



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of May 16, 2009**

DATE: ~~May 1, 2009~~ May 13, 2009

SUBJECT: Appropriation of an Office of Commonwealth Preparedness public safety Interoperability regional grant.

REVISION EXPLANATION: Provides correct background information.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Appropriate \$115,000 grant funds in FY 2009 from the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness (101.364900) to the Fire Department (101.34401) for the development of a regional public safety interoperability plan.

ISSUE: There are no issues with the acceptance of this grant.

SUMMARY: This grant provides funds to develop a strategic communications interpretability plan for the Northern Virginia (NOVA) public safety agencies.

BACKGROUND: ~~Jurisdictions that provide ALS or Basic Life Support (BLS) transport services have a requirement to electronically report patient treatment transport data to the state. A condition of accepting the grant is to install and use the state EMS Registry or similar software on each computer to meet the reporting requirement. Significant investment has been made in NOVA information technology (IT) projects to strengthen public safety interoperable communications and all hazards capabilities. While advances have been made in voice interoperability, jurisdictional/agency IT environments include a vast array of technologies, systems and applications that can't communicate with each other. An infusion of grant funds following 9/11 resulted in the deployment of new assets; however, most projects were based on individual jurisdiction/agency need and did not necessarily consider the need for interoperability. Without benefit of a cohesive regional vision and goals, the planning process was fragmented and investments were made in systems and equipment that may not be interoperable and/or may be at risk of not being supported or not being upgraded or replaced as they depreciate due to a lack of funds and ownership.~~

DISCUSSION: ~~Northern Virginia (NOVA)~~ is comprised of the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park; counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William; and the towns of Dumfries, Herndon, Leesburg, Purcellville and Vienna. The NOVA region, covering 1,380 square miles with a population of two million people, is one of the most densely populated regions in the U.S. and has an estimated total infrastructure exposure of \$181 billion. The region is vulnerable to a wide range of natural disasters (floods, tornadoes,

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County Attorney: _____
Staff: James Schwartz, Fire Department

hurricanes and winter storms); and with its proximity to the nation's capital is a high risk terrorist target area. Recent events have emphasized the urgent need for public safety agencies and other agencies including police, firefighters, transportation and public health to communicate reliably and effectively during a crisis.

These grant funds will be used to develop a roadmap for a comprehensive regional public safety interoperability framework that will align emergency support processes, IT software and hardware, local and wide area networks, people, operations and projects with the region. Not only will the roadmap provide guidance for prioritizing new initiatives, it will assist the region in leveraging those assets already deployed and provide a methodology and metrics for measuring success.

FISCAL IMPACT: The grant funds will be used to pay for consulting staff through a state contract to perform a capabilities analysis, identify existing gaps, facilitate sessions with executive leadership and develop a regional public safety interoperability plan (\$110,000); and general administrative, graphics and travel (\$5,000). No County funds will be required or used.