

**CENTRAL MINNESOTA USER COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday, June 10, 2008, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Swift County Law Enforcement Center, Benson, MN**  
**Swift County**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

1. Benton County – Marie Herbst
2. Big Stone County – Jim Hasslen
3. Douglas County – Dave Pedersen, Stephan Vanluik
4. Grant County – Jon Combs, Greg Jacobson
5. Kandiyohi County – Stacey “Ace” Bonnema, Brad Hanson
6. Meeker County – Rich Christianson, Joel Engler, Greg Gilbertson
7. Morrison County – Pat Boone, Jeff Jelinski, Mike Nieman
8. Otter Tail County – Dallas Grewe, Mark Hovland, Mathew McGuire
9. City of St. Cloud – Tom Justin
10. Stearns County - Paul McIntyre
11. Stevens County – Judy Diehl
12. Swift County – Rob Lee
13. Todd County - Bob Cuchna, Steve Peterson, Kelly Saarela
14. Traverse County – Stan Churchill

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

15. Mille Lacs County
16. Pope County
17. Sherburne County
18. Wadena County
19. Wilkin County
20. Wright County

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Meeting called to order by Chair Paul McIntyre at 1:07 p.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

Chair McIntyre welcomed everyone and conducted introductions.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

*Pat Boone moved, Dave Pederson second to approve minutes of May 13, 2008, upon a vote, motion carried.*

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

No communications since last meeting.

**INCIDENTS:**

No incidents since last meeting.

## **REPORTS:**

### **SRB/ARMER Update:**

Chair McIntyre stated they talked about PSIC funding, allocation will be going to RRB's for further approval and distribution to entities – training allocation is \$600,000 and was divided equally to all regions. Subscriber units regional allocation \$2,053,000 divided equally \$25,000 per county.

Tom Justin stated there is a change presented in the formula. Previous subscriber unit proposal was 50% of \$4.5 million and 50% by county by population, recently presented is 60% by county 1/3 to be divided by population although this proposal still has not received State Radio Board approval.

Motorola is giving 1,500 radios to be used for the RNC, when it is over, there is a likely hood these subscriber units will be at a 25% off the State contract; the radios are all model 2500, series II and encryption capable. Andy Faith asked if there was any stipulation with grant money and if it can be used to purchase these radios, it was uncertain if they needed to be new or if these qualified.

### **RRB Update:**

RRB meeting will be next week and dedicated to budgeting issues, same budget as last year being proposed with a few adjustments.

Chair McIntyre read memo on WEGO system and funds available from PSIC Grant program awarded by US Department of Commerce and needed to follow particular requirements and what the funds can be utilized for. The funding is available for RRB's and RAC's and must be spent by September 30, 2010 with no extension available at this time.

Jeff Jelinski asked who is submitting the request for the funds for this region; Tom Justin stated he thought Micah Myers was submitting this on behalf of the Central MN RAC and RRB. At the State RRB Interop Subcommittee, a plan in the next month or two will be to start in the phase III region as they get to them as well as put a plan in place to make 800 and VHF interoperability. The committee consists of is Jay Sikkink, Tim Lee, John Haukos, Tom Justin and a few individuals from Metro. They also will be turning tower sites on as soon as they are up and running, Tom Justin will send out an email to let individuals know as they are available - Baxter, Gilman, Freedom, and Leader are on at this time. Tom stated when in Browerville, he feels the tower he utilized was Baxter. Next Friday in Wadena is the RAC meeting and Tom can report on affiliation at that time.

Tom stated the State is willing to work with counties if they have land for a tower site in an area they are seeking to secure land and Tim Lee from MnDOT is the contact. He asked the group how they felt the communication between the State and the counties for securing land is working, there was some concerns although were told the land proposed was not a viable option. Tom made note of the sites and will follow up. He stated the regional studies and county assessments are being completed, per Micah if you have not cut a check yet to the consultant for their studies to contact Micah prior to doing so. The RAC chair and the State are aware of some issues occurring between individual counties and the consultant, do not pay for services rendered until discussed with Micah.

Regional study – the State and regional plans are ongoing, the State's RFP has been released and a consultant to conduct phase 3 study has not been defined as of this morning. Grant and Wilkin County are a part of phase 4-6 even though they are in this area. Hopefully the State will expedite these counties if possible.

