

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Friday, February 9, 2007 10:00 AM
Wright County Courthouse
Buffalo, MN

MEMBERS PRESENT: The following RAC members and alternates were present: Tom Hannon, Micah Myers, City of St. Cloud; Jay Sikkink, Stearns County; Pat Bettenberg and Troy Heck, Benton County; Bill Swing, Wright County; John Olson and Ken Brown, Sherburne County; Stacey “Ace” Bonnema and Dan Hartog, Kandiyohi County; Debbie Backes, St. Cloud, Recording Secretary.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Morrison County; Meeker County, and Todd County.

GUESTS PRESENT: Tom Justin, City of St. Cloud; Mike Kahl and Dan McCoy, Granite Electronics; Mike Mazzitello, Geo-Comm; Jamie Nixon, District 742, Curt Gullickson, City of Sauk Rapids; Phil Thinesen, Wright County; Tim Lee, Assistant Director MnDOT OEC; Dan Gelle, Gold Cross; Mike Fink, Motorola.

Meeting called to order at 10:05 a.m.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Introductions were conducted and Tom thanked Wright County for their great accommodations. Six out of the nine members were present for a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

John Olson moved, second Dan Hartog to approve minutes of January 12, 2007, motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Jay stated yesterday he received notice from AMEM (Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers), and they are looking for people to testify at the Public Safety Committee for the Senate on Monday the 12th at 3:00 p.m. regarding ARMER, with another meeting in the House on the 22nd. He stated they are looking for someone from the emergency management field as they already have someone from fire and police. If anyone is interested in attending, they are strongly encouraged to do so. Jay passed out the correspondence he received with the dates, times, locations, etc.

Bill Swing stated there is a possibility that a couple of County Commissioners from Wright County may attend today to ask some questions.

REPORTS:

ARMER Update:

Tim Lee from MnDOT stated they are working on getting some of the sites completed and purchasing land. The Phase III equipment was received, zone controller is just about complete, and is named Zone 4 and will be installed with software release 7.1. The current plan provides an interface box for software release 6.9 in the Metro area to interconnect with software release 7.3 in St Cloud and Rochester. Tim explained the difference between the system platforms and the problems as different zone controllers come on, they can be at different versions. Tim stated the 4 zone controllers could possibly cover the state although 5 or 6 controllers would be better. If current pending legislation passes the interface device will not be necessary and the entire ARMER system will be on the same software release.

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REPORTS: (CONTINUED)

ARMER Update: (Continued)

They will start installing antennas in April. The State Radio Board has approved the microwave plan. MnDOT expects to release the microwave for bids and anticipates installation about June or July. Tim stated they could do some testing with St. Cloud's radios to see what zone controllers they will go to once all four zone controllers are in place; this could possibly be later this summer, although it would be a different ID so the radios would have to be reprogrammed.

Mike Mazzitello asked when the new site in St. Cloud's will be up and Tim stated they have a few issues to work through and was unsure on the time as there is still some fiber to complete. Mike stated they still have some licensing applications needed for St. Cloud and Tim replied that Mike should coordinate with Jim Mohn of MnDOT regarding this.

Interop Sub-Committee:

Jay Sikkink reported on the activities of the Interop sub-committee. He reported that Stearns County has program to provide radios for jurisdictions in Stearns County. The program provided radios for 25 agencies. They should have them in the next couple of weeks. He stated every agency in Stearns County will have an 800 radio by this spring.

There was discussion relative to the direction of the Interop sub-committee for evolution into a User Committee. The consensus was that the Regional Radio Board Agreement requires appointment by parties to the agreement for membership on the committee. Unlike the RAC, where there is statutory authority for the committee, the User Committee can't be formed until the agreement is approved and the Radio Board is actually created. It was agreed that the Interop sub-committee could begin work drafting by-laws for a future User Committee. These by-laws would require approval by the RAC and eventually the Radio Board.

