

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

**Meeting Minutes**

Friday, November 21, 2008 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Alexandria Fire Hall

Alexandria, MN – Douglas County

**Members/Alternates Present:**

1. Micah Myers – Vice-Chair – Designee of St. Cloud
2. Troy Heck – 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. Jay Sikkink – Alternate Stearns County
13. Judy Diehl – Designee Stevens County
14. Scott Mattison – Designee Swift 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  
Dawn Mund – Alternate Wilkin County
19. Greg Howell – Alternate Wright County

**Members/Alternates Absent:**

20. Sherburne County

**Guests Present:**

Tom Hannon, ARMER  
Ron Whitehead, ARMER  
Mark Gieseke, MnDOT

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

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

**Communications:**

None at this time.

**Revisions and Approval of Agenda:**

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

### **Approval of October 10, 2008 Minutes:**

Correction – site 6 is Glenwood versus Hoffman, Scott Larson changed to Scott Mattison.

*Scott Mattison moved, Jay Sikkink second, upon a vote motion carried to approve minutes as amended.*

### **Reports:**

#### SRB/ARMER Update:

Ron Whitehead was present to talk about grants, Scott Wiggins forward letter to RAC chairs to consider what initiatives should be included in grants. Attached memo lists grant funding, he stated \$3 million was allocated to regional radio boards for interoperable communications; investment proposal included three areas of investment, continued funding of tactical communication planning, VHF/UHF interoperability, and portable and mobile radios with focus on agencies that have jurisdictions in two different environments. \$794,000 was allocated to Central MN to fund VHF/UHF interoperability and was divided dependent upon the number of ARMER towers within each region. There is a RFP recently put out requesting solutions to the VHF/UHF interoperability and should have a strategy in the next few months. There also is funding in PSIC grant for the same purpose.

Homeland Security Grant has \$1 million in it for Cross Spectrum Interoperability mobile and portable radios, with \$157,000 set aside for Central MN for this purpose.

Another grant was the Interoperability Communication Grant, they had three weeks to put grant together, it will assist in providing funding to the regional radio boards to help reimburse expenses for volunteers to attend these meetings. Ron stated regions will get \$105,000 to help defray some of the costs and will need to come up with a plan and reimbursement request.

There is \$95,000 for an Interoperable Communication Conference sometime in the future. They have a request for the 2009 development and unsure amount of money that will be allocated. Homeland Security interoperable communications remains a high priority. One is 2009 State Homeland Security Grant Program and the other is \$714,000 under the Interoperable Emergency Communication Grant opportunity. Focus is upon governance, MN is providing better governance issues than anyone in the country. He is asking for feedback on the Interoperable Communication Grant program in the near future as the language needs to be drafted by January 13<sup>th</sup>.

Tom Larson stated the Emergency Managers came to a consensus on where the 2007 grant funds can be spent, \$100,000 for TIC planner, will be meeting December 12<sup>th</sup> with entire Region 4 Emergency Managers as to where the funds could be spent, and will be going through RACS. Emergency Managers do not have a joint powers agreement like the RAC, although they cover the same area as the RAC. Ron would like to come back to a future meeting and update the RAC on interoperability studies they have and will be coordinating.

Chair Myers stated there is a MN Management and Performance Bond items in packet, the bonds did sell and funds are available to continue to build out the system, they are very pleased with the finalized bond sales.

Scott Mattison asked for clarification of 911 fees and the bond information as originally it was only to be utilized for 911 PSAPS. Ron stated the 911 fees are utilized for communication and are aware of the 911 fees for PSAPS, to date they have not raised the 911 fees even though they were authorized to raise it by 30 cents and are aware of the concerns of the 911 fees and PSAPS.

## **Reports: (Continued)**

### SRB/ARMER Update: (Continued)

#### Mark Gieseke

Mark explained map handout which conveys the status of the build out, he is looking for feedback on the handouts presented today, and they meet everyone's needs. Mark also had a process diagram to indicate the entire process it takes to acquire a tower to its completion, the whole process takes about 20 months, although the minimum would be 12.

#### OTC:

Chair Myers stated they addressed standards and numbering, Gold Cross Ambulance Service is requesting a talk group. Paul McIntyre stated they are looking at using the talk group for communication as they operate across the state of MN and will not be using it for day to day operations. They will use the talk group differently than North Memorial as they use it for actual dispatching and Gold Cross will not. Chair Myers indicated he has a sample contract available for all members between MnDOT and the entity.

