

CENTRAL MINNESOTA REGIONAL RADIO BOARD (RRB)

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 22, 2009 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
City of St. Cloud City Hall, St. Cloud, MN

Members/Alternates Present:

1. Jim McMahon – Designee Benton County
2. Roger Sandberg – Designee Big Stone County
3. Paul Anderson – Designee Douglas County – Vice Chair
4. Ron Woltjer and Tom Amundson – Alternate Grant County
5. Dean Shuck – Designee Kandiyohi County
6. Wally Strand and Dave Gabrielson – Designee Meeker County
7. Mike Disher – Alternate Morrison County
8. Jack Edmonds – Designee Mille Lacs County
9. John Lindquist – Designee Otter Tail County
10. Larry Kittelson – Designee Pope County
11. Rachel Leonard – Alternate Sherburne County
12. Sonja Berg – Designee City of St. Cloud
13. Don Otte – Chair and Designee Stearns County
14. Larry Sayre – Designee Stevens County
15. Doug Anderson – Designee Swift County
16. Gary Kneisl – Designee Todd County
17. Dr. David Naatz – Designee Traverse County
18. Lane Waldahl – Designee Wadena County
19. Neal Folstad – Designee Wilkin County
20. Elmer Eichelberg – Alternate Wright County
21. Paul McIntyre – Designee User Committee

Members/Alternates Absent:

22. Dan Hartog – Designee RAC

Guests Present:

Mark Gieseke, Mn/DOT
Tom Justin, Central MN RIC

Call to Order:

Meeting called to order by Chair Don Otte at 2:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introductions:

Introductions were conducted.

Approval of January 28, 2009 Minutes:

Elmer Eichelberg moved, second Dean Shuck to approve minutes of January 28, 2009, upon a vote, motion carried.

Communications:

Nothing at this time.

Reports:

SRB/ARMER:

Mark Gieseke explained the ARMER build out and locations of towers. His hand out listed location of towers and he explained how Mn/DOT decides on tower locations, what steps are necessary to get the tower online i.e. meeting with local authorities, meeting local standards, variances required, etc.

RIC:

RIC Justin stated ARMER is presently conducting frequency and VHF/UHF plans; Federal Engineering has been selected to conduct studies. Governor's PSAP workgroup was held last week and this region and Central MN is represented very well.

He attended the CASM collection meeting in which the discussion was to determine what data will be collected.

RIC Justin also attended regional planning meeting with GeoComm, the vendor completing Central MN's regional plan.

Interoperability Committee:

Micah stated the full group met yesterday. They approved the grant subcommittee's recommendation on the allocation of the 2008 Homeland Security funds. The proposal and it will be forward to the Finance Committee and then the SRB for approval. There is \$5.8 million available and allocation that will be submitted to the State Interoperable Committee next week is: region 1 \$216,300, region 2 \$515,000, region 3 \$422,300, region 4 \$576,645, region 5 \$278,100, region 6 \$208,060, MESB \$618,000, DECN \$2,884,000, border counties \$103,000.

RAC:

RAC Chair Myers reported the RAC reviewed the OTC reports, Mn/DOT's update, discussed the Owners and Operators Committee and next week there will be a meeting in St. Cloud for radio boards state-wide. They also discussed training, at the March RAC they formed a Training Committee to look at items the Central MN Region needs; there is a statewide training coordinator who will be working with the group.

The Vendor Committee met last month and they looked at standard 4.10.

RAC Recommendations:

Appeals Process - The RAC had a lengthy discussion regarding appeals process. A radio shop within the region has submitted an employee who was rejected and they are asking for an appeals process. Conclusion by the RAC is some type of appeals process is necessary and the group met yesterday define the process. The chair of the committee, Mark Englund of Otter Tail County, stated that they revised the application process and background check form. The RAC will review them at their next meeting.

