

Town of Chilmark - Regular Town Meeting Action
Dukes County Regional Emergency Communication Center
Fiscal Year 2020 Funding Request

To see if the Town of Chilmark will raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds up to \$39,299.05 of the Town's proportionate share of the fiscal year 2020 maintenance cost of the State-funded development and upgrades of the Dukes County Regional Emergency Communication Center and Radio System, such share based on the Town-selected apportionment formula with the Fiscal Advisory Committee vote weight based on the proportionate dollar contribution; and to authorize the Selectmen to negotiate and execute a Cooperative Agreement with Dukes County Sheriff's Office for annual payment of such costs.

Explanation:

Dukes County Regional Communication Center and Radio System was established in 1964 as the most efficient way to provide dispatch operations for the Island towns. Towns that had used the system for all of the emergency and non-emergency dispatch functions were funding its operating and capital budgets through the real estate valuation based assessments and deeds excise tax, administered by the County, from 1964 to 2009. In 2010, when the State of Massachusetts assumed the funding for the operation of the Sheriff's Office, Towns stopped paying the County assessments for the Sheriff's Office functions. The State has not fully funded all of the existing operations of the Sheriff's Office, including the House of Correction, Regional Jail & Lockup, Regional Emergency Communication Center. This is truly a regional operation, not contemplated in the fiscal support structure by the State, despite the annual request for funding from the Sheriff's Office. It is considered an obligation that should be funded locally by system end users. There are four regional emergency communication centers, run by Sheriff's Offices in the State – Barnstable, Berkshire, Dukes and Essex. Dukes is the only one that does not currently charge participating communities for system costs.

Thanks to Sheriff's efforts, starting in FY 2019, the State 911 Department Support & Incentive annual grant funding increased from of \$216,418 to \$589,556, resolving the majority of personnel costs operational deficit at the communication center. The Sheriff's Office also secured \$1,500,000 in radio system development funds for FY 2019 from State 911 Department for Phase 1a of a multi-year project to modernize the outdated radio system, increase reliability and provide public safety rated compatible radio equipment across the Island. The development grant specifically excludes maintenance costs, which are end user responsibility. The total maintenance costs for FY 2020 are \$237,313 and cover vendor service package, service package exclusions reserve, grant ineligible development costs reserve, site development contingencies reserve, grant ineligible project management costs and communication center maintenance. Unused reserves would carry over to following years of the project and reduce maintenance cost need and related contributions.

The Town is requested to base its contributions on selected apportionment formula and authorize its Selectmen to negotiate and execute a Cooperative Agreement with Dukes County Sheriff's Office for annual payment of such maintenance costs. Sheriff's Office will maintain a separate fund, where the annual contributions will be maintained, with an oversight from the regional Fiscal Advisory Committee, with each Town having a weighted vote proportionate to its dollar contribution. A separate Technical Advisory Committee will assist the Sheriff's Office with technical aspects of the system development.

