

LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes

November 13, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The sixth meeting of the Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee was held on Thursday, November 13, 2025 at 1 p.m. in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Scott Sharp, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Scott Sharp, Co-Chair; Senators Danny Carroll, Gerald A. Neal, Matt Nunn, Aaron Reed, Reginald L. Thomas, and Phillip Wheeler; Representatives John Blanton, Matt Lockett, Steve Riley, and Tom Smith.

Guests: Major Todd Kidd, Division of Electronic Services, Kentucky State Police; David Barker, acting branch commander, Communications Branch, Kentucky State Police; Barbie Dickens, general counsel, Finance and Administration Cabinet.

LRC Staff: Committee Staff Administrator William Spears; Committee Analysts Jacob Blevins, Austin Fraley, Christopher T. Hall, Taylor Johnston, Jonathan Rickett, Austin Sprinkles, Shane Stevens, Joel S. Thomas, and Holly Tracy; and Research Assistant Maegan Mohr.

Approve Minutes from October 9, 2025

Upon motion by Senator Thomas and second by Senator Nunn the minutes for the October 9, 2025, meeting were approved without objection.

Staff Report of the Statewide Emergency Responder Voice System

Committee analysts Joel Thomas, Austin Fraley, and Jonathan Rickett presented the staff report "Statewide Emergency Responder Voice System." Staff's full presentation is available on the Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee webpage.

In response to a question from Representative Blanton, Mr. Thomas said the land acquisition process is determining the project's timeline. Having an initial master plan to give to the Division of Real Properties would have helped this process.

In response to a question from Representative Blanton, Mr. Thomas answered that the Kentucky Wireless Interoperability Executive Committee's (KWIEC) membership consists of the Commonwealth Office of Technology's chief information officer as well as other stakeholders from around the state.

In response to a question from Representative Sharp, Mr. Fraley clarified that Legislative Oversight and Investigation Committee (LOIC) staff were not able to confirm whether the Kentucky State Police (KSP) owed interest to Motorola for late payments, but indicated that evidence like an email chain suggested that payments were made late. LOIC staff could not confirm if interest has been paid on late payments.

Representative Smith remarked that he believed the legislature should have required planning controls, such as a master plan, when SERVS was first funded in 2018.

In response to a question from Representative Smith, Mr. Thomas presented other states as examples of how SERVS could benefit from having a master plan.

In response to a question from Representative Sharp, Mr. Thomas said that representatives of KSP stated in a 2025 LOIC committee meeting that the project was too complex to develop an initial master plan.

In response to a question from Senator Wheeler, Mr. Thomas said he did not have the number of local responders who answered the LOIC survey that they were brought in to assist with SERVS planning, but he could provide that information.

In response to a question from Senator Wheeler, Mr. Thomas answered that representatives from KSP would have more information regarding whether a regional radio system model was better suited to Kentucky's diverse terrain.

In response to a question from Senator Nunn, Mr. Thomas said that while the Finance and Administration Cabinet employs procurement specialists, he did not know if KSP has licensed project managers. Many other states deployed turnkey statewide radio systems with a commercial company that provides their own project managers.

In response to a question from Representative Sharp, Mr. Thomas said that the biggest delay seems to be property procurement.

Representative Smith expressed that the General Assembly should modify how the commonwealth handles projects as large as SERVS.

Kentucky State Police and Finance and Administration Cabinet Response to Staff Report

Major Todd Kidd, Division of Electronic Services, Kentucky State Police; David Barker, acting branch commander, Communications Branch, Kentucky State Police; and Barbie Dickens, general counsel, Finance and Administration Cabinet (FAC) presented their responses to the LOIC staff report.

Ms. Dickens agreed that property procurement is one of the most involved parts of SERVS and this project has presented unique challenges to the property procurement process. KSP and FAC

have worked together to create a new process for site acquisitions which has expedited the project. Currently, 4 sites in Phase I have been completed, 5 towers are currently under construction, 13 sites are in various stages of acquisition, and the Division of Real Properties (DRP) is bidding out 43 sites in Phase 3A and the Closeout Phase. The project started with existing sites and leases and has progressed to the acquisition phase, which has taken time to perfect. FAC disagrees with the LOIC recommendation that project managers should consult with DRP prior to receiving funding to assess the agency's capacity to carry out property acquisition. FAC believes its collaborative relationship with other agencies is effective, and Ms. Dickens cites the unique nature of SERVS as the reason for initial issues.

Mr. Barker stated that the SERVS system is being constructed for KSP and that the future use by local responders is seen as an additional benefit. However, they project that four KSP post areas will be capable of supporting local first responder agencies as soon as spring 2026. Tower updates in 2026 and 2027 will benefit local first responders who only require improved coverage of their county area. Additional funding will be necessary to finish the project. KSP disagreed with the LOIC staff recommendation that KSP review its payment practices to avoid late payments, stating that no payments have been made that fall outside of the Commonwealth's prompt payment requirement.

