

CENTRAL MINNESOTA REGIONAL RADIO BOARD (RRB)
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 18, 2008 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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

Members/Alternates Present:

1. Don Otte, Designee Stearns County - Chair
2. Jim McMahon – Designee Benton County
3. Paul Anderson – Designee Douglas County – Vice Chair
Jerry Johnson – Alternate Douglas County
4. Dean Shuck – Designee Kandiyohi County
5. Wally Strand – Designee Meeker County
Dave Gabrielson – Alternate Meeker County
6. Mike Disher – Alternate Morrison County
7. Robert Block – Designee Otter Tail County
8. Paul Anderson – Designee Pope County
9. Arne Engstrom – Designee Sherburne County
10. Larry Sayre – Stevens County
11. Dr. David Naatz – Designee Traverse County
12. Neal Folstad – Designee Wilkin County
13. Elmer Eichelberg – Alternate Wright County
14. Dan Hartog – Regional Advisory Committee
15. Tom Justin – Designee User Committee
Paul McIntyre – Alternate User Committee

Members/Alternates Absent:

16. Big Stone County
17. Grant County
18. City of St. Cloud
19. Swift County
20. Todd County
21. Wadena County

Guests Present:

Call to Order:

Meeting called to order by Chair Otte at 2:10 p.m., he asked everyone to join in the pledge of allegiance

Introductions:

Introductions were conducted. Chair Otte welcomed everyone and reminded them to sign-in.

Approval of April 30, 2008 Minutes: *Paul Anderson, Douglas County moved, Jim McMahan second, to approve minutes of April 30, 2008, upon a vote, motion carried.*

Communications:

Jay Sikkink explained the memo regarding Regional Radio Board Grants for M&A Expenses from Scott Wiggins, it explains in 2008 Central MN will get \$20,000, 2009 - \$14,000, 2010 - \$7,000 and is seed money to get the RRB up and running. It will be \$1,000 per county and \$100 per City involved.

General Discussion and New Business:

Budget:

Jay Sikkink explained the proposed 2009 budget is the same as last year with the same allocation and commitment from each of the entities; currently we are under budget this year. The RAC recommended to this group that the budget be kept the same as we may need more expense money for consulting services and it is becoming more of a time commitment. The RAC felt it is better to have a reserve going forward and entities involved did not have any concerns with the 2008 budget allocation. He stated the handout explains what each entity's commitment is and also attached was the expenses to date.

Chair Otte verified the fiscal year for the RRB is a calendar year. Paul Anderson, Pope County asked where the M&A Funds were listed in the proposed budget and Jay stated it is not reflected in the proposal. Chair Otte asked if it would be used or if it would be carried forward as a reserve. Jay suggested using the \$20,000 first and then the remaining is carried forward as a surplus.

Wally Strande asked who would take the budget back to each county or if someone else would be sending it out. Mike Disher asked who is responsible to get this information back to the County to be sure everyone is aware of it. Jay stated the City sends the bill out in January although it is up to the RRB representative here to bring back to their county to be sure it is included in their budget.

Jerry Johnson asked if the Board could send the approved budget to the City Administrator. Dr. David Naatz asked if the full sheet could be sent to the County Administrator/Auditor and it is straight forward. *Wally Strande, Meeker County moved, Larry Sayre, Stevens County second that the budget be approved per included in the packets and be sent to the County Auditor/Administrator at this time to be included in their budget. Upon a vote, motion carried.*

Micah Myers stated last year the City sent the invoice to each county auditor and the information is already on file. He clarified it will be sent out as per what was approved.

Grant Money (PSIC):

Micah Myers stated there are different investment justifications the State will be voting on for funding – one is for training - \$103,596.24 has been agreed on for Central Region to be utilized for training; of the \$600,000 from the PSIC grant that was earmarked for training – we would receive \$103,596.24.

Investment justification eight for subscriber units, the one that was settled upon by the State is based upon funds by regions and population within the region. Originally it was 50% based on population and 50% by county and weighted the Metro heavily and out state voiced their opinion then came up with the 66/34 and will be taken to the State Radio Board \$842.823 for subscriber units and requires a 20% match. It is up to the region as to how it is allocated and can only be used for subscriber units such as portables and mobiles. Wally asked if there a state match on consoles of 50% and asked if it was true as he was told and Micah stated it was not true.

Arne Engstrom stated they are being built up this year and asked if they could request \$250,000 of the money and stated they are requesting \$250,000 of the PSIC grants and requesting any additional funds if other counties do not use their funding. He stated they have \$3.5 million into the system and already secured \$773,000 from the state and thought they were going to be reimbursed 50% by the stated which did not happen. Micah stated there was \$9.5 million that was bonded that was to go to two counties in the Central MN Region and the seven counties and were not Metro, it was counties south of the Metro. He stated he knows Sherburne was given an amount and the amount changed and is totally separate from the PSIC grant. He stated the State received \$14.6 million for the PSIC Grant and left it up to the regions to disburse their portion and is for subscriber units.

