

Resolution No. 9-0814

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED STATE FUNDING
FOR COUNTY 911 DISPATCH SERVICES AND ONE DESIGNATED
PUBLIC SERVICE ANSWERING POINT PER COUNTY**

WHEREAS, 911 emergency dispatch services are among the most vital services that counties provide, and Wisconsin residents and visitors alike expect the same level of excellent service throughout the state regardless of where their emergency occurs; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 the State of Wisconsin established a fee on all wireless phones to fund grants to counties to pay for enhanced 911 services, such as wireless call-locating software and equipment; and

WHEREAS, in 2009 the enhanced 911 grant program expired and, in its place, the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) and the state's telecommunications providers advocated establishing a permanent grant program to fund equipment purchases and training for employees of county-designated Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), with each county to designate one PSAP per county by resolution to be funded with a monthly fee of up to 75-cents on all devices capable of dialing 911; and

WHEREAS, instead of funding grants to county Public Safety Answering Points, in 2009 the Wisconsin Legislature and the Governor re-designated the funding as a 75-cent monthly Police and Fire Protection Fee for all such devices and directed the revenue from the fee to fund the county and municipal aid (shared revenue) account to meet other state financial obligations; and

WHEREAS, without the intended state funding, counties must rely almost entirely on property taxes to pay for equipment, training, and consolidation of municipal and county 911 services, and as a result, many counties are unable to upgrade needed equipment to receive texts, video, and still photographs; to provide needed training to 911 system operators; and to foster further consolidation of services; and

WHEREAS, eliminating the Police and Fire Protection Fee and restoring the funding for 911 without replacing the lost revenue would result in a roughly \$50 million annual reduction in shared revenue payments to municipalities and counties; and

WHEREAS, under current law each county must individually contract with a telecommunications provider for telephone lines running into each county 911 center, and counties must depend on a maximum 40-cent monthly fee on only landline telephones to pay telecommunications providers for the cost of this service; and

WHEREAS, revenues from the 40-cent landline fee are declining due to the increased use of cellular telephones and are often insufficient to cover the cost of these services, thereby requiring any difference to be paid for with property taxes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Iowa County Board of Supervisors hereby urges the Wisconsin Legislature and Governor to support legislation and state budget action that accomplishes **all** of the following goals:

- Fully funds the County and Municipal Aid Program (shared revenue) with State General Purpose Revenue, rather than with the Police and Fire Protection Fee; and
- Establishes a technology-neutral fee on all cell phones, landline phones, and other devices capable of dialing 911; and
- Uses the revenue from this fee to fund a grant program to pay for equipment purchases and training for one Public Safety Answering Point (911 center) per county, as designated by the county board of each county, and to develop financial incentives to encourage consolidation of 911 services; and
- Provides a sustainable source of funding for costs associated with providing all telephone lines (both landline and cellular) into county Public Safety Answering Points.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the WCA Board of Directors for consideration at the WCA Annual Business meeting urging that all county officials support the resolution and ask their legislative representatives and the Governor to restore the funding for this vital public safety service.

Resolution drafted by Iowa County Corporation Counsel and respectfully submitted by the Justice Committee.

Adopted by the Iowa County Board of Supervisors this 19th day of August, 2014.