Ms. Dickens agreed with LOIC staff's assertion that master agreements are competitively bid. The use of a master agreement allows FAC to ensure a fair public and competitive process because it uses a competitive bidding process. The Motorola master agreement referenced in the report came from the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) and the procurement section had 11 different categories consisting of detailed scopes of work for bidders to respond to. From there, Kentucky entered into the state addendum master agreement. The agency then issues delivery orders off that master agreement. All the documentation related to that master agreement is captured in the state electronic Management Administrative Reporting System (eMARS). FAC disagrees with the LOIC staff recommendation that the Auditor of Public Accounts should do an audit of the project, stating that all the information is available in eMARS.

In response to a question from Representative Sharp, Ms. Dickens said she did not know which property was acquired most recently or how long it took, but that she could get that information for the committee. Mr. Barker said that the Arts Oasis tower in Phase I was the last tower built and took about 1.5 years to complete.

In response to a question from Representative Blanton, Ms. Dickens said payments are made off delivery orders and payment approvals are established with the delivery orders. She is aware of the terms within the master agreement between Motorola and KSP regarding radio procurement, but Motorola did not bid on the construction part. The commonwealth has current construction contracts in place for SERVS. Mr. Barker said that local, county, and state entities have tried to assist SERVS project planners in finding property, but it does not always work because the area might not meet coverage requirements for the project.

In response to a question from Representative Blanton, Ms. Dickens said that the property acquisition process is the major delay to the project.

In response to a question from Representative Sharp, Ms. Dickens said that she did not know how many meetings FAC had with the state budget director, but there were weekly meetings between KSP and FAC. Mr. Barker said there are not meeting notes from these meetings. Mr. Barker and Major Kidd said they were not aware of progress summaries or executive summaries that have been exchanged between KSP or FAC and the State Budget Office.

In response to a question from Senator Nunn, Ms. Dickens clarified that selected properties do not always work because of title issues and that it is policy to select two alternate sites for this reason.

In response to a question from Representative Sharp, Ms. Dickens said that she believes master agreements are the appropriate procurement contract for a project like SERVS.

In response to a question from Senator Carroll, Mr. Barker said that his predecessor consulted with Tennessee and Ohio to plan Kentucky's statewide radio system. KSP has learned from their mistakes. For example, KSP was not aware at the start of the project that there was no process for land procurement that would suit SERVS' needs, but KSP and FAC have created one.

In response to a question from Senator Carroll, Mr. Barker and Major Kidd did not know why Motorola was not contracted to implement SERVS from the beginning. Ms. Dickens noted that Motorola did not bid on the tower construction component of the master agreement. Land acquisition is not part of the NASPO master agreement. Mr. Barker was not aware of an initial total estimate for the entire SERVS project. In response to Senator Carroll's request that an LOIC analyst comment, Mr. Thomas said that LOIC staff were never given a total estimate for the system. Mr. Barker said the millions of dollars still unspent by KSP will be used for land acquisition and that the upcoming request is still appropriate.

Senator Carroll expressed concern about the SERVS project not having a cohesive plan moving into the next budget cycle.

In response to a question from Representative Sharp, Mr. Thomas said that LOIC staff reviewed emails between KSP and Motorola related to late payments. He did not have the total of those late payments, but he would provide them to the committee.

In response to a question from Representative Lockett, Mr. Barker confirmed there is not a master plan for the project, but there is a plan for every element such as construction and radio along with a designated project manager. Mr. Barker, Major Kidd, and Ms. Dickens did not know why there is not a master plan. Ms. Dickens did not know if it was a concern that a project the size of SERVS began without a master plan. She stated that KSP securing funding indicated to FAC that KSP had demonstrated sufficient planning to move forward.

In response to a question from Representative Sharp, FAC began working with KSP at the beginning of 2020 since the first part of the project focused on existing tower leases.

In response to a question from Representative Lockett, Mr. Barker said that there is not a centralized ledger for the SERVS project. The information exists internally. Information about the project is on the KWIEC website, but there is nothing about the funding and expenditures of the project. The decision to move forward without a master plan was made before Mr. Barker took over.

Representative Lockett expressed his surprise at the lack of plan for a project as large as SERVS.

In response to a question from Representative Lockett, Ms. Dickens said that the Division of Engineering and Contract Administration conducts the construction element of SERVS. FAC operates in a support role to assist agencies as they build their projects. All expenditures, delivery orders, and contracts are kept in eMARS.

In response to a question from Senator Wheeler, Mr. Barker said they would be willing to work with local entities that have existing towers if the towers fit within the coverage needs of SERVS.

In response to a question from Senator Carroll, Mr. Thomas said that Virginia's STARS statewide radio system cost approximately \$361 million in 2004. Mr. Barker agreed that the \$107 million that KSP is going to request in the next budget cycle will finish the project.

Senator Carroll stated that if Kentucky's statewide radio system costs a total of \$323 million, the SERVS project might be economically comparable to projects in other states.

Upon motion by Senator Wheeler and second by Senator Nunn the staff report "Statewide Emergency Responder Voice System" was approved without objection.

Administrative Office of the Courts Response to Shock Probation Requests

Representative Sharp informed the committee that the Administrative Office of the Courts provided informational packets containing answers to questions from the September 11, 2025 committee meeting. The documents are available on the Legislative Oversight and Investigations webpage.

Adjournment

Upon motion by Representative Smith and second by Representative Lockett, the meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m.