

money on a radio system that doesn't work.



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Tags: [edward flynn](#), [police communications](#), [gametime](#), [rosie's](#)

Official airline of the away game. 

While Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn spent most of his time in the spotlight asking that his officers not be furloughed for four days, the Common Council's Finance Committee essentially glossed over a report that the MPD has spent \$17.5 million on a radio system that doesn't work and won't be fixed.

The city approved a contract for a new radio system to M/A-Com in 2003, despite being warned that the system was shaky at best and radio communication would suffer from blacked out areas, dead spots. Also, the system does not communicate with any other municipal law enforcement in the area, including the Sheriff's Department.

Officers would be forced to continue to use cell phones for that, the city was told. The system's trade name is OpenSky and it took the city four years just to get past testing data communications to test vocal communications.

"The MPD began installing OpenSky M7200 mobile radios in all new squad cars in 2007. By January 2009, problems with radio interference, unstable radio sites and unexpected alert tones and noises had been resolved," according to a Legislative Reference Bureau report.

The radios had to be redone, but in a test area in 2008 the radios were pulled from the field after only a few weeks.

"It should be noted that several OpenSky customers with significantly larger geographic areas have had concerns or issues with garbled transmissions, dropped calls, dead spots, faulty radio signal handoff and undependable emergency functions," the bureau reports.

Three weeks ago, Flynn said the department was told by M/A-Com that the company would no longer support the system.

"The consoles have issues," he told the committee. "We are owning the legacy of another system."

It's not the first time Flynn has had to deal with technology issues in his short tenure, nor has it been that case with the department. An audit found that the Third District station was some \$30 million over budget and its radio system hadn't worked for years. One of Flynn's first moves was to go to the private sector and ask for tech support from the experts.

"Police departments always get their clocks cleaned by salesmen," he admitted to the committee.

Flynn also told the committee that the department would slow down, and in some cases stop, answering low priority calls since the MPD will have 91 fewer officers on the streets.

And even though Flynn is projecting a decrease in overtime again for next year, he bemoaned what causes the overtime stress on his budget, blaming, in part, the courts for scheduling and rescheduling cases, causing officers to have to reappear several times for one case.

"Counties love to spend city overtime ... it makes my head explode," he said.

He also offered some of his now-well-known Flynn dry wit during the long meeting. When asked about the cost of the horse patrols and the city's police boat, Flynn said to his knowledge, "There have been no successful acts of piracy on Lake Michigan and no horse thefts."

Bradley Bar to Reopen: After several failed efforts, the city is trotting out another attempt and getting an operator into the city-owned parking structure at 4th Street and Highland Avenue. It's the only city parking lot that also includes space for a restaurant and bar, a seemingly good idea given its proximity to the Bradley Center across the street. But it hasn't worked so far. The latest victim was Gametime.

Brian James, an owner of Rosie's Waterworks on Water Street, and Rick Kohen, owner of Connections Ticket Service, will lease the space in their attempt to make a go of it there. The two say they have hired consultants that operate six restaurants in the Downtown area, including Omar Shaikh, owner of Carnevor, Umami Moto and Charro, among others.

The city is offering a seven-year lease with a seven-year option to follow. And the terms seem reasonable, given the location. The two would get reduced rent for the first four months, at a pro-rated rate of \$50,000 a year, and then pay an escalating rent from \$75,000 a year to \$132,000 a year in 2016. Rent for the second seven-year term would go from \$139,000 a year to \$186,000. The bar would also pay 5 percent of net sales over \$1.25 million and 7 percent on sales exceeding \$2 million.

The city would throw in 20 parking spots for the workers and free parking for customers.

Ald. Robert Bauman asked the Public Works Committee this week to hold the matter until more terms can be written into the lease. He noted James and Kohen are experienced bar and nightclub operators, but wanted a more detailed lease put together that includes a clause acknowledging that there wouldn't be a drain on police resources or public safety.

