

CITY OF OLNEY
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
OLNEY CITY COUNCIL & RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD
AUGUST 11, 2025

AGENDA #1 “CALL TO ORDER” The August 11, 2025, special joint meeting of the Olney City Council was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Olney City Hall located at 300 S. Whittle Avenue, Olney, Illinois, with Mayor Mark Lambird presiding.

AGENDA #2 “PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG-PRAYER” Council members and visitors joined in the pledge of allegiance to the flag. Mayor Lambird led the group in prayer.

AGENDA #3 “CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL” The following Council members were present: Matt Miller, Bryce Fehrenbacher, Julia Eichhorst, Jack Eyer, and Mark Lambird. Also present were City Manager Allen Barker, City Clerk Kelsie Sterchi, City Treasurer Jane Guinn, and City Attorney Bart Zuber.

AGENDA #4 “COUNTY BOARD ROLL CALL” The following County Board members were present: Brian VanBlaricum, Dennis Graves, Alexis McFarland, Cynthia Given, Morgan Henton, Travis Paddock, and Steve Schonert. County Clerk Amanda Troyer was also present.

AGENDA #5 “PUBLIC COMMENTS/PRESENTATIONS” No one from the public wished to speak.

AGENDA #6 “DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE RESOLUTION: AUTHORIZE CONTRIBUTION OF FUNDS TO THE COUNTY-WIDE RADIO PROJECT” The Council was provided with a proposed resolution that would authorize contribution of funds to the County-Wide Radio Project. The Council was also provided with a \$677,574.00 quote from Global Technical Systems Inc. (GTSi) and a \$890,500.00 quote from VEI Communications.

Interim Fire Chief Daron Harmon, Police Chief Justin Bloomer, and Richland County Sheriff Andrew Hires were present to discuss the project and answer questions.

Interim Chief Harmon told the Council that Requests for Proposal were issued a while back with 2 proposals received. The low proposal was from GTSi at a price of \$677,574.00.

County Board Member Schonert asked if the proposals included Claremont. Interim Chief Harmon indicated so, but pointed out that these proposals were for infrastructure only and not the radios themselves. He believed that all first-responding organizations would be purchasing their own radios.

Councilman Miller asked how many mobile radios the Fire Department needed versus portable radios. Interim Chief Harmon stated that he looked to purchase 7 mobile radios as a result of this project and 14 mobile radios. He expected the cost per radio to be between \$1,200.00 and \$1,400.00. He also

pointed out that if all entities purchased their needed radios together, better bulk pricing could be received.

Interim Chief Harmon continued to say that mobile radios for the Fire Department would be different than mobile radios for law enforcement. The Fire Department needed dual-head radios, and those could run about \$3,500.00 each. The law enforcement mobile radios would cost less.

Councilman Miller asked if appropriate licensing was in place. Interim Chief Harmon replied that licenses would not be needed on the portable radios. Needed licensing was included in the \$3,500.00 estimate.

Police Chief Bloomer stated that he would need 17 portable radios and 10 mobile radios. The portables and mobiles would be approximately \$1,800.00 each and would include license fees.

Interim Chief Harmon felt that the City would be spending about \$97,000.00 on radios alone. If this were to be the case, Councilman Miller noted that would take up almost the entire \$100,000.00 that the City had budgeted to contribute to the entire project. He wondered if any other organization may be able to make up the \$27,000.00 difference.

Interim Chief Harmon felt that the 911 Board may be able to provide more funding or access to a grant that may help. Sheriff Hires agreed that the 911 Board may be a good option, and he offered that a special meeting of that Board may need to take place.

Councilman Miller saw that about two to three tower locations were on grain legs. He wondered if the extension of electrical service was included in the proposals. Sheriff Hires said it was not. No matter where towers were located, a long-term lease would be needed for maintenance access. He hoped these leases would come without a lease fee. Also, if needed, a portable generator could be added in these areas. Overall, electrical needs at these sites would be minimal and should not be noticeable on an electric bill.

Councilman Fehrenbacher asked for backup power plans in case of emergency. While not required, the Sheriff reiterated his plan to utilize portable generators.

From the audience, Firefighter Logan Muston stated that each site would already have eight hours of battery backup power.

Councilwoman Eichhorst asked for the project timeline. From the audience, a representative of GTSi indicated that the biggest factor in the timeline was Federal government licensing. Sometimes the turnaround on the licensing could be 6 weeks, but it could also take 6 months. The project could not continue forward movement without the licensing. His best good-faith estimate for a timeline would be between 120 and 180 days.

County Board Member Schonert asked if a representative of VEI was present. No one from the audience indicated that they were representatives of VEI.

County Board Member Schonert then asked if organizations had dealings with GTSi or VEI. Sheriff Hires said he had worked with both companies and had no particular preference.

County Board Member Schonert noted that the proposals included references. He wondered if any references had been contacted. Sheriff Hires and County Board Member Given indicated so. Each set of references only spoke well about each respective company.

Sheriff Hires then told those present that beyond the initial cost for the project, there would also be a yearly maintenance fee that would range between \$35,000.00 and \$40,000.00 per year. He felt it was possible to incorporate that into the JEDS' budget. Insurance would also be needed.

Councilman Miller asked who would own the infrastructure. Sheriff Hires felt that could be owned by JEDS or the 911 Board.

Mayor Lambird asked who carried insurance on the 911 console. Sheriff Hires thought it was likely Richland County since it was inside of a County building.

Councilman Miller moved to table the topic until funding information was given by the 911 Board, seconded by Councilwoman Eichhorst. A majority affirmative voice vote was received.

Interim Chief Harmon said that bid acceptance was due by Wednesday [an extension was later received].

AGENDA #7 "ADJOURN" With no further business to discuss, County Board Member Given moved to adjourn, seconded by County Board Member Henton. A majority affirmative voice vote was received.

The meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Kelsie J. Sterchi
City Clerk