

**WHATCOM COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**BILL ELFO**  
SHERIFF



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## **Memorandum**

**TO:** Honorable Whatcom County Councilmembers  
**THROUGH:** Bill Elfo, Sheriff & Director of Emergency Management  
**FROM:** John Gargett, Deputy Director  
**DATE:** May 6, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** Request for Whatcom County Council to approve a Joint Resolution between Whatcom County (County), the City of Bellingham (City) and the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) regarding the creation of a Whatcom County Public Radio System.

### **Requested Action**

The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management respectfully requests that County Council approve the Joint Resolution for the County, City, and WTA to partner, cooperate, share staff resources and physical assets, and commit financial resources for the creation of a county-wide digital public radio system for use by all public agencies in Whatcom County.

### **Background and Purpose**

The County, City, and WTA have defined operational needs for a secure, reliable, and redundant radio system to support daily operations and safety of employees and the public. Public agencies in our community, especially those involved in public safety, lack an integrated public agency radio service and the public safety of the citizens of our community is negatively impacted. The existing VHF and UHF radio systems has aging and failing physical infrastructure, does not provide coverage to all areas of the county, and does not facilitate interagency communications. This lack of a reliable county-wide radio system puts agency staff and the public at risk. The County, City, and WTA have identified that the development of an 800 MHz digital radio system can provide the necessary interagency communications and each have complementary in-house staff expertise necessary to establish an integrated public agency radio system and are currently making further investments in assets necessary to create and operate a digital 800 MHz radio system.

The County, City, and WTA will develop an interlocal agreement for consideration by the boards and councils of all three agencies outlining roles and responsibilities in the development and operation of a county-wide public safety grade radio system to include outlining a long-term operations plan, security, infrastructure, and asset needs and a funding strategy including capital investment, replacement and renewals of hardware and software, service providers, and staffing. It shall further provide mechanisms for other partner agencies to join and benefit from the countywide system.

Please contact John Gargett at 360.778.7160 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this resolution.