



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 31, 2022

TO: Members
Joint Finance Committee

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Military Affairs: Section 13.10 Request to Release Monies for Geographic Information System (GIS) Grants and Create Positions -- Agenda Item VII

REQUEST

The Department of Military Affairs (DMA) requests the release of \$1,500,000 SEG in 2022-23 from the Joint Committee on Finance's SEG supplemental appropriation (s. 20.865(4)(u)) to DMA's Next Generation 911 appropriation (s. 20.465(3)(qm)) to provide geographic information system (GIS) grants. Funding would be provided by the police and fire protection fund. The Department also requests the creation of 2.0 SEG positions related to GIS program operations and grants administration, including a GIS specialist and a grants specialist.

BACKGROUND

Under current law, 911 is established as the statewide emergency services telephone number. Basic 911 service was first established in the 1960s as a voice-only service, meaning that the caller had to provide location and callback information verbally in order to receive assistance. The system was last updated in the 1990s to "Wireless Enhanced 911," which provides a mobile caller's number and approximate location. The system consists of separate networks maintained by telephone service providers through contractual relationships with local governments.

In general, 911 services are funded and administered on the local level. The state has over 100 public safety answering points (PSAPs), locally-administered call centers that answer and process 911 calls. The current 911 system is supported through three fees: (a) a landline fee assessed per county based on population, collected by carriers; (b) a portion of the monthly fee of \$0.75 on each assigned telephone number, deposited to the police and fire protection (PFP) fund; and (c) a \$0.38 fee per transaction on all prepaid wireless services, deposited to the PFP fund. The police and fire protection fund supports programs in DMA and provides direct financial assistance to local governments through the shared revenue program. The shared revenue program is also funded by a capped, sum-sufficient general purpose revenue (GPR) appropriation, such that any PFP funds

allocated for state programs are offset by an equal increase in GPR.

To create an interoperable 911 system that is compatible with current and emerging digital technologies, emergency response agencies nationwide are upgrading to the "Next Generation 911" (NG911) system. Under current law, the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) is responsible for supporting the development of NG911 in Wisconsin.

The statewide NG911 system will resolve current infrastructure limitations among PSAPs by creating a shared statewide network; providing the ability to re-route 911 calls during crises, periods of high call volume, and service outages; improving resiliency and reducing system downtime; providing an increase in situational awareness through data sharing with first responders; delivering increased location accuracy for all calls; providing equal access for callers, including the deaf and hard-of-hearing; supporting a variety of consumer devices as technology evolves; and supporting the ability to change or add connections during emergencies. In addition to voice capabilities, NG911 will enable the public to transmit text, images, video, and data to 911.

Much of the decision-making related to public safety has been delegated to the local level in Wisconsin. According to DMA, the NG911 program will be administered on a state-guided, local control basis. For example, while the statewide Emergency Services Internet Protocol Network (ESInet) will create the capacity to connect PSAPs, participation in the network will be voluntary. Further, while consolidating PSAPs could increase efficiencies by requiring fewer call centers to purchase new equipment, current law does not allow the state to require consolidation.

The NG911 system consists of three key components: (a) ESInet, a statewide internet-based network shared by all public safety agencies; (b) GIS data, which routes calls and messages to the correct PSAP and provides locational information to first responders; and (c) PSAP equipment, which facilitates the transmission of information between callers and emergency responders. Once NG911 is implemented, the system's network will be operated on the state-level, while local units of government will retain fiscal and administrative responsibility for PSAP operations. Local entities will also need to upgrade answering equipment to ensure that 911 calls can be processed under the new system.

To implement NG911, DMA must create a statewide GIS database, which will be used to route 911 callers to the correct answering center and to provide first responders with detailed information on where to respond. In the current 911 system, the caller's location is determined after the call is answered by a PSAP, at which point the call may be transferred to a more appropriate PSAP. In the case of a wireless caller, the address is often approximate. To decrease call transfers and response times, NG911 will use GIS data to determine the caller's location before the call is answered to immediately route the call to the correct PSAP. Geographic information also helps increase the situational awareness of first responders. Associated data elements include street centerlines, address points, road networks, PSAP boundaries, and emergency service zone boundaries. Prior to implementing NG911, GIS data needs to be prepared at the local level and collected into the statewide database. Maintenance will be needed to ensure that the dataset contains accurate and secure information regarding caller locations. In an August, 2020 report, the Wisconsin Land Information Association (WLIA) concluded that the NG911 system's stringent data

requirements and the precision needed to facilitate emergency response will place financial demands on local governments.