RAC Recommendations:

Mn/DOT Contract Process – Members within the region are looking at ways to streamline the contracting process. The contracts have already been reviewed by each of the member's legal staff. The RAC's request is to either form a committee or authorize the RAC to approve the contracts to streamline the process. Paul Anderson asked where the final responsibility lies if something goes wrong such because if it lies on the board the someone from the board should be represented on the committee. Don Otte stated the contracts could be reviewed either at a RAC meeting or a special meeting, Myers stated when we have a contract for review we could put it on the RAC agenda and notify the RRB appointees to be present at that particular RAC. *Mike Disher moved to appoint Wally Strand and Paul Anderson to the committee, Elmer Eichelberg second, upon a vote motion carried.* Myers stated if there is a meeting that would require an approval the commissioners would be notified in advance.

Reports: (Continued)

RAC: (Continued)

RAC Recommendations: (Continued)

Staffing – RAC Chair Myers stated staffing is an on-going concern and this board is starting to grow as are the needs. The RAC stated there is a lot of responsibility involved as agencies come on such as signing of contracts, fleet mapping to be completed, etc. We have an ICC position that will be writing a TIC plan and staff time is very limited with all members. A committee has been put together to define job title, responsibilities, etc. and need to know if the RRB would like them to proceed with the position. Don Otte stated prior authorization has been granted and stated one or two individuals from the RRB would be needed to sit on the committee. Lane Waldahl asked if the position would require the individuals to be at RAC meetings, Myers stated there are funds available from the state for this position and it requires a 20% match which is in the budget, although at some point when grants are not available the RRB would need to fund it. Lane Waldahl volunteered, Myers stated there is a conference bridge set up for some of the other standing committees and can be utilized for these meetings. *Paul Anderson moved to appoint Lane Waldahl and Mike Disher to the Staffing Subcommittee, second by John Lindquist, upon a vote motion carried.*

User Committee:

User Committee Chair Paul McIntyre reported the last meeting was in March, 14 of the 20 counties were present, updates were provided, points of topics is the use of county-wide roaming and recommendation is each county should have their own. The other item of discussion was the use of interoperability tactical channels which would have a pool versus talk groups broke out by discipline. It was tabled until after the state meeting on the 27th and then they will make recommendation to RAC and ultimately the RRB. The April meeting was cancelled since there were only updates and training was cancelled. Next meeting will be May 19th in Alexandria. Paul Anderson asked if all volunteer firefighters have put in for grants, Chair McIntyre stated he was unsure; some have applied and have been successful. Lane stated Wadena County did put in a grant for the whole county, John Lindquist stated Otter Tail also did.

OTC:

Jay Sikkink reported there has been a lot of activity; new standard was put into place, each radio has a unique ID, to date 50,000 have been used with only 15,000 IDs remaining. In order to get radio IDs an entity would need to make request to the board. Todd and Morrison Counties have requested 1,500 IDs as their Drug Task Forces were utilizing Stearns County IDs and they are getting PSIC funds.

The other item is the roaming channel talk group; one for the whole region would not work for all 20 entities. Benton County had a request in for their county and it has been approved Jay anticipates more request from other counties as they come onto the system for their state-wide roaming talk group. He stated each county would need between one and four although most counties in this region would only need one.

Video conferencing is another topic of discussion and they are looking at video conferencing; the SRB conducts this and it has been successful and is webcasted. Mike Disher asked if this is something available for RAC as far as participation to minimize the travel costs. Jay stated that would be up to the RRB and there are facilities around the region which could provide this. Chair Otte stated the SRB utilizes Mn/DOT and it has been nice.

ICC Committee:

Micah Myers stated the ICC Committee is in the final contract process with On Target Training & Consulting, last week the City Attorney reviewed it and OTTC is now reviewing it, OTTC will be providing the Regional TIC plan.

Reports: (Continued)

Participation Plan Committee:

Micah stated the committee is looking at a process to finish the participation plans for the remaining members. The committee made recommendation if an agency is ready to work with the participation plan they can move ahead and ask for reimbursement. The committee should have updates and final submissions by the June Annual meeting.

