UCA Radio Console Sub-committee Report

June 09, 2016

Summary

Members of the UCA Board, UCA Staff and Motorola met on June 09, 2016 to discuss the radio consoles, within the current UCA radio network, as well as options to support console purchase, replacement and maintenance within current 911 PSAPS. Discussions focused on the UCA's current and future responsibility with respect to radio consoles, and interoperability concerns associated to this issue. Background of recent and current funding changes within UCA were discussed, as well as historical and current responsibility of UCA to radio consoles within individual PSAPs.

At the conclusion of discussions, it was decided to forward the following recommendation to the UCA Chair and Board:

- No change in the current responsibility of UCA for the radio consoles within the individual PSAPs prior to the completion of a UCA strategic plan, and a final decision regarding upgrade of the radio network.
- The UCA Board direct the inclusion of radio consoles as part of core network decision, within the strategic plan and overall decision regarding radio network upgrades.

It is imperative to recognize that UCAs provision and responsibility of radio consoles, as part of the core network, is ***funding dependent.*** A new source of revenue for UCA must be provided prior to UCA funding any replacement radio consoles. These recommendations are based on issues and changes currently at the focus of the UCA Board and Staff, outlined below.

Attending

UCA board members: Michael Rapich, Mike Mathieu, Scott Finlayson and Rick Baily. UCA employees: Jake Hunt, Omar Essa and Derol Simkins. Motorola representatives: John Tate and Dave Hill.

Items Discussed

- UCA responsibility current and future responsibility with respect to radio consoles and network integrity.
- Interoperability capabilities and functionality of disparate consoles within a radio network.

Back Ground

During the 2014 Utah State Legislative Session, approximately $17.5 million was appropriated to the Utah Communications Authority (UCA) to address existing needs for improvement to the 800-radio network. Included was approximately $6 million to purchase new radio consoles to replace existing within 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) statewide. This was in anticipation of the completion of a request for proposal (RFP) and contract to complete a total network upgrade. The purchase of new radio consoles was to be done in conjunction with the granting and commencement of the contract to upgrade the complete radio network.

In December of 2015, the UCA Board voted to postpone the issuance of the RFP for a radio network upgrade. During the 2016 legislative session, UCA was directed to cease future new expenditures until the completion of the legislatively mandated strategic plan. Upon receiving the findings of a legislative audit of UCA, the Executive Appropriations Committee ordered the return of all the uncommitted portion of the $17.5 million appropriation, to include the $6 million for the purchase of radio consoles.

Discussion

UCA Responsibility – Radio Consoles

With respect to UCA's current and future responsibility to radio consoles, it was unanimously agreed the radio network begins with the radio consoles. From that point forward, proprietary software and equipment are essential for needed functionality, performance and operation. Additional reasons for radio consoles to be maintained as part of the network were identified as follows:

- Network Security and Integrity - radio consoles are access points to the overall radio network.
- Network Upgrades – consoles require regularly scheduled and predictable network, software and equipment upgrades.
- Interoperability
- Network / System Integrity
- Network / System Uniformity
- Full system and network functionality and compatibility

While radio consoles are functional and dependent part of the overall network, and should be maintained as such, any policy decision regarding UCA's responsibility to PSAP consoles is contingent upon an identified funding source and legislative appropriation.

Interoperability

Information regarding the interoperability of disparate systems was discussed. Representatives from Motorola and the UCA staff provided information regarding our current system. The following was discussed:

- P25 Compliant – while the intent of P25 was to ensure interoperability between differing systems, with regard to network systems, this often involves only basic levels of functionality.
- Mixing old and new consoles – current Motorola consoles can function alongside current, new generation consoles; however, there may be operability issues unique to a given PSAP, which may need to be overcome. The best option is the same make and model in one PSAP.
- Mixing consoles from differing manufacturers – may be possible with appropriate proprietary software.

Based on information discussed, interoperability between console manufacturers is possible, but more information is needed before a decision to do so could be made.

Points of Consideration

- UCA currently has no funding to purchase radio consoles, and future funding has not been appropriated.
- Currently all radio consoles in operation within the statewide 911 PSAPs have been purchased and owned by the individual local or state entities.
- Many PSAPs have purchased new and / or used radio consoles to replace or expand those currently in use.
- How the technology works should guide policy decisions.
- P25 compliant often translates to interoperability of systems with basic levels of functionality. Full functionality of CAD and dependent RMS systems requires uniform and proprietary components and software.
- UCA has purchased 20 plus used Motorola Gold Elite radio consoles which could be purchased by individual PSAPs.
- Maintaining the current console infrastructure, make and model, is likely the most practicable and economical solution pending a final direction on the overall network.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1

Regardless of any decision regarding policy or responsibilities, there is no current funding to support UCA purchasing of radio consoles. This, combined with the current restriction on expenditures, provides no opportunity for UCA to make any current commitment to provide PSAPs with added equipment to include radio consoles. Additionally, until the completion of a strategic plan, network RFP and funding, there can be no decision by the board concerning network upgrades, including radio consoles.

It is recommended that individual 911 PSAPs continue to maintain their current radio consoles, at their discretion, until a decision can be made regarding a network upgrade and the Board authorize UCA to do the following:

- Make available to PSAPs, with immediate critical need, the purchase of part of the inventory of used consoles at purchase price.
- Support PSAPs with consultation on technical and strategic planning concerning immediate radio console decisions.
- Provide support to PSAPs with maintenance and installation of current or new radio console placement, at the standard rate of service.

Recommendation #2

Any decisions to support or fund radio consoles are connected to the upgrade of the overall network, which will be defined in the UCA strategic plan. Radio consoles should be identified in the plan as a component of the core network, as well as a strategy address purchase, maintenance and replacement.

It is recommended that the Board withhold action concerning future commitments of UCA regarding radio consoles, pending:

- The completion of the UCA strategic plan, which should include future network upgrades and the responsibility of radio consoles in the upgrade.
- Submission and acceptance of the strategic plan to the appropriate legislative committee.
- Ongoing funding to support the initial purchase of radio consoles, and future maintenance, replacement and expansion needs.