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## **DETCOG September 24, 2020 Board Meeting Brief**

A presentation on the first phase of the Deep East Texas Council of Government's Regional Radio Infrastructure Project was held for the DETCOG board of directors Thursday afternoon during the monthly board meeting.

Public Safety Planner Candy Hartman explained the goal of the project, which is to help build resiliency and protect life and property throughout the region. The project will provide the infrastructure and technology to ensure that law enforcement and other public safety agencies and first responders in the region will have improved radio communications, including the ability to communicate with departments in other counties throughout Deep East Texas and other parts of the state.

The goal of the project is to connect Deep East Texas with the rest of the state by partnering with the Texas Wide Area Radio Network, also known as TxWARN. The TxWARN system serves over 263 public safety agencies, including military, federal, state and local authorities.

In phase one of DETCOG's project, existing towers will be utilized to connect most of the counties along the US 59 corridor, along with Houston and Trinity counties in the western part of the region. Phase one will be funded by a \$1.1 million grant to DETCOG from the Statewide Emergency Radio Infrastructure Grant Program of the Governor's office.

The Board of Directors approved the recommendations from DETCOG's Homeland Security Advisory Committee to begin implementation of phase one as soon as the grant funding is released.

To fund the interoperable radio project in the remainder of the region, DETCOG plans to submit an application to the Texas General Land Office's CDBG-Mitigation grant competition. Taking a step toward that goal the Board selected KSA to provide engineering services for the project. The Board selected another engineering firm, Magellan Advisors, to provide services for another proposed CDBG-Mitigation grant which would fund phase one of a proposed regional broadband network.

DETCOG Regional 9-1-1 Director Van Bush also gave an overview on the area's Next Generation 9-1-1 program, which went live Sept. 16. The new routing system offered by NG9-1-1 uses geospatial routing to offer more accurate information to dispatchers and faster responses to emergencies. Additionally, the new technologies introduced with NG9-1-1 will help future proof the region and allow for further improvements over time.

In other business, members of the Board of Directors gave approval to the agency's budget for Fiscal Year 2021. The new budget calls for expenditures of \$22,639,413 and projects revenues of \$22,858,668 for a net of \$219,255 revenues over expenditures. Although it is a governmental entity, DETCOG has no taxing authority. Its program of work is funded almost entirely by state and federal grants and contracts, with a small amount of local revenue from membership dues and private sources.

An extension of waivers offered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the DETCOG Regional Housing Authority was approved. These waivers allowed housing authorities to continue operations in a more streamlined and remote fashion amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and were previously adopted for DETCOG by the board earlier in the year. The board approved extending the use of the waivers for as long as they're allowed by HUD.

The board also approved a resolution that gives conditional consent to Jasper County's request to transfer from State Planning Region 14 (Deep East Texas) to State Planning Region 15 (Southeast Texas). Under Texas law, the boundaries of the state planning regions are delineated by the Governor, and the authority to realign the regions is vested with the Governor. The resolution states that "while Jasper County is a valued member of DETCOG and we welcome their continued membership and participation, we respect their request and voice our conditional consent to the requested transfer, such consent being conditioned upon the Governor of Texas approving Jasper County's request."

Additional actions by the board during the meeting include:

- The approval of revisions to DETCOG's procurement policy.
- The approval of a Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan.
- The award of a bid of \$500 for the sale of a 2002 Ford that DETCOG is no longer using.

DETCOG's next board of director's meeting is scheduled for Oct. 22, 2020 and will be held online.

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