No Move is Good Move: The county's welfare office won't pack up and moving closer to Downtown, after all. Developers C.H. Coakley & Co. got wet feet after strong opposition to the idea from Milwaukee aldermen.

Coakley's plan was to use state money to redevelop a building on King Drive in order to move the bulk of the county's welfare services from its home at 12th and Vliet. Aldermen opposed the idea, since King Drive remains the heart of the city's attempt to recreate the old Bronzeville entertainment district, even though that effort is moving a tad more slowly than originally hoped.

"I give credit to C.H. Coakley & Co. for doing the right thing," said Ald. Milele Coggs, who represents the district.

Creative Accounting is Job One: Those creative accountants in the bunkers at the Wisconsin Club for Growth are somehow taking issue with job creation efforts in the state of Wisconsin.

It's always simplistic and easy to poke holes in jobs that are created with public money. Simply doing the math makes the exercise seem more expensive than it probably is. Here's the take from the at the right-wing Club on state spending of federal stimulus money: the state has spent \$680 million to create 8,248 jobs.

"That's \$82,444 a job!" a recent newsletter claims. "Where do we apply?"

The group also claims that the bulk of the stimulus jobs -- 74 percent -- being created or preserved have been for public employees, as municipalities scramble to cover cutbacks. Those are certainly good paying jobs and good for the economy, but the group failed to take that into account.

"So here's what the first stimulus report seems to confirm," says the Club. "Huge sums of your federal tax dollars are being used to supplement your local property tax dollars, so that government is not inconvenienced by the recession."

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Posted by [medicolx](#) on Oct. 26, 2009 at 7:44 p.m. ([report](#))

I was a witness of two incidents that required police response so I called the 911 telephone service. On the first occasion, the dispatch hung up on me. The second incident, the 911 phone service did not pick up until after 20 RINGS!! Obvious communication breakdown!

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Posted by [leprechaunshawn](#) on Oct. 24, 2009 at 9:09 a.m. ([report](#))

@ Hckyboy00 Why ignore my comment? Read the papers and the internet and you'll get sick of reading about government mistakes. Whether its local, state or federal doesn't matter when they're wasting taxpayer money. And of course, the private sector has wasted money, just not taxpayer money. My whole point is why would we want the government running our healthcare system when they cannot even get things right that don't involve life or death. We already have government run health care in the U.S. and it's called the V.A. Ask any vet how they feel about their 'free' healthcare. I saw a perfect bumper sticker the other day and it said, "If you think healthcare is expensive now, wait till it's free".

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Posted by [mweiher](#) on Oct. 24, 2009 at 8:57 a.m. ([report](#))

As the Radio Systems Administrator for Milwaukee County, I was appalled to read the comments about interoperable communications with the MC Sheriff's Office. The Milwaukee County 800 mhz Trunked Radio System serves 17 of the 19 municipalities (Police, Fire, EMS, DPW) in the county as well as the MCTS (Transit) and MCSO. There are no fewer than 4 ways the MPD officers can use their current radios to communicate directly with MCSO deputies or any other municipal law enforcement agencies: through the NPSPAC Mutual Aid channels that are programmed into every 800 mhz radio in the US, through county-wide communications talk groups, through the newly created MWPD talk group linking MPD directly with other law enforcement, and finally through talk group patching at the dispatch center level. To suggest they must use cell phones blatantly misinformed.

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Posted by [Hckyboy00](#) on Oct. 23, 2009 at 10:43 p.m. ([report](#))

ignoring the comment on how every level of government is the same from city to federal, and of course the private sector has never wasted a dime, the point about officers having to reappear in court is painfully true. An acquaintance got a DUI ticket nearly 4 years ago, and has been in court over half a dozen times without the case being resolved. the court system sorely needs to be addressed.

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Posted by [leprechaunshawn](#) on Oct. 23, 2009 at 7:01 p.m. ([report](#))

Really?!?! The MPD spent \$17.5 million on a radio system that doesn't work. This is just another case of government ineptitude at its best. And these are the people we want to let run our healthcare??

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