Wisconsin does not currently have a statewide GIS dataset capable of supporting NG911. Therefore, DMA is developing a plan to create a statewide GIS dataset for NG911 based on a model designed by the National Emergency Number Association. Of the monies provided for NG911 in the 2021-23 biennium, \$500,000 in 2021-22 and \$1.7 million in 2022-23 was designated for creating the GIS database. According to DMA, organizations associated with 911 systems have already identified issues such as a lack of data, differences in data administration, and the need for financial support. To address these issues, \$1,500,000 SEG was placed in the Joint Committee on Finance's SEG supplemental appropriation for GIS grants to local units of government to help counties compile GIS data for NG911. DMA anticipates that the grants would be available for five years to run concurrently with the initial transition to and implementation of ESInet. Thus, grant funding would total to \$7.5 million over 2023-27 at \$1.5 million per year.

On November 2, 2021, Senate Bill 673, which established statutory criteria for GIS grants, was introduced. On January 25, 2022, the bill was passed 33-0 in the Senate and 92-0 in the Assembly. On April 15, 2022, the bill was enacted as Act 261. Act 261 assigns authority regarding the development and operation of a statewide emergency number system to DMA and requires DMA to administer a GIS grant program that provides grants to county land information offices for the purpose of preparing GIS data to help enable NG911. The act specifies that GIS grants be issued based on purposes recommended by the 911 Subcommittee, which may include data preparation, data gathering, data creation, GIS system staffing, data preparation and collection contracts, and training, if these purposes enable NG911. Grants may not be used for county overhead or costs providing emergency services or emergency services equipment.

The 911 Subcommittee is a statutorily created 19-member council attached to DMA. Subcommittee members serve 3-year terms. One member is appointed by the Adjutant General and 18 members are appointed by the Governor. Members appointed by the Governor represent associations and interests related to: Wisconsin municipalities and counties; fire and police chiefs, county sheriffs, emergency management, emergency medical service providers, and public safety communications professionals (two members); and a universal emergency telephone number system, commercial mobile radio service providers (two members), telecommunications providers (two providers), competitive local exchange carriers, voice over internet protocol providers, video service providers, and land information professionals. The duties of the 911 Subcommittee are to advise the Department on awarding GIS grants, appropriate grant purposes, and eligibility criteria. The Department is required to develop a policy setting forth eligibility criteria for grants based on the recommendations of the 911 Subcommittee.

ANALYSIS

In accordance with Acts 58 and 261, DMA is requesting the release of \$1,500,000 SEG for 2022-23 from the Joint Committee on Finance's SEG supplemental appropriation to implement the GIS component of the NG911 program. The GIS grants are intended to help local units of government prepare, gather, and create data; support GIS staffing; support data preparation and

collection contracts; and support training. The Department is currently in the initial stages of developing the parameters for grant implementation and guidance for the grant application with approval from the 911 Subcommittee. The Department recently met with the WLIA NG911 Task Force to gather recommendations for eligibility criteria before bringing recommendations to the 911 Subcommittee. The 911 Subcommittee will meet on June 16, 2022, to decide on final recommendations. Subsequent to release of funding, DMA will create a grant application, post the application, and field questions from applicants. The Department does not anticipate that every county will initially apply for a grant. Applications would then be evaluated and awards made to local units of government for the purpose of preparing GIS data to enable the implementation of NG911.

In addition to the release of GIS grant funding, DMA is requesting 2.0 SEG positions in 2022-23 for the GIS component of NG911. The Department currently has one position (a program manager) assigned to the NG911 program, funded from justice information systems fee receipts. With the initiation of the GIS grant program, DMA indicates that additional staff are needed to address the more technical aspects of the GIS database and grants administration. Currently, the NG911 program manager: acts as the contract administrator for ESInet and statewide NG911 services implementation, which involves frequent communication with local organizations and vendors; reviews and certifies payments for the ESInet vendor; oversees the ESInet component of NG911; provides support to the NG911 Subcommittee; coordinates with national organizations to ensure that NG911 is up to date on requirements and completes federal reporting; oversees procurement for NG911, including the GIS request for proposal (RFP); discusses NG911 GIS requirements with local units of government; assists in drafting of and oversees administrative rules for the NG911 PSAP grant program; and manages a NG911 consulting contract.