Jay stated on February 25th Stearns County will be testing the Failsoft function on the radio system. If anyone from the RAC is interested in attending, feel free to show up. It will be at 6:00 a.m. on Sunday. This test is part of the preparation for the migration of the MnDOT site to a new location in St Cloud. Tim Lee added that the OTC meeting scheduled for February 13th will include an Interop Planning Meeting. Micah Myers and Curt Gullickson will be attending. Tim Lee stated the ARMER plan included funds for interoperability and the OTC is looking for input as to which equipment would be beneficial.

STANDARDS, PROTOCOLS, AND PROCEDURES UPDATE:

Standard 4.1X Update:

Micah Myers stated this issue continues to generate a lot of discussion. He distributed copies of the 4.10 Standard adopted by the SRB and the CM-RAC Interim standard 4.10 previously adopted by the RAC. The sub-committee reported that the major difference is in the criminal background check provisions. There was significant discussion regarding the need for comprehensive criminal background checks for all system maintenance and support vendors and the current state of legislative authority for checks. This will most likely require legislation modifying state statute to allow for background checks for vendors and suppliers. This item will be sent back to the Standards Committee for future recommendation.

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STANDARDS, PROTOCOLS, AND PROCEDURES UPDATE: (CONTINUED)

Standard 4.1X Update: (Continued)

Curt Gullickson stated everyone can do background checks right now, the issue is being able to conduct Triple I nation-wide checks. The consensus developed that the RAC should amend the existing standard to comply with the changes made by the SRB.

Bill Swing moved, John Olson second to adopt the modifications of the RACS 4.10 Standard to comply with the changes approved by the SRB to the State's 4.10 standard. Motion carried.

Standard Governing Application to use System Update:

Micah Myers reported there are a number of standards that are already in place that address this issue and he will post the list of standards approved on the Central MN Radio website – cmnradio.org. He further reported that the sub-committee is exploring creating a template letter for entities to use when they are requesting to come onto the system.

Jay Sikkink stated that since we have new members he feels the sub-committee should bring back two or three standards each meeting that the RAC has adopted on an Interim basis for review. He suggested examples such as application for use, request for talk group permissions, etc. The RAC approved this suggestion.

OTC UPDATE:

Curt Gullickson stated everything regarding the OTC update has already been discussed i.e. criminal background checks, ARMER updates, etc.

Tom Justin asked when the state will have the ATACS encrypted. Tim Lee responded that he thought the standard calls for this to be complete by January 2008, although their contract they are working on with Nextel regarding re-banding will affect it. Tom Justin stated they had a communication issue yesterday (Thursday, Feb 08, 2007) when several Metro entities came to assist St. Cloud. All of the talk groups were allowed, and there was a programming issue with SOA's and could not communicate with them (Anoka and Met Transit, Minneapolis, Hennepin). Tim stated they are programming STACS into their radios at this time, Tom Justin stated the LTACS were to include encryption and they're not functioning in St. Cloud's system. Tim Lee was unsure if any of the LTACS were to be encrypted so there needs to be more discussion on this. Tom Justin stated we have the BCA7 TACS in St. Cloud's radios so they could talk to the BCA in encryption if needed.

Tim Lee suggested that Tom Justin coordinate a meeting with the various entities that were at the scene where problems developed, include MnDOT and St Cloud/Stearns radio support staff. The group should attempt to discover what issues inhibited cross communications and develop solutions. Jay Sikkink, Tom Justin, Micah Myers, and Tim Lee will come up with a plan to resolve this issue. Micah will coordinate a meeting to discuss these issues and possible solutions prior to the next RAC meeting.

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REGIONAL RADIO BOARD CREATION:

Update on Approvals:

Morrison County is the first agency to approve the agreement.