## **REPORTS: (CONTINUED)**

### **RRB Update: (Continued)**

Next week will be the RRB's annual meeting to decide funding, SRB has approved administrative funding, Micah has provided a budget to the RRB for approval. Concern currently is what to do with the PSIC funding as it becomes available to the region. The State will be submitting funding to the regions to determine how to allocate. The User Committee and RAC needs to have serious discussion as to how it will be decided. Tom stated currently he is the voting member for this group on the RRB and is looking for feedback from this group for input. He received input from Benton County that they need a console, and he is unsure if this would be considered a subscriber unit. Andy Faith stated a console does have a subscriber ID so it may – we would need clarification. Question was to explain the difference between a console, subscriber, etc. The cost of a console is approximately \$45,000. Tom stated Wilkin County was unsure if they will be going 800 in the next couple of years, do we purchase a console for them even though they may not use it for the next several years, these are the type of discussions and decisions the RRB, RAC, and User Committee need to decide. Dave Pederson stated by August 1<sup>st</sup>, he needs to have a budget proposed, yet he needs to know what the county is doing so he can make those decisions. Tom stated all studies needed to be revised.

Question was asked what type of similar expenses would all counties have that the money can be utilized for. Tom stated he thinks the biggest expense is subscriber units and the biggest thing with the PSIC grant is the money will be decided regionally by the RRB and not county by county. Tom stated the RRB are elected officials - not users and may not have as much knowledge on what is needed as the actual users would. Ace stated they need to beef up their tower and purchase subscriber units, Bob Cuchna stated in Todd County it will take approximately \$1.2 million and Ace stated in Kandiyohi it is approximately \$3.5 million. Question was asked if each console is a subscriber unit and it was explained that each console will have an ID and is not an individual subscriber unit.

Jeff Jelinski from Morrison County stated he is looking for an actual quality plan in order to make decisions on how to spend the funding. He stated perhaps in Morrison County, not every school and fire department, first response team, etc. responded to study, yet Geo-Comm did not address that so how is a decision going to be made.

Question was asked if the same funding will be there next year. Tom Justin stated some years there is a lot of money, others none, he does not anticipate the Federal funding to continue as it has. Otter Tail County stated for example they are not ready to purchase radios yet, if they did purchase them, they will sit on the shelf and asked if they could get funding next time around. Tom stated it is the RRB that needs to make these decisions, not individuals, the decision does not need to be made in the next couple of months but it does need to be spent by 2010.

Scott Mattison stated he agrees with the disparity of the radio studies, their county study was fairly acceptable although the PSAP study was not. Geo-Comm's study results were dependent upon who conducted the study, he stated with the workload they had he knows there was a lot of cutting and pasting to meet deadlines. He agrees that until finalized quality plans are presented, we will not be able to provide recommendations.

Brad Hanson asked if the RRB could purchase a cache of radios, portables, etc. and entities receive them as they are ready to come on-line rather than if a county who purchases them and not sure if they go 800, to just have them sit on the shelf. He stated there are some EMS entities who were not able to receive equipment, as dollars become available, how do they divvy them up.

## **REPORTS: (CONTINUED)**

### **RRB Update: (Continued)**

Question was asked if it must be used for 800 or can it be for narrow band as well. Tom stated it is for 800 or 700. He stated the funding that is not needed in the region is for three control stations/consolettes per county since justification number 3 in the PSIC grant funding will provide two for each PSAP for interoperability and one for each EOC for emergency manager statewide communication. Question was asked if a cache of radios were purchased, who would be responsible for the radios and who would they belong to, the RRB or the county they were given to. Another question was who would be responsible for the \$20 software assurance fee per radio. Tom stated once the subscriber unit is in a county's hands, it would become their responsibility. He stated on the fee structure, if you are on the State system, entities will not have a cost to use the system; they will have software assurance fees, batteries, etc.

Tom stated for an entity as large as the City of St. Cloud, it may be more feasible to not purchase a warranty and if they have issues, to replace the radio, smaller entities may not have the same option. Andy Faith clarified that software assurance does not include retuning of radios without a warranty. Tom stated it may be something the RRB could chose to provide for all counties. Paul McIntyre stated the cost of warranty per year was \$40 - \$110 per year per radio, there are several different options such as number of years, type of coverage, etc.

Brad Hanson stated his experience is Motorola did not have a lot of issues so it would not be worth purchasing a warranty. Question was raised if some of the radios that are being replaced by 800 could be utilized to upgrade their radios. Brad stated they received radios from Fargo and it helped them for a while. Scott Mattison stated the current PSIC money is only a one-time opportunity. It was clarified that the funding needed to be encumbered in order to meet grant deadlines. Question was if there are other States as far along as us and how is funding being expended. Tom stated there are several states either on or moving on 800, he stated of the billion dollars available, Minnesota received \$14.2 million; the other States received the remaining funding. Scott Mattison stated every State needs to have a PSIC plan on file and some are more advanced than others.

