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Associated Press

Northampton County Council unanimously passed a package of ordinances and resolutions on Thursday night to purchase Bethlehem's 911 communications equipment for \$1.37 million. The council's action addressed the state's intent to streamline 911 operations, encourage shared use of technology and equipment, and meet the June 30 deadline for Bethlehem to make the equipment transfer to the county. After June 30, the state will no longer provide 911 funding to the city.

Northampton County will pay for Bethlehem's Motorola trunked radio network and software in equal payments over four years. The first payment is due within 30 days of receiving the city's invoice. A trunked radio system is a computer-controlled network that automatically connects users to available radio channels when they need them.

Before the votes, council members John Cusick and Robert Werner inquired about the age of the equipment and whether it was inspected by the county. Charles Dertinger, the county's director of administration, said most of the equipment is five years old and in excellent condition. He said the communications assets "are as good as we could ask for." The county will even get the owner's manuals, he said.

Dertinger also said the value of the equipment surpassed the purchase price and the equipment was inventoried and inspected. The county is essentially taking over Bethlehem's final payments on the equipment, which will be used to dispatch Bethlehem fire, EMS and police, as it is used now. The transaction also includes the transfer of the city's Federal Communications Commission license for the equipment to the county.

Dertinger said the county will have access to the buildings that house the equipment. Bethlehem's 911 system equipment is primarily located in four locations — City Hall at 10 E. Church St.; Electric Shop at 247 E. North St.; Water Tank at 95 Williams St.; and South Mountain at 1508 East University Ave. The radio system is currently used by the city and other entities authorized by it, including all city agencies, Moravian College and Lehigh University police, Bethlehem Area School District Public Safety and the Bethlehem Parking Authority.

[Border wall funding could imperil projects in Phila., elsewhere in Pa., Casey says](#)

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Council President Ronald Heckman said that the purchase is not a gift to Bethlehem, rather a purchase of 911 equipment. Bethlehem City Council approved the sale of the equipment earlier this week. – [WFMZ-TV, Allentown](#)

AT&T Inc. is the latest to join a growing group of marketers halting their advertising on YouTube after it was found that the site served ads near inappropriate content again, putting pressure on the video platform to contain any new brand revolt. “Until Google can protect our brand from offensive content of any kind, we are removing all advertising from YouTube,” an AT&T spokesman said in a statement on Thursday.

AT&T’s retreat is notable because it was one of the last major marketers to resume advertising on YouTube, part of Alphabet Inc.’s Google, after a [number of them pulled out](#) in 2017 over revelations that their ads there were running near offensive videos. AT&T said in January that it had taken time to be confident that similar problems wouldn’t recur.

Marketers including Clorox Co., Nestlé SA, McDonald’s Corp. and “Fortnite” publisher Epic Games Inc. [halted their YouTube advertising](#) on Wednesday following reports that their ads were appearing next to videos of young girls that were marred by inappropriate user comments. “What is happening with these videos is deeply disturbing,” said Clorox Chief Marketing Officer Stacey Grier in a statement. “We have paused our advertising on YouTube while Google addresses the situation.

Google executives tried to stem the damage Wednesday by arranging a conference call with marketers and ad buyers describing the steps they had taken to address the problem and promising an update within 24 hours. On Thursday, YouTube distributed a memo that said it had suspended comments on tens of millions of videos that “are likely innocent but could be subject to predatory comments,” reduced the “discoverability” of similar videos, restricted ads from millions of videos, and terminated the accounts of “bad actors,” referring some of them to law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

YouTube said other efforts in progress include working on a tool to better spot predatory comments, developing ways to help YouTube channel owners monitor comments more effectively, trying to make it harder to discover the kind of videos in question and reviewing ad buyers’ controls for channels that feature minors. “We took immediate action by deleting accounts and channels, reporting illegal activity to authorities and disabling comments on tens of millions of videos that include minors,” a YouTube spokeswoman said in a statement. “There’s more to be done, and we continue to work to improve and catch abuse more quickly.”

