

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 18, 2006, 12:00 p.m.
Wright County Government Center
Buffalo, MN

PRESENT: Tom Hannon, Micah Myers, and Debbie Backes (Recorder); Jay Sikkink, Stearns County; Bill Swing and Greg Howell, Wright County; Pat Bettenberg, Benton County; Mike Disher (Morrison County), Gary Petersen, Sherburne County. Guests: Tom Justin, Bill Mund, City of St. Cloud; Mike Kahl, Granite Electronics; Dave Pike, PSC Alliance.

Call to order at 12:30 p.m. and conducted introductions.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Introductions were conducted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Mike Disher, second by Bill Swing to approve minutes of April 21, 2006, motion carried.

STANDARDS, PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES DISCUSSION:

Jay stated the committee has an issue with a training standard. Most of the standards Jay Sikkink and Micah Myers have not been changing much. They have been recommending the adoption of the State's standards on an interim basis with the understanding that the Radio Board will be modifying standards and procedures in the future. Tom Hannon stated he had been advised that the RAC didn't need to adopt policies and procedures and could just adopt everything the State Radio Board has adopted. He indicated his belief that the process was a good exercise for the RAC, providing both an educational and operational function. He stated one of this committee's functions is to adopt policies in the interim until a board was in place and recommended we continue to adopt as we have.

Micah Myers stated we don't want to adopt something the State is going to change on us. Tom Hannon stated he does not want to totally rule out that we may need to address something that the state has not yet dealt with. Jay stated he was asked to clarify after the last meeting if we were under the State's standards or are we under our own region? Tom H. stated there are definitely State standards that apply to us and there are other pieces as we create our own radio board, we will have standards that apply to our region. Bill Swing stated he felt we should continue with our policies and acknowledged that we may be required to propose specific policies to our region.

State standards basically states that everyone who turns on a radio on the system will need training. In the St. Cloud area, they will have a check-off sheet as to what items are needed to be trained on.

The proposed standard on Training was distributed. Section 4, 5th bullet point refers to Local System Administrators shall maintain a record of end user radio training. Jay stated there is no way the Administrator can keep up with this and would like to see each local jurisdiction be responsible for keeping their respective records. Gary Peterson suggested perhaps on a yearly basis, each local entity is responsible to forward any new people they trained. Tom H. asked if this standard also applies to recertification. Jay stated no. Tom indicated some people may use the radios on a regular basis and others may only use it once or twice a year. Micah stated there needs to be some penalty if someone doesn't follow the procedures and it needs to be enforced.

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STANDARDS, PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES DISCUSSION: (CONTINUED)

Jay stated perhaps we need to define what the “Local System Administrator” should be. He stated they had discussion which chief’s need to sign off that they will ensure that their staff will have the appropriate training.

Mike D. asked how the subscriber unit number is determined? It was explained that each unit has their own number identity and the entity knows who has that ID number and it will vary from entity to entity. Mike said it would be a great idea if they could have a radio to use for a month so he could better understand how it works.

Gary Peterson asked what the initial and recertification training would consist of? Tom H. stated the training time varied by department and function. But generally, the City required two hours for public works and six to eight for police, they had to have a couple of sessions, and fire was four hours. Jay stated the County and City put together a “train-the-trainer” program and contracted with Karns, Inc. to provide the training. Tom explained that even though the training was copy righted, we had the right to copy the training materials and use for programs conducted by the new trainers.

Tom asked this group if they were in agreement that there needs to be standards approved regarding training. It was the consensus that responsibility of the training should be on each entity. Jay, Tom, Gary, Greg, and Micah will meet next week to set up training criteria requirements. Gary stated each of the entities should have their own training staff and said the “train-the-trainer” would be much more feasible for entities. Tom stated each entity could have their own unique training depending on the features they need. Mike suggested the group includes Jeff from Morrison County in training requirements. It was the consensus of the group that each entity trains their own staff i.e. fire trains fire, police trains police, etc. Gary felt each of the train-the-trainers could have the same training and it is the responsibility of each trainer to go back and set up the training to meet their needs. Jay, Tom, and Bill felt that would work.