Question was asked if the grants that are available are just for governments or are they available for hospitals and private for profit. Tom stated because of the status of the St. Cloud Hospital, they are eligible for some of the grant money. He stated the State's goals was for public safety, although public safety needs to be determined, is it law enforcement, fire, ambulance, etc. It was suggested that just one entity can not get all of the county allotment. Discussion followed regarding feeling that all dispatches would need a console in order to communicate, it was clarified not all counties will be going 800 and may not need it. Tom stated there are radios out there that has both 800 and VHF and are considered multi-bands. Tom stated if an entity's radios were purchased in the 1970's and 1980's, there is a great possibility they will not be allowed to be utilized by the end of 2012 as they will need to be narrowband. Question was asked how long before counties need to replace their equipment and can continue to patch, it was clarified that all entities need to be narrow banded by 2012 whether it be via 800, 700, VHF, UHF, etc. Question was raised as how do we interop with agencies and State Patrol as they are being brought on to the 800. Tom stated there was significant discussion on this exact subject and it included a discussion such as installing an interop console in each PSAP. Andy asked if the State of MN will kick in the 50% on subscriber units, Tom stated that was a different grant. He stated the grant funding could be utilized for the 20% grant match for some entities.

**REPORTS: (CONTINUED)**

**RRB Update: (Continued)**

Tom asked what the committee would like him to report to the RRB next week, was it fair to state that the group is unsure which way to go since the county plans are not complete now. Ace suggested putting together a subcommittee for feedback to the RAC and RRB. Stated entities need to know what their portable coverage is prior to deciding if they should be going 800 or 700. Brad stated perhaps the funding is divided equally between counties and the counties that do not need radios, they are returned and utilized for those that do.

*Brad Hanson moved to split funding to the counties that will use it, the ones that don't use it will need to let the region know six months before the grant is due; therefore the funds allocated to agencies who do not use it can get redistributed, Stephan Vanluik second. Jeff Jelinski felt the radio study needs to be completed first. An entity will need to prove they will utilize the funds, if not the funding is reallocated. The concern was some entities will just purchase radios and put them on the shelf, the amount is approximately \$45,000 per entity (when divided by 20 entities). Jeff asked if we need a motion today, Tom Justin stated he agrees with Bob Cuchna that it is too early to make a final decision today. Entities would have six - eight months prior to grant deadline to commit to go on line, if not, the funds would go back and divided up to entities who will be making purchases. Chair McIntyre request for a vote by show of hands – 18 in favor, 5 against, 2 abstained, motion carried.*

Tom Justin clarified the funding discussed today is dependent upon what the SRB approves, he stated the interop money at the State level put the same stipulations to RRB's.

**RAC Update:**

Nothing at this time.

**OTC Update:**

Nothing at this time.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION AND NEW BUSINESS:**

**Tower Sites:**

Chair McIntyre stated the handout is for the proposed tower sites and could change; the second map is a coverage map which is by 95% mobile coverage. Bob clarified it is outside coverage and not in-building. He stated the tower sites in phase 3 are orange and are existing towers; blue are existing or proposed tower sites and will be up by the end of 2008.

**Funding and Grant Writing:**

See above.

**Other Items of Interest:**

Chair McIntyre stated there was some discussion on EMS, Jay Sikkink is working on getting a group together for EMS and see where we proceed from here and possibly open it up to other EMS agencies in the region.

Chair McIntyre stated Gordy asked how to come onto the system and is looking for a clear answer and assistance in getting in touch of the State to get the final authorization. Tom Justin stated you need to have MnDOT's approval to come onto the system and training as well as fleet mapping will need to be completed prior to coming on. They are in need of obtaining code plugs, talk group ID's, etc. Tom will ask Micah Myers to follow up.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION AND NEW BUSINESS: (CONTINUED)**

**Other Items of Interest: (Continued)**

Items for next agenda – none brought forward. Chair McIntyre suggested the topic of the availability of telecommunicating these meetings such as in two - four different areas throughout the region. Judy Diehl feels it is beneficial to have everyone together in one room. Scott Mattison stated he liked the idea of moving it to St. Cloud as a central location. This will be on the next agenda for discussion.

Tom Justin asked if the items that are on the agenda is that what this group is looking for or is there additional information they want such as patching, gateway, etc. Scott Mattison felt there should be a training piece at each meeting if possible, whether it is handouts or discussion. Chair McIntyre stated another item could be to pick a standard for each meeting.

Chair McIntyre reminded everyone to complete the agency communication survey and return to Debbie Backes if they have not already done so.

Dave Pederson asked if we should draft some documentation in a manual as to how to put a system together with each step explained. Tom Justin will bring this forward to the RAC.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

**July 8, 6:30 p.m.:**

The next meeting will be July 8, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in Todd County – location to be determined.

**August 12, 1:00 p.m.:**

The August meeting will be August 12, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. in Traverse County – location to be determined.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*Dave Pederson moved, Jim Hasslen second to adjourn meeting at 3:35 p.m., motion carried.*

Minutes respectfully submitted by Debbie Backes, Recording Secretary.