

Special "Committee of the Whole" Iowa County Board Meeting Planned

Posted August 18, 2010

The Iowa County Board will meet September 1st at 6:30 p.m. in the County Board Room as a "Committee of the Whole" to hear and discuss the RCC Consultants (www.rcc.com) proposal. RCC recently completed a "Communications Assessment" and now have a proposal to assist the county with communication and information system needs related to Emergency Management and Emergency Responder Communication. It includes providing wireless coverage throughout the county that links our 14 towns, 12 villages and 2 cities with the Emergency Management and the Sheriff in Iowa County as well as the State, Madison, Dane and surrounding counties.

This has been a concern after 9/11 showed that the emergency communication equipment used by emergency responders did not communicate with each other. The Stoughton tornado a few years ago showed Madison's 800 megahertz system won't work with the VHF frequencies used in surrounding counties, unless you have more expensive, special radios that handle both multiple frequencies. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has mandated changes to public safety radio communications systems by January 1, 2013. These changes affect radio communications by local police, fire, emergency management, EMS, hospitals and other first response agencies and relate to "narrowband" radio equipment, statewide mutual aid channels, and steps that local officials should take immediately to ensure the uninterrupted use of public safety radio communication systems.

This should be interesting puzzle for our County Board members to solve. This meeting should prove to be educational so that citizens can better understand the issue and see how our County Board plans to address it.