



"Excellence in Service"

# Yamhill County Sheriff's Office

*Sheriff Sam Elliott*

535 NE 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 143, McMinnville, Oregon 97128-4595

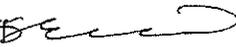
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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** Yamhill County Board of Commissioners

**TO:** Sam Elliott, Sheriff 

**FROM:** February 14, 2025

**RE:** Request for Authorization to Apply – CIP Grant - Modernize Yamhill County's Public Safety Radio System

I am formally requesting the authorization for my office to apply for the Community Investment Project (CIP) grant in the amount of \$867,552.00.

### **Project Overview:**

Yamhill County's public safety radio system, a critical lifeline for our first responders, is facing a growing crisis. This system, which relies on microwave transmissions between ten towers, is operating with aging equipment that is increasingly prone to failure. A catastrophic failure would severely jeopardize public safety.

Two independent assessments, one in 2013 by ADCOMM Engineering and another in 2021 by Communications Northwest, have confirmed the deteriorating condition of our microwave system. These reports highlight critical deficiencies, including:

- **Obsolete Equipment:** Replacement parts are nearly impossible to find, forcing us to resort to unreliable sources like online auctions. This is unsustainable and poses a significant risk.
- **Corrosion and Wear:** Improper storage has led to corrosion, and internal mechanisms are wearing out, causing intermittent connections and impacting performance.
- **Aging Electronics and Wiring:** The electronics are losing their ability to function correctly, and the aging wiring increases the risk of failure.

The ADCOMM report details a stark warning from Walla Walla County, where a similar system suffered a catastrophic failure due to a lightning strike. The lack of available parts resulted in a prolonged outage, severely impacting emergency communications. We cannot afford to face the same situation.

This vulnerability was recently demonstrated when a microwave dish failed at the Doane Creek tower site, causing intermittent transmission and forcing reliance on alternative communication methods. This incident underscores the urgent need for action.

**Funding Details:**

We have a unique opportunity to address this critical issue through a Community Investment Project (CIP) grant. This federal funding would cover the **\$867,552.00** cost to replace the aging microwave system. **Crucially, this grant requires no local matching funds.**

**Rationale for Submission:**

Securing this CIP grant would allow us to modernize our microwave infrastructure without impacting local budgets. This investment will not only ensure the reliability of our public safety communications but also position us for a smooth transition to a complete system overhaul in the future, ultimately saving taxpayer dollars.

This proactive step will safeguard our community and ensure our first responders have the reliable communication system they need to protect us.

**Next Steps:**

My office would submit the full application for the Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations cycle grant funds as soon as possible prior to the stated deadline (previously February 23, 2025; now March 21, 2025.) We will solicit letters of support from the agencies across the County that utilize the Public Safety Radio System (fire, EMS, police, public works, Community Justice) as part of the grant application process.

The selection process and awards announcements are expected in Fall 2025, with disbursement of funds to follow. Our expectation is that, if awarded, we would be able to begin this project in late Winter 2025 / early Spring 2026.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

SJE:emw

cc: Ken Huffer, County Administrator  
Justin Hogue, Deputy County Administrator  
Mike Barnhart, Finance Director

Approved by the Yamhill County Board of  
Commissioners on 2.20.2025  
via Board Order 25-050