General Discussion and New Business:

Appointees to Governor's Task Force:

Commissioner McMahon is the appointee for this region, they met April 16th, there was an overview of the Governor's order, meeting procedures, time, etc. Future meetings will follow the SRB each month, there are absolutely no mandates attached to this, the project will sunset in January 2010. Dakota County was the largest PSAP consolidation via a joint powers board and it is working well, he listed other entities that have consolidated as well and stated purpose of the task force is to provide a "cookbook" on consolidation, joint powers, concerns, requirements, educational programs, etc. Next meeting is May 28th at the video sites at Alexandria is a site, Mn/DOT in St. Cloud, Itasca, Rochester, and Waters Edge. *Sonja Berg moved to have Jim McMahon as delegate and Larry Sayre as alternate to the Governor's Task Force, Lane Waldahl second, upon a vote, motion carried.*

Mn/DOT Contract Approvals:

Micah reported Wright, Benton, Kandiyohi, and Sherburne county's contracts are ready for approval, included in the packet is a diagram which explains the contracting process required to come onto the ARMER system. In packet are the contracts for Wright, Benton, Kandiyohi, and Sherburne Counties. He stated Benton County found some statutory changes required, and after the changes were made it was used as template for the other three counties. The RAC recommended the approval of these contracts and Kandiyohi needs the contract approved prior to proceeding with Benton County right behind them. *Elmer Eichelberg moved to approve all four contracts, second by Wally Strand, upon a vote motion carried.*

Mn/DOT Contract with CMNRRB:

Micah stated this is for discussion only and is a contract with Mn/DOT and the CMNRRB. Mark Gieseke explained the diagram and stated a plan and contract are needed prior to anyone being able to operate on the ARMER system. Mn/DOT is the owner/operator of the ARMER system, the SRB requires that Mn/DOT has a contract with each RRB and that the RRB has an agreement with anyone else who wants to come on and use the system. There is a three party agreement between an entity, RRB, and Mn/DOT and this works best. The contract in the packet defines how Mn/DOT and the region will work together according to the statewide standards.

Regional Talk Group Planning:

RIC Justin explained Regional Talk Group Planning document, he stated the User Committee discussed this at two meetings already and have tabled this until the statewide meeting on Monday. With the RIC position comes the education and coordination of regional interoperable communications. He explained the various interoperable talk groups that he feels could be in radios according to zones. As he traveled around the regions he realized there are similar interoperable communication concerns. Regional talk groups include A-TAC's for all users, P-TAC's for public safety, and EMS talk groups, there are also state interop talk groups such as F-TACS for fire, L TAC's for Law enforcement, E-TAC's for EMS. From an operational and training perspective it is difficult way and asked if we could provide talk groups similar to the example on page two and put them into all radios and not be discipline specific. A general Pool of regional Interop talk groups. According to Jay Sikkink the Stearns County representative, it would cost approximately \$50,000 for Stearns County to reprogram their radios to the suggested example. RIC Justin stated he understands Stearns concern, however, the interoperability issue should be decided by what's best for all public safety in the region. He would not recommend making change right away and put it on a time table for everyone will need to retouch their radios.

General Discussion and New Business:

Regional Talk Group Planning: (Continued)

He explained the status screen a dispatcher could utilize to resolve the concern of talk group confusion until the reprogramming was complete. One of the present state standards is standardize naming conventions for state He stated in the CM Region, entities support each other across county lines and being 19 counties in geographic size, of which the Metro area is roughly the same geographic size as Otter Tail County, regions have issues that are different than the metro area. The Standards and naming of state resources, is a state issue, however, the Regions may have differences. Mike Disher stated he feels the recommendation would be less complex and in the long-run should help save money. He suggested a committee of the RAC look at this and then provides a recommendation to the RRB.

