

CENTRAL MINNESOTA REGIONAL RADIO BOARD (RRB)

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 17, 2009

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

City of St. Cloud City Hall, St. Cloud, MN

Members/Alternates Present:

1. Paul Anderson – Designee Douglas County – Vice Chair
2. Ron Woltjer – Designee Grant County
3. Dan Hartog – Alternate Kandiyohi County
4. Wally Strand– Designee Meeker County
5. Mike Disher – Alternate Morrison County
6. Larry Kittelson – Designee Pope County
7. Sonja Berg – Designee City of St. Cloud
8. Don Otte – Designee Stearns County - Chair
9. Larry Sayre – Designee Stevens County
10. Doug Anderson – Designee Swift County
11. Gary Kneisl – Designee Todd County
12. Dr. David Naatz – Designee Traverse County
13. Neal Folstad – Designee Wilkin County
14. Elmer Eichelberg – Alternate Wright County
15. Paul McIntyre and Tom Justin – Designee and Alternate User Committee

Members/Alternates Absent:

16. Benton County
17. Big Stone County
18. Mille Lacs County
19. Otter Tail County
20. Sherburne County
21. Wadena County
22. RAC

Guests Present:

N/A

Call to Order:

Meeting called to order by Chair Otte at 2:10 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introductions:

Introductions were conducted.

Approval of April 22, 2009 Minutes:

Wally Strand moved, Larry Sayre second to approve minutes of April 22, 2009, upon a vote, motion carried.

Communications:

Tom Hannon stated Cass County Board of Commissioners were the third county in NE to make decision to migrate to ARMER, Crow Wing will vote next Tuesday, SW Murray and Blue Earth Counties have decided to migrate, SC, SW and NE studies will not be complete from Federal until July - August. Concerns of timeline to get work completed prior to December 2012 deadline.

Elections:

Chair:

Held elections in January for officers, bylaw change was also voted on to indicate the election of officers will take place on the third Wednesday of each January. Chair Otte called for elections with officers taking office from today until the third Wednesday in January. *Dr. Naatz nominated Don Otte as Chair, with no other nominations Paul Anderson moved to close nominations and white ballot, second Mike Disher, upon a vote motion carried.*

Vice Chair:

Neal Folstad cast nomination for Paul Anderson as Vice-Chair, Sonja Berg moved to close nominations and white ballot, Elmer Eichelberg second, upon a vote motion carried.

Recording secretary is an appointed position; Chair Otte stated Debbie Backes is the appointed recording secretary.

Reports:

SRB/ARMER:

Chair Otte indicated they met Thursday, May 28th, approved to create statewide policy on plain language and inter-agency interoperable communications. Governor's workgroup on PSAP met Thursday May 28th and read report from Jim McMahon.

MnDOT:

RIC Justin stated MnDOT established additional tower sites that are up and online and explained coverage he experienced while travelling around the region. MnDOT is on schedule to have all existing state tower sites on line by end of this year or early 1st quarter 2010. He attended Wilkin County's kickoff User meeting and training advisory group, ARMER hired Pam Biladeau to coordinate the state-wide training curriculum. Upcoming meeting will be next Friday.

RIC:

RIC Justin stated good conversation on grant funding, was informed there is approximately \$5 million in the governors budget, that Scott Wiggins stated will be for infrastructure. The anticipated stipulation is it will come into regions only for those entities that have not had grant funding for infrastructure previously.

Doug Anderson asked what would be included in grant and what they could expect to receive from it. Tom Hannon explained it is an infrastructure assistance grant similar to what four entities in Central MN and southern area received and is it to add additional towers or repeaters to towers and will pay up to 50% of infrastructure – in southern it was approximately 28% back on infrastructure, in Central and SE it was between 25-30%. The funds are anticipated to bridge assistance for infrastructure until the legislation can meet again. Assessments are not in for the 48 counties they are completing so final estimates are difficult to determine.

Interoperability Committee:

Jay Sikkink stated the final draft of plain language came out late last week, had some presentations from Federal Engineering on interoperability.

RAC:

Jay Sikkink reported Federal Engineering provided presentation; went through reports on various committees, grant funding of \$576,000 to this region, counties will be completing participation plans, contracts with MnDOT, RRB, and Counties.

Reports: (Continued)

RAC: (Continued)

Recommendations:

Staffing Approval – Subcommittee developed a concept and will come with more detail and provide a recommendation at July 29th meeting.

