

**CENTRAL MINNESOTA REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)**

**Meeting Minutes**

Friday, January 23, 2009 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Hoffman Community Center  
Hoffman, MN – Grant County

**Members/Alternates Present:**

1. Micah Myers – Vice-Chair – Designee of St. Cloud
2. Troy Heck – Designee Benton County  
John Burski – Alternate Benton County
3. John Haukos – Designee Big Stone County
4. Tom Egan – Designee Douglas County  
Michael Henrion – Alternate Douglas County
5. Troy Langlie – Designee Grant County  
Greg Lillemon – Alternate Grant County
6. Dan Hartog – Designee Kandiyohi County  
Stacey “Ace” Bonnema – Alternate Kandiyohi County
7. Jeff Norlin – Alternate Meeker County
8. Mike Smith – Alternate Mille Lacs County
9. Jeff Jelinski – Alternate Morrison County
10. Mark Englund – Designee Otter Tail County  
Judy Siggerud – Alternate Otter Tail County
11. Tom Larson – Designee Pope County
12. John Olson – Designee Sherburne County  
Dave Pikal – Alternate Sherburne County
13. Jay Sikkink – Alternate Stearns County
14. Judy Diehl – Designee Stevens County
15. Bob Cuchna – Alternate Todd County
16. Trevor Wright – Designee Traverse County
17. Scott McKellep – Designee Wadena County
18. Rick Fiedler – Designee Wilkin County
19. Greg Howell – Alternate Wright County

**Members/Alternates Absent:**

20. Swift County

**Guests Present:**

Glenn Elvecrog, MN DPS/MSEM  
Kathy Gilson, State Patrol  
Tom Hannon, ARMER  
Tom Justin, RIC  
Tim Lee, MnDOT  
Ron Whitehead, ARMER

**Meeting was called to order by Chair Micah Myers at 10:00 a.m.**

Chair Myers welcomes members and guests, introductions conducted. 19 Out of 20 members in attendance with quorum present.

**Communications:**

Metro Region EMS Strike Team Request for Regional Talk Group Access:

EMS Strike Team is requesting to have the Central MN regional talk groups in their radios. *Dan Hartog moved, Jeff Norlin second to authorize the request to use our regional talk group in their radios. Upon a vote, motion carried.*

**Revisions and Approval of Agenda:**

*Jeff Jelinski moved, Bob Cuchna second to approve agenda, upon vote motion carried.*

**Approval of November 21, 2008 Minutes:**

*Troy Langlie moved, Jay Sikkink second to approve minutes, upon a vote motion carried.*

**Reports:**

SRB/ARMER Update:

Chair Myers stated there have been a lot of questions on process to come onto the ARMER system. Tim Lee stated there is a process which a plan is submitted; the RAC approves plan, then RRB, OTC, and finally MnDOT. A contract is also required to be on the system, an entity or user under a county has a contract with that county. The county in return has a contract with the State and the State work directly with the county. The State is currently working on Kandiyohi, Wright, Sherburne, and Benton County contracts. System information will be sent out as needed so within the contract it will need to have a point of contact.

Chair Myers stated he currently has a contract for Wright and Sherburne and the attorney is currently reviewing it. He stated currently the contract reads the City of St. Cloud's attorney needs to sign off and asked if we will want to change the contract to State to read only the entity's attorney need to sign off on it. Ron Whitehead stated it is up to the group how they want to approach it. Ace was questioning if each county needs to have a contract or if each agency needs to do their own. Chair Myers stated each county will need to have their own with MnDOT. Andy Terry had some questions on licensing and made some changes to contract and liability to contractors, insurance questions, etc. that they found; he suggested having those changes included as a template as other counties move forward. Andy will forward the template to Chair Myers to post on the web.

Hennepin County Request for Tower Site Access:

Chair Myers stated where an entity has neighboring counties who want access to use their tower, how do we handle this. Tim Lee said there is a system standard that refers to talk groups and other agencies utilizing another agency's talk group. He stated the current system standard needs to be cleaned up but the intent was to allow the main talk group to be allowed to work on the neighboring/adjoining towers one site out.

MnDOT – Contracting and Site Access Procedures:

Tim Lee reported they are bringing sites up in the Central MN area, T-mobile provided some microwave links per a buy-out and now have the link completed to Hoffman, Herman, etc. antennas are hung, just brought Eden Valley on site for testing.