Jay Sikkink stated the biggest concern with this is expense, we are just changing the name and it would be an added expense. He stated they only use the talk group once or twice a year and the Metro area uses the A-TACS and P-TACS. Lane Waldahl asked for clarification and asked if it was just a name change, RIC Justin stated he could provide a presentation at the next RRB to explain in greater detail. He explained the simplicity of the name change when assisting agencies outside of our region and the use of resources being tied up on the system. RIC Justin discussed this with the other two RIC's of the state, and the general consensus of the ARMER Personnel is support of the concept in Greater MN. The City of St. Cloud is not opposed, and they will have numerous radios to reprogram as well and it does not need to be done right away. He reiterated, a timeline could be established through a working committee, and again, feels the long-term change is best for public safety. Elmer Eichelberg agrees with RIC Justin although they operate with the Metro and asked for the plus and negative of the two scenarios. RIC Justin explained the various ways Wright County could communicate with them when going into Metro as they would use the state-wide tactical. Jay Sikkink stated he disagrees that this can be done over several months' time as it would be confusing when only a portion of the radios are reprogrammed. It is a four-five month project and the channels are only used once or twice a year.

RIC Justin will put together a presentation on regional TAC's for the June meeting, identifying the pros and cons.

Statewide RAC, User Committees, O&O Committees:

Micah stated the Owners and Operators, User Committees, and RACs will be meeting here next week and their agenda is in packet.

Approval of Standards:

Jay Sikkink stated three standards to join the system were reviewed and is included in packet – standards 1.10.1, 1.10.2, and 1.10.3. Standard 1.10.1 refers to requesting full participation and what is required; full participation means you are on the ARMER system and does not mean you added infrastructure to be on the system. Limited means you do not operate on ARMER on a regular basis although you do need it to interop and perhaps you operate on VHF. *Dr. Naatz moved to approve standards 1.10.1, 1.10.2, and 1.10.3, Larry Kittelson seconds, upon a vote motion carried.*

Old Business:

Grant Money (PSIC):

Micah Myers stated that members had to submit their commitment to the funds and have a line item in their budget, indicating that they would have the matching funds by May 31, 2009. Benton, Big Stone, City of St. Cloud, Morrison, Sherburne and Todd Counties have already requested reimbursement. The May commitment date is to allow for funds reallocated if necessary.

Old Business: (Continued)**Letter to SRB – Colleges and Universities Assessment:**

Micah stated in the region we have several colleges and universities who will be coming onto the system such as St. Cloud State and have security staff that communicates with public safety and ambulances. The letter would allow these entities to have representation in the region and provide a voice on these boards and we are requesting SRB Chair Leslie to consider this. *Roger Sandberg moved, Larry Sayre second to submit the letter to the state for consideration, upon a vote motion carried.*

Sales Tax Bill:

Micah stated this region had a letter presented to the legislative session requesting sales tax exemption for ARMER purchases. It was introduced in January with additional authors in February, March, and April. It appears the bill will pass the House but not the Senate so it will be brought forward in the next legislative session.

CMNRRB Budget Report:

Micah stated the region is entitled in 2008-2010 a total of \$41,000 In M&A (Management and Administration) funds. These funds require a 20% match.

Paul Anderson stated he is on the planning commission for the state convention on December 7th and asked if they should have a breakout session like two years ago regarding the radio system.

Jim McMahan asked for the ease of these meetings if we could have items numbered on the agenda corresponding to the attachments and stapled together. Also on protocols if they could show deletions as strike through and additions highlighted.

Micah stated another item to address is the posting of the location of open meeting law to have the website as the official website. It was the consensus this was a good idea and Micah will start the process of amending the bylaws.

Upcoming Meetings:

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 17, 2009, 2 p.m. at St. Cloud City Hall Chambers, St. Cloud, MN and will be the Annual Meeting.

The following meeting will be July 29, 2009, 2 p.m. at St. Cloud City Hall Chambers, St. Cloud, MN and will be the quarterly meeting.

Adjournment:

Paul Anderson moved, second Mike Disher to adjourn at 3.47 p.m. Motion carried.

Minutes recorded by Debbie Backes, Recording Secretary.