CTC Letter – Jay explained the letter of support from the RRB indicating they would like to provide support to CTC who would like to apply for stimulus funding. NE met on this had a conflict as they have two other vendors in their region applying for the same and suggested each county provide their own letter, although this region does not have a conflict as it affects two counties in our region and no other vendor has come forward. This is a great opportunity for under and undeveloped areas. Wilkin County asked if CTC owned several phone companies, Tom Hannon indicated they serve part of Mille Lacs and Morrison County and are a coop headquartered in Crow Wing County. *Wally Strand moved, second Gary Kneisl to approve letter of support, upon a vote motion carried.*

User Committee:

Paul McIntyre stated they met yesterday in Alexandria and continue with updates, discussed governance structure of the User Committee, made motion and recommendation to bring forth to RAC regarding moving to a regional pool of talk groups with a vote of 26 to 7; discussed setting up a committee between Users, RAC and RRB to decide what is best way to come up with the talk group names, come up with training costs, a sunset date, and funding sources to help offset the costs for anyone who needs to reprogram radios. Had training by RIC Justin related to scanning and 800 MHz, approved proposed letter regarding personnel concern from last month's meeting. Will not have July meeting, as more entities come on, will need to start looking at a mechanism of using talk groups for training exercises and them not being available for use when an incident takes place. Paul Anderson asked for the level of participation, Chair McIntyre stated around 46 entities with at least 33 individual's voting.

OTC:

Jay stated they met last week, discussions regarding 2.50 Standard for limit of the system and number of talk group IDs available on the system. Standard indicates by July 1st of this year a proposal needs to be put together as to how many talk group IDs entities need for the next three years. Approximately 6,000 remain, when Motorola provides upgrade 7.11 more talk groups will be available although it is undetermined when that will take place. Draft letter is in packet and still needs some revision regarding this. Chair Otte asked for permission to sign letter when draft is ready possibly Monday or Tuesday. *Paul Anderson moved to authorize Chair Otte to sign when available, Dr. Naatz, second, upon a vote motion carried.* One item to be added to letter is asking state to respond with the number of IDs which were assigned and to date not utilized and probably will not in the next several years and are requesting what entities statewide have unit IDs assigned and how many are being used. Jay indicated entities are anticipating 10% growth per year and if every entity asked for 30% growth over the next three years, there would not be sufficient IDs available.

Participation Plan Committee:

Tom Larson stated draft contract to SEH is in packet and provides a ballpark figure for cost of plans. SEH indicated all of the plans could be complete in three – six months. With funding available through the region and feel if any additional funding was necessary it would be available through an additional grant although some of the smaller counties will not cost as much as the larger counties. Looking at having a kickoff meeting to reduce costs by consolidating counties to conduct plans at the same time. Contract is billed at an hourly rate for time and materials, the payment will come through the county emergency manger from the vendor and county will be reimbursed by Region IV Emergency Manager. Tom Hannon stated sine the development of the participation plans are critical that any county who have made commitment to go to ARMER, it would be advisable the board recommends to their county they move forward to get SEH on board to conduct as soon as possible. *Mike Disher moved, second Dr. Naatz to move forward as timely as possible. Upon a vote motion carried.*

General Discussion and New Business:

Interop Communications Coordinator Contract:

Jay stated approval of contract would approve OTTC and the Region to enter into a contract to provide TIC plan for the region for completion by June. *Larry Kittelson moved, Neal Folstad second to approve contract, upon a vote motion carried unanimously.*

MnDOT Contract Appeals (Todd County):

Paul Anderson moved, second by Elmer Eichelberg to approve contract, upon a vote motion carried.

MnDOT Contract with CMNRRB:

Sonja Berg moved, second Ron Woltjer to approve MnDOT contract with CMNRRB, upon a vote motion carried. Tom Hannon stated contract allows the RRB to enter into a contract between counties and MnDOT such as Todd County's presented today.

Regional Talk Group Planning Presentation:

RIC Justin provided presentation on regional talk groups, various tactical Talkgroups, recommended usage, and naming conventions; the benefits of a pool of talk group, ease of training, explained current state IC zones and a suggested state IC zone to simplify naming convention of regional and state interop.