SRB:

Ron stated the SRB has authority over all interoperability channels. There were changes to the bylaws to reflect this such as NIMS, EMS, frequency plans, etc. The 2009 IECGP grant was approved by the SRB and all interoperability grants will be addressed by the SRB to allow for consistency. Scott Wiggins reported that Benton and Kandiyohi Participation Plans have been approved as submitted.

## **Reports: (Continued)**

### OTC:

Jay Sikkink stated there is a draft contract for support services for language changes which states when you come onto the system, the OTC has the authority to decide what is and is not included and if you have infrastructure on the system, you are part of the contract. He stated there is software assurance on the radios to keep the firmware up-to-date, it was discussed if it should be required to have each entity have software assurance. Tim Lee wrote the standard and stated he wants to make it clear there is not a fee to be on the system, although there are costs to cover the State contract to provide software assurance so when future upgrades are required and agencies add equipment to the system, it affects it.

Last year the cost was \$2.4 million for the upgrade and the whole system needs to be upgraded at the same time. They are trying to formalize the process and it will be brought to the SRB each year and a new contract will be signed each year so if you own equipment on the system, you will have a cost for it. Mark Englund stated some agencies will be purchasing non-Motorola equipment, how will that affect it, Tim Lee stated for the subscribers it is optional to have the assurance. Tim stated he does not foresee any upgrades in the near future that will require the subscribers to be upgraded.

Jay stated regarding the aircraft operations, he handed out the testing process they completed; the other is an aviation standard which will make a change to the aircraft airwave which will allow it to switch towers quicker as currently it could take up to ten minutes. If you have a portable in the aircraft, it will take additional time to switch towers.

An additional handout showed the process and priorities on the ARMER build-out. Mark Englund stated the sites that were ready to be constructed would be built in conjunction with phase 4, 5, and 6 as they become available and funds remain. If they come into a bottleneck, it will be discussed at the OTC on how to proceed. Tim stated there were several tower sites in the southern area and thought they would be completed in October although they ran into some issues and are working on them now. Chair Myers stated there is a process posted on the website on what it takes to get a tower site completed.

Jay stated another standard is on ID's as they are trying to manage the ID's more efficiently and there is a request process for the State and system administrators to manage the ID's. Currently there are 65,000 available and 44,000 are already being used. Mark Englund stated as the ID talk groups are handed out, they will allow room for growth. Andy Faith stated for future upgrades they will be expanding the ID's. Tim Lee stated if the State runs out of ID's and there is a cache of spare radios the State may need to reallocate the inactive ID's. He stated the Gold Elite consoles eat up a lot of talk groups, the new 7,500 consoles only requires one.

Another handout was the Metropolitan Emergency Board and explains how to use the L-TACS, E-TACS, numbering definitions, etc. Jay suggested this area may want to draft something similar. LE-TACS and LESIU-TACS will be addressed at the State level and as you are programming these talk groups into your radios, you will need to get the key from the State.

SMG is looking at requiring all network administrators on the system must meet at least twice a year in order to keep up your rights to be on the system. Washington County brought their talk group fleet plan for review, Jay stated in the Metro they have a statewide roam talk group for each county and currently Central MN has one for the whole region and he is questioning if one for the whole region is sufficient. Chair Myers stated in the Metro they have more radios and this region does not have as many, this may be something we may want to monitor or expand in the future versus making a decision at this time. Ron Whitehead stated in Metro they utilize a Bloomington 911 channel so they are set up a little different, Troy Langlie asked when their staff goes to the Metro and come across an accident, who do they contact and talk to regarding this? Tom Justin stated maybe we look at making a regional hailing channel or a talk group for each county and see what the Interop and User Committees feel.

## **Reports: (Continued)**

### OTC: (Continued)

Tim stated Metro has several Metro talk groups but doesn't know who monitors them all. Tom Larson suggested providing training at one of our upcoming meetings on how to utilize the radios for the individuals who currently do not use a radio and are unsure how they work.

### Interop:

Interop grant group met and did not have quorum but moved forward Federal Engineering VHF study and Plain Language standard to the SRB for approval. IECGP Grant allocated to all regions for participation expenses, \$716,000 directed with priorities of governance and exercise development. If they addressed the governance and exercise issues, then it could be used for equipment and requires a 25% match. Exercise development is for TIC plans and we need to look at training to include web based training. They developed a project under the IECGP Grant for web training with Chair Myers providing input. The State is hiring staff to develop and provide training and should be complete within the next week. League of MN Cities and Sheriff's Association have provided web based training in the past, grant needs to be 80% local and 20% for the State. The allocation was made to the Central MN Region and need to sign a MOU directing it back to the State; \$350,000 of this grant is provided for developing a web based process. \$366,000 is for equipment from the grant and requires a 25% match and is based on population and the number of counties within the region.

