

## New York state sends out subpoenas for Monroe County's privatized communications system

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The New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman has [issued subpoenas](#) to a number of individuals who are part of local development corporation (LDC) Monroe Security and Safety Systems (M3SLDC). M3SLDC was established in 2009 by Monroe County to provide public safety technology and services to county citizens. With millions spent and Monroe County on the hook for \$224 million, questions are being raised as to the creation of M3SLDC and its contractor Navitech Services Corp.

Back in 2009, following the creation of the Monroe County local development corporation, [I blogged about how the creation of such a corporation](#) would be disadvantageous to the county because it would prevent reevaluation of services, software and hardware every few years. Under normal circumstances, an agency would bid out services and if the results were unsatisfactory after the initial terms of the deal, the agency could rebid the services and contract with a new vendor. Monroe County gave up its own independence in the procurement process when it allowed M3SLDC to complete all the contracting itself, possibly with ulterior motives behind its decisions, or at least that is what the New York state attorney general may believe.

Part of the concern in Monroe County is that Harris Corp. was selected by M3SLDC for subcontracting of the project at a cost of \$11 million more than a competing firm. Therefore, Harris Corp. was also subpoenaed. Much of the negativity regarding the M3SLDC subpoenas centers around its creation, lack of transparency and contracts like the one given to Harris Corp. LDCs are not subject to the same procurement laws as a government agency and are under no obligation to provide all documents as open records. However, M3SLDC believes that it has been open and provided documentation on [its website](#).

Due to the rarity of LDCs commanding such control over a county's public safety services, these subpoenas and the subsequent investigation will be interesting to follow. These types of projects that are controlled by an external group do not appear to be the trend I thought they might become in 2009. LDCs may work in some arenas, but they seem to bring along a tremendous amount of baggage that begs the question, are they worth it?