

Greenville County Fire Chiefs' Association Kenwood Radio Updates – Phase 2 and OTAP

Attn: Belmont Fire Department

Today, March 27, 2023, your Executive Committee attended the Greenville County Council - Public Safety Committee meeting. At that meeting, we informed the Committee of significant upcoming need as it relates to the Kenwood Radios. We are all very aware of the user fees and the radio fee that was enacted to help pay for those fees that was subsequently deemed unconstitutional by the Court. Thus far, that funding mechanism has not been replaced. In addition to the user fees, you may or may not be aware of the additional costs that will be necessary in the future. Those costs are for the Phase 2 (TDMA) and Over the Air Programming (OTAP). Phase 2 is part of the P25 system mandates and PAL800 is planning for a transition of all radios by 2025. Overall, the Phase 2 update is a good thing as it allows more bandwidth on the system. OTAP is an update that allows radios to be programmed over the air. That can be accomplished over a wide area or a local, more concentrated area, such as a fire station in some cases. I will spare you the details, as what is of most interest to most people is the cost.

While we did not officially request that Greenville County fund these updates, we did make it clear that they will likely receive multiple requests for funding. The timing of this notification is to give you time to plan for these expenditures between now and 2025 as well as let the Greenville County Public Safety Committee know that Council will be receiving requests from multiple departments. Most departments will likely need assistance in paying these expenditures. For those that don't, you will have upwards of two years to plan/budget for the expenditures.

If you have heard that in 2025 the Kenwood Radios will no longer work, that is factually incorrect. All of the current Kenwood Radios will continue to work, but will need to be updated to Phase 2 in order to continue to transmit on the PAL800 system as it is upgraded to Phase 2. Any radios, Kenwood, Motorola, etc. will have to be updated to Phase 2 if they are not already. This does not just affect Kenwood Radios. There are SOME Motorola Radios that are at end of life and will no longer work going forward as Motorola has announced they will no longer be supporting those radios. The agencies that have and use Motorola Radios are advised to contact their Motorola reps to determine if their radios are affected by that and to develop a replacement plan.

I have been in contact with Kimball Communications to obtain the most up to date information they have on your current inventory of portables and mobiles. Using that information and the standard pricing, we were able to estimate the cost associated with these two updates. According to those records, your department currently has 22 portable and 5 mobile radios. For Phase 2 updates on the PAL800 system, the updates are estimated to cost \$9,072.00 (\$336.00/per radio). For the Over the Air Programming update, the updates are estimated to cost \$4,455.00 (\$165.00/per radio). The total cost for both updates is estimated to be \$13,527.00 for 22 portables and 5 mobiles. If you are able to have the updates done while the scheduled template updates are done (estimated to be done summer of 2023), you will receive an estimated savings of \$2,700.00. The total estimated cost of both updates completed during the template update will be \$10,827.00.

I encourage you to get an official quote from Kimball Communication as your price may differ based on factors, I am not privy to. To get a formal quote on the Phase 2 and OTAP updates for your department, please contact Kimball Communications directly and make that request at:
Kimball Communications, Inc. 245 Duncan Hill Road, Hendersonville, NC 28792 (828) 697-6232

Thank you,
Dorian Flowers
President
Greenville County Fire Chiefs' Association