A Clorox spokesman said YouTube’s memo demonstrates that the company is trying to deal with a disturbing issue, but said Clorox wasn’t ready to return. “While we are continuing to pause all advertising on YouTube at this moment, we are working very closely with them to determine what measures can be put in place so we can turn our advertising back on,” the spokesman said. A Nestlé

spokeswoman said it would stay away until YouTube can ensure that it meets the marketer's ad standards. Epic Games, which said Wednesday that it had asked YouTube what it would do to eliminate the inappropriate content from its service, said Thursday that it had no further comment. McDonald's said Thursday that it had no further comment on the issue. – *Wall Street Journal*

This Sunday, Netflix Inc. will find out if it finally has a seat at the cool kids' table.

The company's film "Roma" is the favorite to win the Academy Award for best picture, the highest accolade at Hollywood's most prestigious awards show. "Roma" has a 33 percent chance of winning, according to the [Hollywood Reporter](#), while the Gold Derby gives it a 4-1 shot. A victory Sunday would complete Netflix's transformation from Silicon Valley interloper to the consummate Hollywood insider, and signal the dawn of a new era in the entertainment business. "Roma" is the first nominee for best picture that was essentially a digital release -- though it had a limited theatrical run -- and Netflix would be the first technology company to clinch Hollywood's top prize.

Whether or not Netflix wins, an online movie will certainly be crowned best picture sooner or later, said Rich Greenfield, an analyst with BTIG LLC. Amazon.com Inc. and Apple Inc. are both spending billions of dollars on programming, and even Walt Disney Co. plans to release digital movies that won't appear in theaters. "This is an inflection point for the industry, showing you where the world is going," Greenfield said.

Netflix has always relished its role as an outsider, the data-driven startup that breaks with Hollywood tradition. It drops every episode of new shows at once so people can binge, and it never says how many people watch those shows because it doesn't have to. It also generally doesn't release its movies in theaters before they appear online -- a source of great frustration for theater owners and some filmmakers. But ever since Netflix traded mail-order DVDs for online TV, it has begun to embrace Hollywood norms. While its headquarters are in Silicon Valley, most employees now describe Netflix as an entertainment company. Its new chief financial officer works from its Hollywood offices, not far from Chief Executive Officer Reed Hastings' apartment and Chief Content Officer Ted Sarandos's mansion. The company has courted stars and writers for original productions, promising large budgets and creative freedom, and pursued awards to validate those shows in the eyes of the industry. It even released "Roma" in theaters weeks before its debut on the streaming platform, a key concession. Last year, Netflix earned the most Emmy nominations of any TV network.

Yet, Netflix has never mounted a campaign quite like the one for "Roma." The company spent \$30 million on its Oscar crusade, [according to the New York Times](#), a promotional push orchestrated by Lisa Taback, an executive whose sole job is to help Netflix win awards. Movie-theater owners and filmmakers such as Steven Spielberg have attempted to block Netflix's path to the Oscars. The company still insists on making most of its movies available on its service at the same time they appear in theaters, much to the chagrin of cinephiles and theater owners. The major studios release movies in theaters for months before they are available anywhere else.

The world's largest movie theater chains have refused to exhibit Netflix's films, and wouldn't even show "Roma" after it received the most Oscar nominations of any picture. "There is mild panic about Netflix possibly winning," said Sasha Stone, editor of Awards Daily. A victory for "Roma" would tilt the balance of power in Hollywood. Netflix is locked in a competition for talent with the biggest studios in town, including Disney, Comcast Corp.'s Universal and AT&T Inc.'s Warner Bros.

These studios have wooed talent by claiming Netflix won't promote their movies -- and that the streaming giant could never win top awards. Now Netflix can offer the easiest sales pitch of all: work at Netflix and win an Oscar. "Let's say Netflix does win," Greenfield said. "What's amazing is 60 million people in the U.S. -- and 150 million globally -- can click a button and watch it a minute later at no additional cost. That has never happened before." – *New York Times*



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