Chair Myers stated the Benton County plan was approved with some changes. They will need to then enter into a contract. Benton plan had some concerns with the number of ID's on the system and these issues have been resolved. The OTC talked about the communication issues during the RNC.

#### Interop:

Chair Myers stated they met earlier this week, talked about grant funding, how they will expend the funds, etc.

#### CMNRRB Update:

Chair Myers stated there was a lot of participation from members with several to-do items for the RAC such as sales tax exemption letter, how do we implement the colleges and universities to get them a seat at the table as the way the bylaws are set, it does not allow for it. Since they are a state agency, they need to contract with the state. Ron stated Andy Terry is currently doing an assessment on their roll, Chair Myers stated these entities need to have a voice as they come onto the system.

Discussed the ICC position, looking at making a few revisions, timeline is to finalize the position, get the RFP out and report back to the RRB at their meeting in January.

Included in the packet is a letter which will be going out to each of the entity's agency on the requirements, etc. on the grant funding. Pat stated on behalf of Camp Ripley, they will be coming onto the system ahead of Morrison County and asked as a Government Agency and in the military, are funds available. Ron explained the funding that is available from HSCM has not yet been allocated; once Andy is finished with his study, they will then determine how it will be distributed and it is approximately \$1 million for radio stations and portables and hope through National Guards they would have access to some of the funding as they are a state agency.

#### User Committee:

User Committee Chair Paul McIntyre stated they met Tuesday, did not meet quorum, provided updates, discussed tacticals per Lt. Justin's handout, will be meeting in January. Alexandria is the central location for meetings, rotating day one month and night the next month. January's meeting will be focusing on fleet mapping, the committee is in educational phase and as more people come onto the system, it will change more to an interop group. Election of officers will take place at January meeting.

## **Reports: (Continued)**

### Regional RAC Committees:

Tom Hannon stated final radio board will be formulated in December, have approval from all agencies but one which is on schedule for next Tuesday. All of the radio boards have a number of issues such as Central MN, there still is a seat on the SRB and there needs to be some process for the selection of the representative and we need to start working on this. Another item is grant and participation issues, if anyone would like Tom Hannon or Tom Justin to attend their meetings with their commissioners, please invite them.

### Regional Training Facility:

Chair Myers stated as more agencies come onto the system, it is apparent training will become a huge issue both with the initial and refresher training and looking at utilizing Alexandria Technical College to put together training curriculum and facility. The region has funds for training and looking for input if funds should be allocated there. Tom Larson asked if we were looking for the technical college to put together the curriculum, Chair Myers stated someone needs to keep the information standardized. Pat Boone asked if anyone discussed including Camp Ripley in the training as level 3, it was indicated no.

Jay stated Bob Dickhaus from Stearns County attended training, they tried to get a trainer for each entity and it did not work – originally had 41 trainers although they were all training differently. Stearns County then had Bob Dickhaus provide the training to the whole county for continuity. Chair Myers stated there are several different types of users such as dispatch, field operations, executive level, etc. and need a variety of training.

Tom Larson stated when they started discussing this, they were looking at dispatch only training, they have the RFP written and will send the region a letter as to what they anticipate the cost will be. They are enhancing the area as the building is being built since it is more feasible. Tom will ask them about the end-user training and feels it may be a possibility. Bob Cuchna feels dispatchers may be able to go to Alex although fire training would be different. Jay felt everyone would need to have a local (meaning by county) trainer involved as different counties function differently.

Chair Myers stated perhaps we need to look at allocating some of the training funding towards this. He stated it will be an ongoing issue as technology changes and does not want to wait until everyone is on the system and then determine how training is being provided. Dan Hartog stated they are working with their training at this time with RIC Justin and stated there are a lot of steps involved.

### Central MN Project Coordinator Committee:

Chair Myers the RRB asked if legal council reviewed the document, he stated the City's attorney did and suggested adding indemnification for insurance in there. Tom Larson stated the RRB suggested a few additions which were made, Scott Mattison stated there was discussion if the committee's intention was to exclude vendors who are engaged in services, equipment, etc. and it was clarified yes it was the intention based upon feedback. He asked if the intent was to avoid entities from bidding on the RFP and it was clarified yes it was.

Chair Myers stated if the RAC does not meeting in December, we then would need to put together a subcommittee to review the RFP's as they come in. The RRB will meet on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January and the RAC will meet once before that. Ultimately it will be up to the RRB who they select, Tom Larson asked if the committee was responsible for making recommendations, Chair Myers stated it may be a good option as they drafted the RFP. The next question is how to get the RFP published and asked Ron Whitehead for input and if he could provide some type of scoring process to the committee; they have various email lists and would assist the committee getting it out.

