

Project Follow Up

Re: FCC Rules update/status of April 26, 2012

5/3/2012

As we reported last week, the FCC delayed narrowbanding mandate for agencies operating in the T-Band spectrum for an undetermined time. After careful consideration, we are going to continue working through the radio project.

Several factors support this decision:

- We are not exempt from this mandate and we will need to vacate the T-Band frequencies. The FCC intends to recapture those channels and auction them off to generate funds to aid in the build out of the national broadband network.
- Many of our neighboring counties, inclusive of SEPTA, operate in T-Band and will also be required to migrate to another frequency range. It is likely that they will be looking to the 700 MHz range, which we anticipate will become a very competitive market.
- The County Commissioners have shown a dedication to Public Safety by ensuring that our responders are safe and have the most current equipment available to them for their daily operations. By doing so, they have contracted with Motorola and have already committed the bond funds to complete the project.
- Parts of our existing infrastructure and the XTS3000 portable radios in service on today's radio system have been deemed at the "end of life" and are no longer supported by the manufacturer. These critical elements are increasingly more difficult to procure, and since they are no longer manufactured, we cannot simply go back to the vendor and purchase replacements.
 - With the County's new contract with Motorola, they have assured that they will make the best effort to continue servicing and maintaining our legacy radio system pending the cutover to the new 700 MHz system.
- We are currently in the midst of designing the 700 MHz system and the relief from the narrowbanding mandate on our daily operating channels gives us all a little bit breathing room.
- With the build out of 4G networks, and increased wireless infrastructure, space on existing towers is becoming much more scarce and difficult to obtain in critical geographic points throughout the county. This trend can only be expected to continue and we are at an opportune time to secure our space on what's out there.

The County and the project team are committed to providing our emergency responders and our dispatchers with the best possible system. For these reasons, the County is continuing with this critical upgrade to our emergency radio network. As has been the case, we will continue to keep you apprised of the latest happenings with the project as new details emerge. We thank you for your partnership and commitment to this project.