Two issues of concern have been raised by Wright County during committee discussions of the agreement draft. The first issue concerns the language in the indemnification section of the agreement. The Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust, based on previous court decisions, is recommending a revision in the section to comply with new decisions. The chair distributed copies of the suggested replacement language. There was discussion by the RAC concerning this issue and the importance of providing language the Boards insurer feels comfortable with. There was discussion regarding adding the previously discussed survivor paragraph to the language suggested by MCIT.

John Olson moves to approve the MCIT suggested language with the addition of the previously approved survivor provisions, second by Bill Swing. Motion unanimously carried.

The second issue deals with modifying the budget approval process by moving the final approval date from September 15th to August 15th. There was general consensus that this modification will improve the process for all the partners.

Dan Hartog moved to modify the budget process by changing the final approval date to August 15th and changing all other dates to be consistent, second by Pat Bettenberg. Motion unanimously carried.

Bill Swing thanked the group for modifying the agreement to meet Wright County's requests. The chair expressed the group's gratitude to Wright County for bringing these issues forward.

Stearns County and the City of St. Cloud are ready to put the agreement approval on their agendas, Benton needs to discuss with administration, Kandiyohi, Wright, and Sherburne Counties stated they will address the agreement at their March meetings.

The RAC agreed to discuss locations and processes for the first radio board meeting at the March RAC meeting.

REGIONAL PLANNING PROJECT AMENDMENTS:

Geo-Comm Proposal for Schools and Hospitals Inclusion:

Tom stated that Geo-Comm has modified their proposal to reflect the changes requested at the February meeting. Copies were distributed for discussion. The add on cost of the Hospital study to the Regional plan is \$5,300 and the cost for the inclusion of the schools in the Regional Plan is \$10,250. Sufficient grant funding from previous grants is available for this addition.

Moved by Micah Myers to accept Geo-Comm's proposals for adding hospital's to the Regional Plan project for a total cost of \$5,300 to be covered by existing grant funding, adding the Paynesville Hospital to the list of hospitals studied at no additional cost, second by John Olson. Motion unanimously carried.

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REGIONAL PLANNING PROJECT AMENDMENTS: (CONTINUED)
Geo-Comm Proposal for Schools and Hospitals Inclusion: (Continued)

Moved by Bill Swing to accept Geo-Comm's proposals for adding school districts to the Regional Plan project for a total cost of \$10,250 to be covered by existing grant funding, second by Pat Bettenberg. Motion unanimously carried.

Discussion followed on selecting the school district in each jurisdiction for extensive review. The group indicated that February 14th should be the deadline. Each RAC delegate should notify the chair on or before that date of the selection representing their agency. Moved by Micah Myers that the chair is directed to select either the school district covering the county seat or the largest district in the county if no selection is made by February 14th, second by Dan Hartog. Motion unanimously carried.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS ON CURRENT PROJECTS:
Wright and Sherburne Planning Project Update:

Wright and Sherburne Counties are concerned with completing their schedule with PSC Alliance's deadline to meet our needs; therefore are asking this group for assistance. Jeff Nelson had open heart surgery which put PSC Alliance behind schedule, although there continues to be concerns. Bill stated last March 17th the RAC approved \$41,634, and so far paid out \$15,515 with a balance of \$26,119 to pay out. There will be a conference call with Jeff Nelson immediately following the RAC meeting to discuss this problem. Discussion followed regarding options including obtaining the information PSC obtained to date and forward that information to another firm to complete the plan. Wright and Sherburne stated if PSC could not deliver a plan, they are interested in switching to a different vendor as time is of utmost importance. It is the consensus of the group that they are in agreement to use the unspent funds to PSC to pay for another firm to complete the plan if necessary.

Bill stated the five Wright County Commissioners need an education meeting on the 800 MHz system and what it is all comprised of to assist them in their planning process including funding.

