018, all SERS employees and the management team at SNO911 were sent a very similar survey as was submitted to the Board members in February. The intent of the survey was to identify opinions and ideas regarding the potential merger or consolidation of the two agencies.

This document summarizes the input from the survey, without attribution.

#### **Response Rate**

SERS has 7 employees. 4 responded.

SNO911 has \_\_\_ members on its' management team (excluding Kurt and Terry). There were 4 responses.

#### **Overview of Results**

Respondents generally see benefit to the merger. A theme from some SERS employees is that radio system information technology (IT) issues are very different from PSAP IT issues and they are concerned about the differences potentially getting lost/causing problems in a merger if the organization is not structured to separate out the two functions. SNO911 respondents did not mention this issue.

#### **Survey Question Response Summary**

##### **1. What do you see as the primary benefits of merger SERS and SNO911 into a single agency?**

All respondents mentioned the relationship of the current service offerings of both agencies—the activities are integrally linked and as a single agency, so a merger seems logical. There is a general sense that it would be possible to streamline processes to be more efficient, improve oversight/support, and potentially improve services.

SERS employees specifically mentioned benefits to include:

- Streamline workflow
- Better pricing on benefits
- Better ability to support first responders
- Increased operational understanding
- Efficiency and eventually cost savings
- Better administrative support for SERS

SNO911 employees mentioned:

- Streamline communications, cooperation
- Integration of operations
- Lower operating costs
- Improved communications

**2. Do you see downsides to the merger? If so, please describe.**

Six of 8 respondents identified no downsides. Two SERS respondents noted the differences between radio system IT and PSAP IT being a potential downside depending on how things get structured in a merged agency.

**3. What questions or concerns do you have about the merger?**

The most frequently mentioned issue was the organizational chart. Other issues mentioned included commitments to/future of employees, commitments about cuts – whether those made today will be feasible in 2 years, where staff will be located.

**4. What tasks do you see as particularly important to undertake as the process moves forward**

The org chart was mentioned by multiple respondents. The need for SNO911 administrators and board to become very familiar with the SERS operation was mentioned, as was determining the status/salary/benefits of SERS employees; determining the work load on

**5. What information is important for the Boards to see?**

Suggestions included:

- Teamwork and positive attitude from all involved
- Cost issues / potential savings
- Desire for a seamless transition
- Boards need to understand the different operations
- Implications for tech support staff –will they need more resources or support?

**6. Do you have ideas about the timing for the integration of the two agencies – when should it occur? Are there actions that you think should occur before the *merger happens*? Why?**

- 2 votes---after the South and North merger is completed after the PSAP merger complete
- 3 votes-- sooner rather than later/ soon as feasible / quickly as possible
- 2 votes--No ideas
- 1 vote --Ideally after the radio project is done, but that's several years out, so doing it soon focus should be on understanding SERS mid-level and field staff will be very busy with that project— plan accordingly.
- The SNO911 and SERS directors should meet directly with staff and ask for input/questions.

**7. Any other feedback or ideas you would like to offer?**

- Keep engaged with employees, keep them updated, potentially poll staff again on issues later.
- Reinforcing need to keep radio side and PSAP side separate with their own director.
- “Non-SERS members will be skeptical until we actually merge. It has already been mentioned that our commitment is only words and the rest of the county is waiting to see it happen.”
- Thank you for working to consolidate the agencies. “We are already beginning to see the benefits of PSAP consolidation.”

**SERS –SNO911 Merger Schedule Brainstorming:**

- What decisions and agreements need to be developed, by when, to accomplish the radio project? To accomplish the merger?
- Who are party to any required agreements?
- What are the critical path issues?
- What risks should we be mindful of?

| March 2018  | June 2018 | August 2018                                  | November 2018   | December 2018 | January 2019 | March 2019 |
|---|-----------|--|---|---------------|--------------|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (SCC) Financing source for project</li> <li>• (SCC) Permissible use of funds, allocation requirements</li> <li>• (SCC) Election date</li> <li>• (SERS) Select Vendor and begin price negotiations to get firm project cost</li> <li>• (SERS) make any changes needed to SERS ILA required in order to sign contract with SC for project oversight/funding</li> </ul> |           | 8/7 ballot language due for November         | 11/6—general election<br><br>Election certified by end of month |               |              |            |
|   |           | Public education/outreach                    |   |               |              |            |
|   |           | 2019 budgets wrapping up for SERS and SNO911 |   |               |              |            |

- ? Will merger need to happen before the project management agreement can be signed (this is a question about the SERS ILA, and any decision about the posture for the public outreach effort)
- ? If SERS can sign the project management agreement this year (with or without ILA changes) is there a logical transition point/merger timing?
- ? Lessons learned from SNOCOM-SNOPAC consolidation?

| Agreements   | Parties  | Timing  | Data needed / Questions  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Bonds issued                                       | County   | 2019?   | Funding source, repayment plan, allocation of proceeds, project cost/description, oversight plan |
| Vendor Contract Signed for construction of system. | Vendor, SERS, County?<br><i>Will be assigned to SNO911</i> |   |  |
| Project management contract (SERS as "manager")    | SERS, County, Vendor?<br><i>Will be assigned to SNO911</i> |   |  |
| Plan of Merger                                     | SERS, SNO911   | Any time prior to merger date.<br>To be filed with state. |  |
| Articles of Merger                                 | SERS, SNO911   | Any time prior to merger date.<br>To be filed with state  |  |
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