

Before I begin this article, let me thank each of you for your prayers and concern during my deployment to Kandahar Afghanistan. The 256 men and women of the 184th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, known in Theater as the Joint Sustainment Command - Afghanistan, served with great pride and honor. The total command was 43,000 strong with Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines from the Active Component, Reserve Component, and National Guard and included civilians and contractors. Working within the command and with our coalition partners, British, Canadians, Romanians, French, Dutch, and Italian, we delivered all required supplies, ordinance, and maintenance - in some of the toughest terrain in the world. Thank you again for your support.

During the October 3 meeting of the Board of Supervisors, I attempted to end the County's contract with Airwaves. According to the contract, the only time during the year to end this contract is 30 days prior to the November renewal. My motion to bid the contract (seconded by Peggy Calhoun) failed on a 3-2 vote with Supervisors Graham, Anderson, and Smith voting to retain/renew the Airwaves contract.

My reasoning for wanting to bid the contract is twofold. First, I wanted to see if the cash strapped County could get a better deal through bidding. Second, I am receiving (and passing on to the BOS) numerous complaints on the performance of the contracted company and that company's maintenance of the radios. Clinton and Byram experienced the aggravation of buying and turning the radios on to the Hinds County system. Clinton provided extensive documentation pertaining to the extensive downtime for repairs (information given to the BOS) and Byram decided to purchase radios through their City budget in an effort to avoid these issues.

Part of the debate centers on adding radios to the county system to allow all law enforcement departments to communicate in the pursuit of their law enforcement duties. I find it odd those Supervisors representing areas of Clinton (Anderson) and Byram (Smith) continuously vote against the protection of both the constituents they represent and the safety of those Cities' law enforcement officers.

Of greatest surprise is the continued objection by Robert Graham, a retired Lieutenant from the Jackson Police Department. While serving as the JPD Public Affairs Officer, he represented the department at many press conferences as a spokesperson for those that searched for suspects on the run and required the ability to communicate and coordinate with other law enforcement officials in Hinds County. It is a pity he places the needs of a private sector company over the safety of sworn officers.

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