General Discussion and New Business: (Continued)

Grant Money (PSIC): (Continued)

Arne asked if they should just continue building their system and if they will get reimbursed for their system as he states it is not retroactive. He stated they will be up and running this year with or without grant money and were under the impression that they were getting some of this grant money and knows it needs to be expended by 2010.

Micah stated in order to be eligible for the grant, they need to have the 20% matching funds and need to be expended by June 6, 2010 and if not it will go back into the pool to anyone in the State. He stated if they are looking for \$250,000 that is ¼ of what is allocated to the whole region, they would like to get as many first responders onto the system as possible, he stated the City of St. Cloud and Stearns County would not be requesting subscribers as they are already on the system. Arne stated originally they were stated they were getting \$1 million and only received \$773,000.

Micah stated he understands Sherburne's situation and it is up to the region to determine how the funds will be disbursed. Chair Otte stated the State still has not even approved the funds and all the requests should be put together from all counties and make a decision then; as it is a little premature to make a decision now as there is still two years. Micah stated commitments needs to be made by January 2010 for expenditures and be spent by June 30, 2010. The reason why it is being brought up now is for the counties to put the funds into their budgets for the 20% match. Micah stated he feels confident the funding module will be approved next Thursday by the State.

Tom Justin stated he met with Meeker and Sherburne County Sheriffs and stated it was 2005 grant money and he has a meeting on the 25th with individuals to determine why Sherburne was told they will be given \$1.5 million, then \$1 million and finally \$773,000. Tom stated to Meeker, the funding of consoles of 50/50 may be the same situation that Sherburne is referring to. He will look to see if Meeker County was to receive the 50/50. He stated the funding formula was put together and the State expects the RRB to determine how the funds are distributed and it is this board's discussion and perhaps via the RAC's and User Committee's recommendations as to how the money is divided out. Tom stated the User Committee last week made a motion to be recommended to this group as to how they recommended the funds be spent.

Paul Anderson, Douglas County, questioned whether the SRB will be approving the formula, and asked if it will then come back to this board. Chair Otte stated it is proposed the 66/44 to be voted upon and he will be voting for that. Micah stated the funds are already available and will be available once the SRB approves it. Chair Otte stated once the SRB approves it, he anticipates the RAC and User Committee who are closer to the system than the RRB would recommend how it is distributed and would like to see what they come up with and asked User Committee Chair McIntyre for what the User Committee recommended. Micah stated the items will be discussed at the Friday's RAC meeting and the bylaws stated the recommendation will come from the RAC and then brought to the RRB for approval.

User Committee Chair McIntyre stated it was proposed at last User meeting what the funds will be, the amount, how the User group would like to see things handled. He stated they had one of the longest discussions so far – approximately two hours. They suggested taking the funds and break out equally by each entity (20), if someone wanted to opt out like City of St. Cloud and Stearns County, the money would then be divided by 18, and would have the 2010 deadline to expend funds. They suggested a deadline for this region would be if you have not utilized your appropriated funding by the determined date, the funds will then be put back into our region for expenditure prior to going back to the State.

General Discussion and New Business: (Continued)

Grant Money (PSIC): (Continued)

Another situation is if a county is next to you on the system, you could purchase radios as you would need to communicate with the agency neighboring. The group wanted to get radios out to everyone such as fire, EMS, public works, law enforcement, etc. It would be some seed money to allow everyone to get onto the system.

Tom Justin stated it was also discussed at the User Committee that it is understood the ARMER plan needs to be in place before the funding can be approved, the majority of the discussion is that each of the funding would be divided equally which would be \$40,000 per agency. What would you do such as in Wilkin County where they may not decide to go onto the system? If it was divided equally and an entity decided not to take their portion because they do not have a plan or already have radios, that may provide a better political decision for a county to start moving onto the ARMER system as additional funds may be available.

Kandiyohi voted to approve funds to go onto the system if they would be eligible for these funds, Tom Justin did not think there was anything in the grant funding that the funds were approved by the RRB and SRB, he stated he thought the RRB could decide to pay Kandiyohi for radios even if they already voted to make the purchase.

Chair McIntyre stated the vote was something like 23 to 5 in favor to split equally. He stated a couple of the counties were not present and it was made perfectly clear that the motion was only a recommendation and in no way would be the final outcome as it will need to be determined by the RAC and RRB.