HSCM changed the process for grants, in the past everyone submitted separate proposals. Ron summarized the language of the MOU and asked for action on request. *Troy Heck moved, second Tom Larson to approve the MOU from the State to move it forward to the RRB for approval. Upon a vote motion carried.*

### CMNRRB Update:

Chair Myers stated agenda is out and will be meeting next Wednesday, if there are any additional items to let him know. Have contract between MnDOT and Sherburne County, the MOU, and ICC items will be on agenda.

### User Committee:

User Committee Chair Paul McIntyre stated they met this week, was the start of centralized meeting, had quorum with 14 of the 20 entities present. He stressed the importance of the User Group and encouraged everyone to talk to their representatives to encourage participation, they conducted elections, had a fleet mapping presentation, discussed reimbursement policy. Their recommendation is to reimburse for mileage only, no minimum, billed quarterly, and is for individuals who are not reimbursed by their entity, remains in effect as long as funds are available, and will be at the rate by the IRS.

### Regional RAC Committees:

Tom Hannon stated all radio boards in the State are formed; Northeast represents 11 counties and 4 cities and are in the process of forming User Committee to be completed by March. Southcentral formed User and Owners and Operators Committees, desire of User Committee chair wants to know what the other User Committees are doing and Tom will be getting in touch on this. Southwest will be convening User Committee for February 17; by the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter all RACS, User Committees, and RRB will be in place and getting Owners and Operators Committee in place. Chairs of the RACs and User Committees will be getting together to discuss issues regarding growth, issues between regions, etc. Other regions are looking to this region for guidance and will be looking for a central area in the State to meet.

## **Reports: (Continued)**

### Regional RAC Committees: (Continued)

Chair Myers stated our RRB chair could not attend the SRB and asked if this is something we want to address prior to the Owner's and Operator's meeting as far as representation. Tom Hannon suggested the RACs discuss this and pass on to the RRBs to discuss. He suggested the RACs may want to consider a policy that would rotate on an annual basis both the delegate and alternate perhaps on a seniority list by the formation of the RRBs.

### Regional Training Facility:

Tom Larson stated Alex Tech will be putting a new dispatch center in their college expansion. They had discussions as to what it would take to get onto the ARMER system, the trainings they could provide, etc. They are working with Federal Engineering on this project, were looking at developing standards, etc. and Tom Justin brought it to their attention that they can't just draft their own standards for dispatch conduct, etc.

Pat Boone stated if Alex can not provide the training, Camp Ripley has a Tier III training center that could be utilized. He stated State Patrol is also looking at putting a dispatch center into this expansion as well.

### Central MN Project Coordinator Committee:

Tom Larson stated the subcommittee received three applications for Project Coordinator and were reviewed by the committee. One group was selected to be interviewed, OTTC (On Target Training Consultants) and interviewed them two weeks ago. Addressed questions such as timeline and it will be addressed via contract. Their recommendation is to enter into a contract with OTTC and move recommendation forward to the RRB. Chair Myers stated the RRB has all proposals and a formalized recommendation for approval. There was a list of questions for interview such as requesting experience of the individuals who will be conducting TIC plan, knowledge of the Central MN Region, etc. Two of the quotes were way over budget, discussed in length if there was any potential conflict of interest and determined it was only a perception and not really any conflicts. *Mark Englund moved, second Bob Cuchna to move OTTC forward to the RRB for approval, upon a vote, motion carried.*

### Standards Committee:

1.10.1, 1.10.2, 1.10.3 Standards presented, Jay made changes to reflect our region, 1.10.2 changed verbage and approval process was a little redundant to 1.10.1. 1.10.3 address limited participation such as school, college, etc. that want to come on for interoperability; section four addresses fleet map, number of radios, etc. that must be included in part of their request to come onto the system.

Spreadsheet included statewide and regional standards, they are on the website, and the website is updated. It included a logo which showed all counties and can be adopted as official logo. The website will list grant templates. *Judy Diehl moved, Tom Larson second to move standard 1.10.1, 1.102, 1.103, and 2.5a to the RRB for adoption, upon a vote, motion carried.*

### Background Committee Report:

Mark Englund stated the background process is not a quick process, Background Committee will meet to review information, forward it to the RAC, and then to the CASM representative. Chair Myers stated members will be provided a code to access the system to look at the data base. Vendors will be able to complete forms online to speed up the approval process. Chair Myers stated it is in the test process at this time to streamline it and will be presented at the next RAC.