Paul Anderson asked if the RAC would be voting on the proposal in June and they would in July, Chair Otte stated the board could take action today if they chose even if the RAC will be addressing in July. *Paul Anderson moved to approve the proposed recommendation, Mike Disher second.* Jay provided sample layout of some current Police, Fire, and Ambulance layouts in Stearns County. His suggestion is we already have the pool although the naming is different. In Stearns County they went to the zone one time when Joe Biden was in town and only once last year during the 4th of July celebration. Stearns County has more than 950 radios to reprogram, as RIC Justin proposed it could be programmed over time, although Jay feels the radios should be programmed the same way. He stated 38,000 radios are programmed with A_TACS and P_TACS on the system. Neal Folstad asked in the future, which system would be the best as far as ease of understanding, quickness of communication, Jay stated it is a new concept, there has not been a problem in four years, does not know what will be the best in the future.

Tom Hannon stated the board should consider as they move forward is history and responsibility of initial users to make a decision and needing to make decisions quickly, the proposal is based on review of the metro area. The Central region borders every region except one in the state and other regions are looking to see what the Central Region is doing. As this region moves forward, they need to consider the future and how they move forward; to date there has not been a lot of experience of several counties being on the system for a major issue and it will be more frequent as entities come onto the system. He feels the other regions will move forward to the proposed system and we need to interoperate with them, if we do not make a decision today, entities coming onto the system will program radios and down the road will need to reprogram to make the change to interop with the other regions. The RAC has not addressed the proposal to date and if board is uncertain on best way to move forward, they may want to wait for the RAC to review and make recommendation. Wally Strand feels the RAC should review prior to the vote of the RRB. Elmer Eichelberg asked if all other regions go with proposal would the Metro would be forced to move forward to the proposal. Tom stated perhaps the region would like to develop a standard for the proposal if they chose to move that way and then ask the state to adopt the standard although it may take several years for that standard to be adopted.

General Discussion and New Business: (Continued)

Regional Talk Group Planning Presentation: (Continued)

Chair Otte stated he is going to support changing the new system and would like to hear from Wright and Sherburne Counties who are already on the system. John Olson of Sherburne stated the cost of reprogramming is a significant issue; they have nearly 400 radios in their county to reprogram. The retraining of the users is significant, Sherburne interops more with the Metro region than the Central region. He feels the concept is a good one and hopes the state moves that direction, although he does not anticipate metro changing. Bill Swing, Wright County stated they border Hennepin County and hope it is endorsed and the logic is great, right now they are in the middle of code plug programming are ready to go and would like a decision soon. *Paul Anderson stated this should be postponed until the July RRB meeting to address and would like to withdraw his motion. Mike Disher second to withdraw motion.* Mike Disher feels the proposal is definitely the way to go and feels the RAC should review prior to the RRB taking action. *Paul Anderson moved to task the RAC to review the proposal and have a recommendation for the July meeting, Wally Strand second.* Discussion followed. Neal Folstad asked if there was enough influence to change the system in the Metro and Hennepin, and what does it do with the overall plan. RIC Justin stated his presentation will be provided to the MESB meeting and feels 38,000 radios is a large concern although the A_TACS and P_TACS are confusing in their use and training. The information he obtained is if the Metro had to make the same decision again, they may not do it the way they did. He stated the P_TACS and A_TACS are regional; the Central Region has four EMS talk groups which the Metro does not and there are already inherited differences between the Metro and Central region. There are ways to currently address this difference. The RICs and Statewide Interop Coordinator are all in favor of the proposal. *Question called, upon a vote motion carried.*

Radio Unit ID Allocation Memo:

See above.

Old Business:

Meeting Notice Posting:

Sonja Berg moved, Larry Kittleson second to approve the Central MN Regional Radio website as the official meeting notification site, upon a vote motion carried.

Budget:

Chair Otte indicated the budget handout is proposed budget which is the same as last year and is for information purposes.

Staffing:

Tom Hannon stated the subcommittee met and sent proposal to vendor for a proposal and will be available for July meeting.

Upcoming Meetings:

The next meeting will be July 29, 2009, 2 p.m. at St. Cloud City Hall Chambers, St. Cloud, MN. The following meeting will be September 30, 2009.

Adjournment:

Ron Woltjer moved, second Elmer Eichelberg to adjourn at 4:25 p.m. Motion carried.

Minutes recorded by Debbie Backes, Recording Secretary.