Mike Kahl stated in the future the training needs to include hospitals, schools, etc. as other entities come on. He asked if you could purchase radios that are receive only as he would be interested in learning more and Dave Pike stated no that you need to transmit to receive. Jay stated the County also hired Frank Karnauskas of Karns, Inc. to help with the talk group plan set up. Bill Mund stated Frank also suggested what buttons should be used for what. Jay added Frank also brought a lot of his expertise from the Metro system. Jay stated the State was also very helpful in the process.

Tom Justin explained his experience with training for the St. Cloud Police Department. He stated the City modified their training because of changes in the system. Pat Bettenberg asked Tom Justin the number of hours required. He stated one four-hour block. Bill Mund stated fire also had four hours of training and did quarterly training on the odd things that come up. A broad discussion regarding training requirements, techniques, features, etc. followed.

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DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL RADIOS BOARD CREATION:

Tom Hannon provided the latest draft of the Joint Powers. This region needs to have an agreement, provide for distribution of property and disbursement of funds. Tom stated a lot of the language contained in the draft was provided by Ron Whitehead for consideration as this group creates a Radio Board.

Tom stated he added the Owners and Operator's Committee to the draft, defining it as a Committee of the Radio Board appointed from those agencies that actually own and operate local sub-systems. The Chairperson of this committee will also be a Radio Board member.

He also explained the modification to the User Committee incorporated into the draft agreement resulting from the May discussions. Some of the other principal modifications contained in this draft include compliance with the Open Meeting Law, designating Robert's Rules of Order for the conduct of meetings, and provisions governing Notice, withdrawal, distribution of assets and other procedural issues .

Mike Disher asked about the length of term on the user committee. Tom stated the current draft provides each individual can serve for to up to five years depending on the appointing authority. The appointing authority ultimately controls who represents their jurisdiction but the current limit is no one may serve on the user committee for more than five years.

A long discussion followed regarding voting and non voting members, the purpose of the votes and representation, the number of representatives per committee, etc., i.e. RAC, User Committee, and the Owner's and Operator's Committee. Discussion also followed regarding non-governmental agencies wanting to come on and the need to have wording appropriate.

Tom clarified that each agency which is party to the agreement has one voting representative that must be an elected official. For counties it must be a Commissioner. Cities may opt to appoint any elected official. Currently there are five counties and one city. In addition, the chairperson of each of the three principal committees (RAC, Users and Owners) are voting Board members. There are two additional non-voting board members appointed by the User Committee.

Issues to be included in the next draft of changes include: disbursement of funds, budget and financial management, administrative and operational authority.

Bill Mund asked under the User Committee why the timeframe was limited to five years on the committee? After much discussion it was the consensus of the group to remove the five-year limit on the User Committee. Tom will incorporate this change in the June modifications.

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GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Updates from Partners on Current Projects:

Bill Swing updated this group on the RTAC's "Proof of Concept" and their action items which are due next month. The "Proof of Concept" will be criminal activity and the City of St. Cloud will be hosting the site. Hopefully in another month things will start taking shape. Tom Justin suggested Micah includes someone from the City of St. Cloud's PD Records staff as their area covers three counties.

Wright County and PSC Alliance met with the fire departments in reference to the radio system and it went very well. Greg Howell stated he felt it went well also and heard some comments after the meeting but they are the same questions unanswered around the state i.e., how much is the system going to cost to run? Bill Swing stated they were left with the feeling that Wright County wants to be included, where do they go from here, and greatly appreciated the help from Central MN and Rochester which flew up for the meeting.

Dave Pike stated one thing they could have done differently is not to sell the system to the attendees but to educate them as to how the system is set up and runs. Bill Swing stated Dave Pike is now with PSC and working with Jeff Nelson.

UPCOMING MEETING, SET DATE, AND LOCATION:

Next meeting will be Friday, June 16th at noon in Stearns County.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.