

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington County Takes Next Step in Rollout of New Digital 911 Radio Project

WASHINGTON COUNTY, PA – *October 28, 2025* – After years of planning, a major Washington County project is taking a big step forward, with local leaders stressing the importance of investing in public safety.

“This is just a glaring issue. Anytime you go to a picnic or community event, all the firefighters and police come up saying, when are you fixing my radio? They are not complaining; these are first responders that need something,” said **Washington County Chair Nick Sherman**.

Washington County Commissioners, in partnership with the Department of Public Safety, continue to advance the rollout of a **new countywide 911 radio system**. On Tuesday, county leaders met with first responders from across Washington County to provide an update on the system’s progress alongside Motorola and Mission Critical.

“As a former first responder myself, I understand the communication concerns of Washington County’s police, firefighters, and EMS personnel, and I’m glad they are asking questions about the progress of the new 911/radio system,” **Commissioner Larry Maggi** said.

The project will include 15 state of the art towers strategically placed throughout the county, offering expanded bandwidth for a more reliable and efficient system. Additional repeaters can be added to existing towers if low-coverage areas are identified during testing.

“The delivery date is mid-2027. There is a lot of testing that must happen. We will be giving out the trunk systems, the base systems, portable handhelds to put on the street to make sure it works so there are no dead spots,” Sherman said.

Most of the project’s cost will be covered by American Rescue Plan funds, which will help distribute radios equitably based on the number of rider positions for each police, fire, and EMS department to start. This approach follows the recommendation of the Land Mobile Radio Committee, made up of first responders from across the county.

“Washington County has a diverse region with needs based on what area of the county you may find yourself in. From the farm fields in California and West Pike Run to Deemston Borough to densely populated areas of the city of Washington and the Route 19 corridor in Peters Township. The diversity within the radio committee helps voice concern for the fire,

medical and police services in those areas,” said **Monongahela Police Chief Kevin Harris**, a member of the committee.

County leaders acknowledge there will be challenges as Washington County transitions to a fully digital system, but they are confident the result will make a lasting difference.

“It’s taken a lot of work and conversations to get to this point in the project. I feel it is a step in the right direction as we as leaders of the county make sure public safety is a priority as technology evolves,” said **Vice Chair Electra Janis**.

Once complete, the system will align Washington County with neighboring counties such as Allegheny, Westmoreland, and Fayette. This regional interoperability will allow shared communication and resources in the event of system issues or large-scale emergencies.

“To have a radio system that actually works is the key, but also with our upgrades when it’s all said and done that interoperability between counties is huge for all first responders whether it’s police, fire or EMS. We will be able to talk to each other if something tragic was to happen,” said **Chief Mark Grimm, Director of Public Safety for North Strabane Township**.

The Department of Public Safety will meet individually with departments to assess additional radio needs ahead of the rollout. The county is also pursuing other funding sources, including an LSA grant application and FEMA allocations, to further support local agencies.