### RRB:

See above.

## **Updates from Partners on Current Projects:**

### **Morrison, Traverse, and Wilkin Counties:**

Todd Pieper stated all of the final meetings and presentations have been scheduled – Morrison February 18<sup>th</sup>, Traverse February 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Wilkin February 9<sup>th</sup>.

Trevor Wright stated they are waiting for meeting, Rick Fiedler stated they are right on schedule, Jeff Jelinski stated they met with Sheriff and waiting for the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Mille Lacs County:**

Project has been kicked off, conducted site meetings, Mike Smith stated met they with Lex on the 8<sup>th</sup>, some surveys have been returned.

### **Regional Plan Update:**

Todd stated they worked on the scope with Micah, will have completed by May 1<sup>st</sup> along with some CASM work. Chair Myers stated he hasn't had a chance to fully review scopes, would like to meet with Tom Larson on the Alex project.

## **General Discussion and New Business:**

### **Elect Chair and Vice-Chair for RAC:**

*Jay Sikkink nominated Micah Myers for 2009 chair, second Scott McKellop, with no other nominations, upon a vote motion carried. Chair Myers nominated Jay Sikkink as Vice-Chair, second by Scott McKellop, with no other nominations, upon a vote motion carried.*

### **Grant – Expense Reimbursement:**

No distance limitations for mileage reimbursement request and will use Federal mileage rate, reimbursement form is on the website. *Tom Larson moved to take recommendation of User Committee to the RRB, second Mike Smith, upon a vote, motion carried.*

### **Grant Funding for Training:**

See above.

### **Unused PSIC Grant Money:**

Chair Myers stated a member notified him that they will not use the full allotment for the PSIC Grant, although as the region grows, that may change. He recommends we wait until May to make any decisions of unused commitments and suggested perhaps a cache of radios for the region be purchased with the unused funds. Bob Cuchna stated he thought the recommendation of the User Committee was the unused funds would be reallocated evenly amongst the entities that are on the system. Mark Englund suggested the funds be reallocated to the entities that are on the system and are moving forward. Tom Larson stated some counties may have committed to interoperable communication but not purchase radios yet. Chair Myers stated we need to commit by September 2009 to let the State know, the RRB tasked the RAC with a recommendation. Chair Myers stated he would like to have a recommendation to the RRB to consider at their April meeting. *Troy Langlie moved, second Judy Diehl that any unused funds be distributed equally between the entities that have a use for it and will have the match. Upon a vote, motion carried.*

### **Homeland Security Grant:**

Tom Larson stated the 2009 justifications are due February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Region IV EMS consists of 18 counties who are all in this region – Sherburne County is the only county not in that region. Taking justification two (Interoperability Communication Management), they will be putting together a large radio list, checking to see if additional radios are needed, i.e. may have had a mobile and now need a portable, etc. They will also be hiring planning staff to apply for grants, etc. Ron Whitehead stated in November he sent letter and the RRB could put in a separate proposal for 2009 and suggested a joint proposal.

## **General Discussion and New Business: (Continued)**

### Wright/Sherburne Joint Participation Plan:

Chair Myers stated this was addressed previously, OTC had some suggested changes, GeoComm made changes and achieved MN NIPS PAC Committee approval, made request and received approval from Nextel, and recently received license for the Sherburne County system. The system is on the air, have frequency plan, license, and are ready to take to the RRB, OTC, and then SRB. The NIPS Pack Committee also applied for the Wright County licenses and that process is underway. Dave Pikal stated they are putting steel up for their tower and anticipate on steel being stacked by next week. 60% of Fire Departments are up and running, all Police Departments except Elk River are up and running. It is six sites with eight channels; with MnDOT and when Wright County is up it will be ten channels. Wright entered into a contract in December for infrastructure, LEC portion is moving to new facility, cut-over is scheduled for May. Wright received grant money for subscribers and anticipates the county being up and running by December. Mike Mazzitello stated both agencies will be utilizing a multi-site paging system. *Bob Cuchna moved, second Mike Smith to move participation plan forward to the RRB for their approval. Upon a vote motion carried.*

### **Old Business:**

#### Sales Tax Exemption Update:

Chair Myers met with Representative Haws on Tuesday and Senator Ingebrightsen is working on it from the Senate side. He asked each group here to talk to their representatives and get their signatures, send your contacts and lobbyists to Chair Myers or Debbie. He stated Governor Pawlenty indicated in his speech to provide sales tax relief to private entities and stated we should also ask for it for governmental entities. We do have the retroactive sales tax in the bill and it is number 09-1041.