Changes to Standard 4.10:

Micah Myers stated he is asking the RRB to approve the 4.10 standard which will allow for NGO's or non governmental organizations to program radios for entities to come onto the system. From the last RAC meeting they needed some clarification which would not affect the standard. He stated the changes made would be required to have detailed information on radio shops and some background checks. It was approved by the State and the RAC added some additional information to protect the agencies if they wanted to use a NGO for programming. *Dr. David Naatz moved, Arne Engstrom second to approve 4.10 standard, upon a vote motion carried.*

CASM Representative:

Micah Myers stated the State is asking each region to nominate someone to monitor the CASM tool and to designate a CASM Representative. It was brought to the RAC last month and no one volunteered due to the time commitment. Dan Hartog volunteered Ace Bonnema from Kandiyohi to be the representative and would take approximately 15 hours per month, the RAC would finalize the language in an agreement with Kandiyohi to have them be the CASM representative. Mike Disher asked for clarification of CASM and Micah stated it was a Computer Aided Survey Mapping which provides a tool indicating the interoperability tools between entities. He stated you can draw a line between two different agencies in or outside of our region and it will indicate what resources are all available between these two entities.

He stated they are asking to enter into an agreement with Kandiyohi for a joint powers agreement. There will be incidentals to travel to each member working with PSAP or emergency managers to collect information. This is required whether or not you come on to the 800 system as the information is still needed. Dan Hartog stated Ace Bonnema is the Communications Director for Kandiyohi County and is very interested in this and will do a great job.

General Discussion and New Business: (Continued)

CASM Representative: (Continued)

Jim McMahon asked what the ARMER plan all entails if the board needs to approve by resolution to join the plan, is there a timeframe to agree to come onto the ARMER, have the 20% match, etc. Micah stated currently each county is going through an assessment plan; there is a participation plan that will go to the RAC for approval, then the RRB, then the OTC and then the SRB. It would list the fleet map, how they are going to operate, etc. If the State rejects anything and if it is a minor change, you can continue to proceed, if it is a major change the process starts all over again for approvals.

Jim asked what the ARMER plan entails so they can be eligible for funding. Micah stated on the 25th they are further defining what it entails to come onto the ARMER, Sherburne and Wright had some changes required to come onto the system, he stated a lot of agencies in this region does not need to build additional infrastructure. They need to know if EMS, public works, etc. will be coming onto the system so they can plan accordingly.

Mike Disher stated Morrision County knows by 2010 they will not be up and running totally to be on the system, although they will be bordering a county that is and may be requesting to obtain subscriber units to communicate; although they have not made a total commitment to come onto the system, would they still qualify for subscriber units. Micah stated they would need to clearly define in detail how they plan on utilizing the radios. He will need to know where these radios will be installed i.e. in public works vehicles, EMS, law enforcement, etc. A lot of agencies will be surprised that they will be able to communicate under the State's backbone and do not need additional infrastructure.

New Business:

Dan Hartog stated going through the ARMER process they were under the impression they will be receiving exemption from sales tax although were not eligible and asked if everyone on the RRB can draft a letter to their representative to ask the legislature to approve to be exempt from sales tax, the amount was \$134,062 for sales tax in Kandiyohi County.

Tom Justin asked if the RRB could draft a concept letter listing all the entities and do a professional letter to the legislatures from the RRB; Jay, Micah and Tom Justin will draft and present to the board on July 30th for approval.

Debbie asked for clarification for the election of officers for the chair and vice-chair if it is at the annual meeting in June or at the beginning of the calendar year in January. The Joint Powers Agreement states:

“The Board shall select a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson at its first meeting. The Board shall appoint a recording secretary and make provision for the proper compilation and promulgation of meeting minutes, notices and communications. The Board shall select such other officers as it deems appropriate. All officers so selected shall serve until the next regular annual meeting.”

Tom Justin moved that the RRB annual meeting be considered first meeting of the calendar year. Mike Disher second, upon a vote, motion carried.

Paul Anderson, Douglas County, stated since he has been serving on this board, there are a lot of things being decided by the RAC and User Committee and he attended one of the RAC Board meetings and it was very interesting and suggested the commissioners take in a RAC or User Committee meeting as it is very interesting to keep up with what the region is doing and where they are going.

New Business: (Continued)

Tom Justin stated there is a preliminary site map handed out, the sites that there are nine currently up on the system in Central MN Region: St. Cloud, Blue Wing, Calvary Hill, Avon, Freeport, Grove, Farming and Belgrade. Gilman, Freedom, Lincoln, Baxter, New??, Leader, and Long Prairie will be up tentatively on Friday. As far as coverage, per his experience you can get to just about Mille Lacs and are still on the system and as far north as Brainerd, going west Long Prairie is spotty and will be better when the tower is up. In Benson there is mobile coverage within two miles of the City of Benson, not sure if it was the Kimball or State's site, he is keeping a current list of sites and coverage as they come on and asked if the group would keep their maps and he will continually keep the group updated to the tower sites.

Paul Anderson, Pope County, asked if the committee will be acting on the User Committee's recommendation, Mike Disher stated he thought it was just a notification as the funds have not yet been allocated.

Upcoming Meetings:

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 30th, 2 p.m. at St. Cloud City Hall Chambers, St. Cloud, MN.

Adjournment:

Mike Disher moved, Paul Anderson, Douglas County second to adjourn at 3:20 p.m. Motion carried.

Minutes recorded by Debbie Backes, Recording Secretary.