## **Reports: (Continued)**

### Central MN Project Coordinator Committee: (Continued)

John Haukos asked for clarification on the “at least previous five years of employment”, Tom Larson indicated the intent was to indicate at least five years of experience and not necessarily consecutive. It was the consensus to take out the word “previous”.

*Judy Diehl moved to approve the RFP with adding the indemnification clause and removing the word previous, second Scott Mattison, upon a vote, motion carried.*

Discussion on length of publication for position, date of RFP, etc. *Bob Cuchna moved to publish by December 1<sup>st</sup>, deadline is due January 5, 2009, second Tom Egan, upon a vote motion carried.*

### Standards Committee:

Revisions to standards 1.10.1, 1.10.2, and 1.10.3 were updated and will be emailed. Jay explained the State-wide standard numbering system, the consensus was the OTC felt it should be the same numbering system across the State and Jay provided an up-to-date copy, it makes reference to the old numbers cross referenced to the new numbers, etc. The OTC determined what were a State and a Regional standard. If a new standard is needed, you will need to contact Jenny Dee. The standards refer to what is needed to come onto the system, limited partnership, building infrastructure, etc.

### RRB:

Chair Myers stated the next agenda will go out prior to the next RAC and items need to be sent to him.

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

### GeoComm Resolution Update:

Todd Pieper reported the following:

Douglas County – GeoComm met with them and approved study.

Grant County – in final state of report acceptance and will go to Troy today.

Morrison County – talked to Sheriff this week, close to accepting report.

Otter Tail County – met last night, will be meeting with county board in December.

Pope County – accepted study.

Stevens County – scheduled meeting for December 16<sup>th</sup>.

Traverse County – working with them on final report hope to meet in December.

Wadena and Wilkin Counties – in final states and hope to have final meetings, are not scheduled yet.

Members reported the following:

Douglas County - Tom stated the board adopted the resolution to go to ARMER system, accepted study.

Grant County – Troy stated there was only one correction from last version needed.

Morrison County – Jeff stated they are still looking at ARMER and need to review document again, awaiting final document.

Otter Tail County – held meeting last night for users and stake holders, consensus from fire, police, ambulance, etc. from the meeting is they need to go ARMER, they are anticipating to accept plan, December 2<sup>nd</sup> it will be presented to County Board.

Pope County - Tom stated they signed off on plan, will go to County Board my May.

Meeker County - Judy stated they will be meeting with County Board, thinks Sheriff is onboard but unsure where they will be able to get funding.

Traverse County - Trevor stated they had meeting with board; consensus that ARMER is the best option, but how to pay for it is a concern. Feels next revision will be final.

Wadena County – Scott stated have a couple of new commissioners to educate on system.

Wilkin County – Rick stated final changes went to GeoComm this morning, will be setting up a meeting in January, he was at Otter Tail meeting last night and stated it was very informational and good.

## **Updates from Partners on Current Projects: (Continued)**

### **GeoComm Resolution Update: (Continued)**

Mille Lacs County – stated contract going to board next Tuesday and does not see any reason why it should not pass, although it will need to be approved by board.

### **Regional Plan Update:**

Chair Myers stated the hospital and school assessments are still out and will need to come together for the Regional Plan.

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

### **Participation Plans - Kandiyohi:**

Andy Terry explained Kandiyohi's participation plan, stated they looked at a mixed 800 and 700 MHz alternative, although decided on 800 MHz choosing to go with an integrated subsystem utilizing two of MnDOT's sites and adding a county site. Kandiyohi will be adding a site in the southern part of the county and will be adding two additional transmitters at each of the northern sites for a seven channel system. Plan showed coverage using State's site and then coverage with their additional sites added. Needed to find additional 800 MHz frequencies and was able to do so with MnDOT's help. Plan shows VHF conventional uses for those entities which are not coming onto 800 right away. Includes training description in plan, have a consultant to provide training with Tom Justin's help utilizing key resources in each agency and is a significant element. County board approved plan, working with Motorola and hope to have early next month, working on mutual agreements, fleet mapping, and training. Chair Myers is expediting the process, the RAC received RRB's approval of plan last month. *Jay Sikkink moved to approve Kandiyohi plan, Judy Diehl second, motion carries.*

Jay stated we need to do some cleanup items for Central MN roam channel.

