

**TESTIMONY OF SHERRY MASSEY  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON UTILITIES  
SENATOR ROBERT OLSON, CHAIR  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2018**

Mr. Chairman and Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of the revisions to the Kansas 9-1-1 Act proposed by SB 420. As a voting member of the 9-1-1 Coordinating Council I believe the proposed changes are necessary to assure the success of the Kansas Next Generation 9-1-1 efforts now and in the future.

There are three revisions on which I would like to focus. The creation of a management reserve is proposed to address the ever-evolving nature of Next Generation 9-1-1. An increase in the 9-1-1 fee is proposed to support local 9-1-1 operations as well as the aforementioned management reserve. A clarification of Council authority is proposed to allow for the establishment of standards and policies for the geographic data that is necessary for the function of Next Generation 9-1-1.

The purpose of Next Generation 9-1-1 is to allow citizens in need to communicate with 9-1-1 communications officers using whatever device and whatever medium can be utilized safely and expediently. If you cannot speak, 9-1-1 needs to be able to receive text. If you cannot explain in words, 9-1-1 needs to be able to receive pictures and video. If your security alarm or medical alert sounds, 9-1-1 should be able to receive notification from that system directly instead of relying on someone to observe the problem and find a phone. And most importantly, when you call 9-1-1, no matter how you call 9-1-1, they need to know exactly where you are.

### Management Reserve and the 9-1-1 Fee

The first step in providing Next Generation 9-1-1 services is to replace equipment that cannot handle modern communications with a network that can. I am proud to say that process is well underway in Kansas, where we stand among the leaders in the adoption of this technology. Over three-quarters of the 9-1-1 centers in our state have the necessary local equipment installed and will be connecting to an Emergency Services Information network that can carry modern communications traffic to them.

The second step is to begin implementing the services I mentioned earlier. We have done this with Text-to-9-1-1. We are very proud of this accomplishment, but it came with a new understanding of the work and costs that will be involved with every new feature that is implemented. Each will take time: time to study; time to vet potential solutions; time to implement the one chosen; time to train both the public and the 9-1-1 community in its use. It will also take money, of course, but it is important to understand when that money is needed.

As I speak to you today, it has been three full years since the contract with AT&T to replace legacy 9-1-1 equipment was signed. We have implemented that technology in seventy-nine 9-1-1 centers with at least another six still in the queue. It will be more than three and a half years between when we vetted the solution and when we achieve full implementation. The selection, implementation, and training for a new service take a great deal of time and cannot start until the funds are available. We know that new services are coming down the road, but we do not know for certain when they will arrive. The Council's solution to this problem is to develop a management reserve. This will allow the Council to begin the

process of vetting new solutions as the technology becomes available so we can provide the most advanced 9-1-1 services while maintaining the fiscal discipline the citizens of Kansas expect of us.

We propose that 10 cents of every 9-1-1 fee go to fund this management reserve, and once it is fully funded any excess will be returned to the local 9-1-1 centers in the form of need-based grants. However, we cannot discuss the fee without discussing the local cost of 9-1-1. Put simply current fees do not come close to covering local costs of providing the service. It can be easy to lose sight of everything necessary to make 9-1-1 work. In addition to the equipment needed just to receive a 9-1-1 call, the local centers still have to pay for every other cost involved in handling the call. Record keeping, radio traffic, office furniture, utilities, training, these are all expenses that can be paid with 9-1-1 fees, but the fees do not stretch that far. This bill includes raising the 9-1-1 fee from 60 cents to 90 cents, with 80 cents of that going directly to the 9-1-1 centers and 10 cents to the management reserve. This increase will not cover all allowable costs for the 9-1-1 centers, but it will help assure that local budget restrictions do not adversely affect the quality of 9-1-1 service.

## Geographic Data Standards and Policies

In the legacy 9-1-1 system geographic data (GIS) is used as visual reference for communications officers, but in Next Generation 9-1-1, that same data is used by the network to determine which 9-1-1 center should receive each call based on the caller's location. When a trained 9-1-1 communications officer looks at a map, they bring local knowledge, common sense, and judgment to the table. But when a computer network looks at a map, everything is black and white. Any error in that map data will end up as an error in the functioning of the network. The accuracy and currency of this data are critical to life safety in the Next Generation.

In Kansas, we have prepared for this change by developing a data standard, remediating the GIS data used in 9-1-1 centers across the state to that standard, and asking 9-1-1 centers to be sure that data is kept current. We have almost unbelievable levels of participation with 90% or more of the data updated at least quarterly and all of it updated at least annually. Because of this level of participation, Kansas is the envy of many states who are reaching for Next Generation 9-1-1 and finding GIS to be their primary obstacle. We should all be proud of the local effort that has gone into this program.

We need to maintain this level of excellence in perpetuity. We owe it to our citizens. To make sure the tools to do that are available, the bill proposes clarifying the Council's authority to specifically include the creation of GIS data standards and maintenance policies. This will assure that no matter what changes take place at the local level, the importance of this life-critical data will always be respected and the citizens of our state will be able to rely on the system working as they expect.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

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