Kandiyohi, Meeker, and Todd Planning Project Update:

Mike Mazzitello reported he did the work for Meeker and Todd Counties, Rey Freeman is doing Kandiyohi County. Geo-Comm is ready to meet with MnDOT to discuss needs and planning for those counties with them. Bob Chuna from Todd County has been collecting the surveys, will conduct interviews once the surveys are all collected. Mike Mazzitello stated so far they are close to being on schedule. Bob and Dan Hartog stated they are scheduled to meet with Rey on the 23rd.

Regional Plan Update:

Mike Mazzitello reported that other than the delay getting Wright and Sherburne data the Regional Plan is developing on schedule. He expects to be able to provide a preliminary report next month.

Jay Sikkink reported \$26,666 is the remaining balance for the planning money. After approval of the plan additions for schools and hospitals there is approximately \$11,000 remaining in the initial planning grants. It is expected that the group will receive approval of the request to extend this grant through December 31, 2007.

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Regional Plan Update: (Continued)

Jay Sikkink stated Tom Hannon was under contract by the City of St. Cloud. Jay expressed the opinion that the remaining balance go towards reimbursing the City of St. Cloud for those expenses. Moved by Jay Sikkink that the balance of the remaining grant planning money of approximately \$11,000 be paid to the City of St. Cloud to help defray their expenses for Tom Hannon's efforts managing the regional planning projects, second by Bill Swing, motion unanimously carried.

District 742 Planning Efforts:

Jamie Nixon, representing St Cloud School District 742 reported he met with Geo-Comm on their assessment and the other schools in the district and are waiting to get the assessment back and moving forward from there. Micah Myers asked Jamie if the grant District 742 received was a reoccurring grant. He stated he thought it was something the school district could reapply for. Micah stated he would like to get the information they used to apply for the grant and supply it to other school districts. Jamie will get the information and pass along to other districts.

Items of Interest:

Tom thanked Geo-Comm and Mike Kahl for their assistance in getting the hospital study as it helped in the planning and pricing process.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND NEW BUSINESS:

RAC By-Laws:

Tom stated the by-laws have not been addressed since Meeker, Kandiyohi, and Todd Counties were added. He asked the group if they would like to add entities to the agreement as they are approved or not to list them out individually. It was the consensus of the group that the parties should be listed individually in the by-laws. This will require amending the by-laws to add the three new counties to the list. It will be on the next agenda to update the by-laws to include all parties. The by-laws require 30 days notice for modification and the group determined that this action constitutes notice for purposes of modifying the by-laws.

Election of RAC Officers:

Tom stated the by-laws require the annual election of officers and this should have been addressed in January. The by-laws provide for a chair and vice-chair.

John Olson moved, second Dan Hartog to elect Tom Hannon as the chairperson of the RAC for the remainder of the year. Motion unanimously carried.

Pat Bettenberg moved to elect Micah Myers as Vice Chair, Bill Swing second. Motion unanimously carried.

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Other Items of Interest:

Ace Bonnema stated their county is applying for some fire grants as a region and are wondering if other agencies applied for grants and who to contact. Jay Sikkink suggested he contact St. Stephen, Waite Park (Gary Curtis) and Cold Spring. John Olson stated Bruce West is applying for a grant for the whole county (Sherburne). Tom Justin stated Cold Spring and Holdingford were the most recent entities to apply for and receive a grant.

Tom Justin asked if anyone talked to Douglas County about joining. The chair responded that no recent contact has been attempted. Dan Hartog asked if the group had concerns if he approached Scott Mattison, Swift County Sheriff, about joining the RAC planning effort. Tom Hannon responded thanking Sheriff Hartog for his efforts, encouraging contact and offering assistance.

UPCOMING MEETING, SET DATE, AND LOCATION:

Next meeting will be Friday, March 9th at 10:00 a.m. in Morrison County in Little Falls. April 13th will be April's meeting at the City of St. Cloud in the Council Chambers, 10:00 AM.

Bill Swing moved, John Olson second, motion carried to adjourn meeting at 1:10 p.m.