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

Chair Myers this is in reference to state agencies operating on the system in our region, letter states we need to look at the governance piece for an entity if they are not working with the State, we need to get them to the table for discussion. This will be sent out prior to the next RAC. Tom Larson asked why not all State agencies were included in the discussions on 800 and Andy Terry stated it was the main wide-fleet users that were included initially – the others were campus-only type of radio communications. Question about DNR being involved in the system and it was indicated the DNR would be as they are actually dispatched by the State Patrol although Parks do not have the same needs. Also had discussion on colleges and other State entities and their potential involvement and needs with the system i.e. Corrections need to transport across the State and need to communicate with all agencies. Jay stated Corrections has a repeater on a Federal frequency and they utilized a mobile patching system from Stearns County and it worked very well.

### **Grant – Expense Reimbursements:**

Chair Myers stated there are requirements for Grant Reimbursement Policy and Request Form; we had past discussions on how we can get reimbursements to agencies to assist them in getting to meetings to enhance attendance. Jay stated there is \$100,000 to assist in expenses, although if split between 20 entities, the funds would not go far and does the policy limit the number of vehicles allowed for reimbursement, does it include mileage only, meals, reimbursement to mileage only over a set amount i.e. 20 miles, etc. Mike Smith stated most of their Users assigned to the group are mainly volunteers and suggested they try and travel with a county representative, and feels we need to reimburse something to them.

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

### Grant – Expense Reimbursements: (Continued)

Tom Hannon asked if it would be appropriate to send this policy to the User Committee to discuss for their review and the Northern area will be utilizing videoconferencing next month and that may be an option. Tom Larson stated as more entities come onto the system, the User Committee will be better attended. Following discussion, Chair Myers suggested this go back to the User Committee for their input. Troy Langlie asked what this mileage was designed for: personal vehicle, county vehicle, etc., it was decided it was not limited. Tom Larson stated he felt this was designed for individuals who were volunteers and not designed for individuals on the clock or driving a county vehicle. Chair Myers stated he would not limit it just to volunteers as counties have costs as well. Tom Egan stated their county board provides the volunteer firefighter gets paid a per diem which equates to the commissioner's reimbursement. Tom Hannon suggested maybe it is written into the policy that these funds are only to be utilized for those agencies and individuals who do not have funds available to get reimbursed elsewhere.

*Mike Smith moved, Tom Egan second to have the User Committee review the policy and bring back recommendations to the RAC for approval. Upon a vote motion carried.*

### Staff for RRB and RAC:

Chair Myers stated there is a time constraint to get the information out to the committees and if we had dedicated staff that all they do is have their emphasis on getting the packets together, etc. it would be helpful and the RRB tasked the RAC to come up with recommendations. Jay stated there is also a lot of time involved for Micah as well and not just Debbie's time. Chair Myers stated it could also involve the OTC board; there is a liaison that could be in place to ensure chairs for the various committees get the documents they need. He asked if there is someone in mind or if expenses can be reimbursed to the City of St. Cloud for this. Chair Myers stated he does not have any ideas and is just putting this out there today for discussion for the future. Jay stated he did a time study for his boss and 11 of his 20 days a month were for 800 MHz and you add a few vacation days, you don't have a lot of time left to do your day to day operations. Troy Langlie asked if this was something the group could reimburse individuals for these duties per a contract. Chair Myers stated he would like to have this standardized across all meetings, Tom Larson stated the Drug Task Force in his county contracts the Police Secretary to provide secretarial responsibilities outside of the workday.

### Regional TAC Discussion:

Chair Myers stated the tactical handout was provided by RIC Justin and would like to discuss at next month's meeting. *Jeff Jelinski moved to table, Mike Smith second, upon a vote motion carried.*

### Other Items of Interest:

#### Sales Tax Exemption (Update):

Chair Myers stated Representative Larry Haws has authored the Sales Tax Exemption bill, and he will be moving it forward during the next legislative session. He stated Senator Ingebrightsen was looking at moving the bill through the Senate.

#### Background Check Release Form:

Chair Myers stated the form includes one line revision as to what information can be released to the Review Committee and the form includes this newly added information. Legal approved the suggested change and it will be posted on the website. *Mark Englund moved to adopt the newly revised background form, Dan Hartog second, upon a vote, motion carried.*

#### Other:

Nothing at this time.

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

January:

*Judy moved to have next meeting January 23<sup>rd</sup> in Grant County, second Jeff Norlin, upon a vote, motion carried.*

*Scott McKellop moved, Judy Diehl second to adjourn at 2:30 p.m., upon a vote motion carried.*

Minutes recorded by Debbie Backes.