#### Letters to SRB – Colleges and Universities Assessment Letter:

Chair Myers put together a draft and is waiting for feedback prior to it being sent out.

#### Letter from Region IV Emergency Managers:

Tom Larson stated Region IV would like to take some of their grant money to allow the RRB to commission a study for implementation/participation for each of the counties in the region and have that encompass a regional plan as well as individual. He felt this is a good way for the counties to work with the RRB as each county would need to have a plan approved and any counties who have already completed their plan after July 1, 2007, could be reimbursed. Tom is requesting the group to develop a RFP for a Participation/Implementation Plan and leave the expertise of this body or RRB to draft. The funds need to be spent by June 30, 2010 and is a 2007 grant. He stated any of the 18 counties within the EMS region could be paid for. Discussion followed regarding paying for studies for counties that are not a part of Region IV EMS but are a part of the Central MN Region. John Olson stated they are part of Metro EMS region and they do have funds available there. Tom Larson stated they are already talking about realigning the EMS and Radio regions to be the same.

Mark Englund had concern of one company providing the studies if it will be an issue where a company may not be able to provide all of the plans within the timeline. Tom stated not all entities will be ready for their plan at the same time. Judy asked if just one entity would be able to provide the plan or could several companies provide a plan. Tom stated they wanted to bring the Region together and have the regional work together and it would work best to have one company provide the plans. The ultimate goal is to have a Region IV Participation Plan to be utilized for use to include future grant writings.

**Old Business: (Continued)**

**Letter from Region IV Emergency Managers: (Continued)**

Ron Whitehead stated they had significant discussion on utilizing several vendors, there was no way they would have all of the data mesh together well. Chair Myers stated if we were to take a single vendor and all of our members are not ready to come on at one time, could it be funded over a several year period in phases. Glenn Elvecrog stated in 2008 the EMS is allowed to transfer some of the funding from equipment and put it into planning, although they can't do this with the 2007 funds. Tom Larson envisioned each county's plan being completed as their need comes up, Jay Sikkink stated he didn't think a couple of different vendors would cause a concern. Tom Larson stated with each different vendor they would have to draft a separate RFP, Chair Myers stated we could let studies on top of the original RFP. Tom Larson stated for the plans that are already complete, they want implemented into the Regional RFP as well. Chair Myers thanked Region IV EMS for bringing this forward and their desire to work together. *Judy Diehl moved, Tom Egan second to put a subcommittee together to start on a RFP. Upon a vote, motion carried.*

Committee consists of Tom Hannon, Tom Larson, Trevor Wright, Micah Myers, Troy Langlie, Mike Smith, and Glenn Elvecrog. *Bob Cuchna moved, second Judy Diehl to recommend to the RRB the process of formulating a RFP of the participation plan, and the RRB would grant the RAC authorization to move forward. Upon a vote, motion carried.*

**RIC Tom Justin:**

RIC Tom Justin asked if the group could make a recommendation for the COML Leadership training on March 17-19, and the State is paying for two from each region to attend. There are some requirements, it will be at the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud, PSIC Grant funding could be utilized for mileage and accommodations. Ron Whitehead stated it is training on TIC Plan development. Scott McKellep and Dona Greiner would like to go. Tom Larson asked if someone within the region should go because of the position they hold, Ron stated this is a prerequisite for train the trainer training. Tom Justin stated there could easily be long-term commitments from attendees. *Tom Egan moved, Micah Myers second to approve Scott and Dona to attend the training, upon a vote motion carried.*

Tom also asked entities to let him know if your entity applied and received grant funding as he would like to put together a spreadsheet for the region.

**RRB Appointee:**

Chair Myers stated the appointees to the RRB are on the board unless they are no longer elected or decline to be on the board. He stated we are working on a process to track the terms of the RRB.

**Upcoming Meeting, Set Date, and Location:**

**February:**

Chair Myers stated the SRB is trying to get dates set for the year and does the RAC want to set a pre-determined date for the monthly RAC meetings such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month. *Mike Smith moved to hold the monthly RAC meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month, Mark Englund second, upon a vote, motion carried.*

Next meeting will be Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup> in Kandiyohi County.

*Jay Sikkink moved moved, John Burski second to adjourn at 2:15 p.m., upon a vote motion carried.*

Minutes recorded by Debbie Backes.