In order to address the GIS specific portion of NG911, DMA has identified a need for two additional positions: a GIS specialist and a grants specialist. Costs associated with the two requested positions would be \$236,300 SEG in 2022-23, including salaries, fringe benefits, and supplies and services. The GIS specialist would oversee data preparation, upgrade the database, ensure GIS standards are correct for a NG911 system, monitor and assist counties with GIS data questions and validation, work with local governments to collect and use data, and work with NG911 contractors to ensure GIS data elements are tested and routing properly. The act requires grant development and administration for GIS grants to counties, which entails management of the GIS and PSAP grant programs, including developing grant guidance, evaluating applications, administering awards, and monitoring compliance with program requirements and performance. The GIS grants specialist position would perform these tasks.

According to DMA, the 2.0 SEG positions in 2022-23 could be supported within existing budget authority and will not require an increase in funding. Since the appropriation is biennial, unexpended funding in 2021-22 will carry forward to 2022-23. The Committee could approve DMA's request to release \$1.5 million SEG from the Committee's supplemental appropriation for geographic information system grants, and create 2.0 SEG positions in 2022-23 using DMA's existing resources. [Alternative 1]

In reviewing the Department's request, it could be argued that creating the 2.0 SEG positions

could be contrary to prior legislative actions. During the 2021-22 legislative session, there were two occasions when the two positions could have been created: (a) during the 2021-23 budget deliberations; and (b) during deliberations regarding SB 673. The fiscal note associated with SB 673 identified costs of \$130,800 annually for the GIS specialist and \$85,500 annually for the grants specialist, which included ongoing funding of \$10,000 for supplies/services for both positions. Additionally, the fiscal note identified a one-time cost of supplies and services for each position at \$10,000, (a total of \$236,300). The request currently before the Committee is identical to the fiscal note for SB 673. As such, the Committee could release the \$1.5 million SEG supplemental appropriation for geographic information system grants but not approve the request for two additional positions. [Alternative 2] Under this alternative, the current NG911 manager would be required to manage technical and grant aspects of the GIS component of NG911. While additional staffing would not be available in 2022-23, increased staffing could be requested in the 2023-25 biennial budget.

Alternatively, if the Committee wishes to release funding and also provide the positions but is concerned about funding in future biennia, the Committee could choose to approve DMA's request for the \$1.5 million SEG supplemental appropriation for geographic information system grants and the creation of 2.0 SEG positions, but specify that the positions would continue to be funded from base resources in the 2023-25 biennium. Under this alternative, funding would be provided for GIS grants and existing resources would be used to fund the positions without increasing DMA's base budget. [Alternative 3]

If the request is not approved, grants to local units of government to support the creation of a uniform GIS database may be delayed. Local governments could be required to support the preparation and maintenance of GIS data needed to create the statewide database without initial state support. As a result, the comprehensiveness of the statewide GIS dataset could be impacted. The \$1,500,000 SEG would remain in the Joint Committee on Finance's SEG supplemental appropriation and DMA could request the release of these funds under s. 13.10 prior to June 30, 2023 (the end of 2021-23 biennium). [Alternative 4]

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the request to release \$1,500,000 SEG in 2022-23 from the Joint Committee on Finance's SEG supplemental appropriation [s. 20.865(4)(u)] to the Department of Military Affairs Next Generation 911 appropriation [s. 20.465(3)(qm)] in 2022-23 to provide geographic information system grants. Approve the request to create 2.0 SEG positions in 2022-23 for the GIS component of NG911, including a GIS specialist and a grants specialist.

2. Release \$1,500,000 SEG in 2022-23 from the Joint Committee on Finance's SEG supplemental appropriation [s. 20.865(4)(u)] to the Department of Military Affairs Next Generation 911 appropriation [s. 20.465(3)(qm)] in 2022-23 to provide geographic information system grants.

3. Release \$1,500,000 SEG for 2022-23 from the Joint Committee on Finance's SEG supplemental appropriation [s. 20.865(4)(u)] to the Department of Military Affairs Next Generation 911 appropriation [s. 20.465(3)(qm)] in 2022-23 to provide geographic information system grants.

Create 2.0 SEG positions in 2022-23 for the GIS component of NG911, including a GIS specialist and a grants specialist. Specify that, in the 2023-25 biennium, the positions would be funded using DMA's existing base budget.

4. Deny the request.

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