

# **Board of County Commissioners**

## **Agenda Request**

Date of Meeting: June 2, 2009

Date Submitted: May 19, 2009

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Mary Dean Barwick,  
Wakulla County Sheriff's Office

Subject: Request Board Approval of the 2009 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Formula Program: State Solicitation

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### **Statement of Issue:**

The Wakulla County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) requests Board approval of the 2009 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Formula Program: State Solicitation. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement has allocated \$231,555 for use by all units of government within Wakulla County. The Wakulla County Sheriff's Office is requesting for these funds to be spent towards purchases of equipment. It is a grant requirement that the units of government in each county reach a consensus concerning the expenditure of these funds.

### **Background:**

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program (42 U.S.C. 3751(a)) is the primary provider of federal criminal justice funding to state and local jurisdictions. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided the U.S. Department of Justice with funding for the JAG Grant. JAG funds support all components of the criminal justice system, from drug and gang task forces to crime prevention and domestic violence programs, courts, corrections, treatment, and justice information sharing initiatives. The procedure for allocating JAG funds is a formula based on population and crime statistics in combination with a minimum allocation.

### **Analysis:**

The WCSO is requesting for these grant funds to be used to purchase the following equipment: 1) Voice over IP Net Phone System and 2) Corrections Camera Security System.

***Net Phone System:*** The WCSO is purposing to use JAG funds to purchase VOIP (voice over internet protocol) equipment for technology and communication improvements. The VOIP system enhances the WCSO ability to communicate internally with employees and citizens of the County. Currently WCSO uses a regular circuit switch phone which is reliable however, it is expensive to maintain, is difficult to add additional features and is not easily expandable. The VOIP system will allow WCSO to improve communications, consolidate resources, and benefit from tremendous costs savings.

One of the most important aspects of the law enforcement community is continuity of communications. Due to budget constraints and logistics, many deputies and most correctional

officers DO NOT HAVE voicemail and if they do, it is shared by several people. With the implementation of VOIP, each member can be assigned a voicemail/fax number and can receive voicemail/faxes in their email inbox regardless of their location. With the VOIP system, the management of phone numbers will be handled internally and instantly. Another improvement over the circuit switch phone system is the management features which allow creation of call groups greatly improving call flow internally as there will be seamless extension dialing between all locations. This feature also enhances the transfer of phone calls and ensures the public that their phone calls are reaching the correct destination.

The VOIP system works through an IP network that is currently in place at the Wakulla County Sheriff's office. The same cabling that WCSO uses for its data network will be used to carry the voice traffic of the phone system. The WCSO will have a substantial cost savings by only having to install network cabling and not having to install a separate cabling system for the phone system.

**WCSO will also benefit from improved disaster recovery and power outage backup for business continuity.** The VOIP phone system has automatic failover which greatly improves disaster recovery and redundancy at huge cost savings. Further cost savings in the future can be realized from additional county offices being able to integrate through the WCSO VOIP system.

***Corrections Security Camera System:***

The WCSO is purposing to use JAG funds to purchase new security cameras in the correctional facility. A new camera security system will heighten the level of security for employees and inmates. The current camera system was donated from the Florida Lottery and is over 15 years old. The monitors are black and white, with a fuzzy appearance and often superimpose images onto one another and sometimes go out altogether. The current cameras and monitors were made with outdated technology and therefore are a burden to maintain.

Security cameras are highly regarded as a tool to monitor officer safety and inmate security. The officers are dependent on the cameras and monitors to observe fights, flow of inmates, suspicious behavior and contraband diversion. With the proper security equipment, events can be recorded onto a DVR for the safety of the officers and inmates. As of this time, there is no capability to record any actions that occur within the compound. All testimony is based on witness statements and accusations. The cameras and monitors would be a substantive step forward in documentation of all activity within the compound.

With new security cameras and monitors, the need for documentation and quick resolution will be solved. The Sheriff's Office will produce a higher standard for the public by utilizing the new security system and will be able to deter violent inmate behavior due to the high visibility of the

cameras and the ability for instant documentation. The Detention Deputies will know the cameras are always running and recording which will deter any violation of policy and procedures involving inmates, therefore, reducing the taxpayer's interest in paying for lawsuits brought on by inmates.

**Options:**

1. Approve using the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program to purchase equipment.
2. Do not approve using the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program to purchase equipment.
3. Board Direction.

**Recommendation:**

Option #1

**Attachments:**

1. Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Application Instructions