

CENTRAL MINNESOTA REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)
Meeting Minutes

Friday, June 8, 2007 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Sherburne County Law Enforcement Center, Elk River, MN

Members/Alternates Present:

1. Tom Hannon – Chair
2. Micah Myers – Alternate City of St. Cloud
3. Troy Heck – Designee Benton County
4. John Haukos – Designee Big Stone County
5. Tom Egan – Designee Douglas County
6. Stacey Bonnema – Alternate Kandiyohi County
7. Dan Hartog – Designee Kandiyohi County
8. Jeff Norlin – Alternate Meeker County
9. Mark Englund – Designee Otter Tail County
10. Judy Siggerd – Alternate Otter Tail County
11. Tom Larson – Designee Pope County
12. Scott Busche – Alternate Pope County
13. Ken Brown – Alternate Sherburne County
14. Jay Sikkink – Alternate Stearns County
15. Scott Mattison – Designee Swift County
16. Bob Cuchna – Alternate Todd County
17. Bill Swing – Designee Wright County

Members/Alternates Absent:

1. Morrison County

Guests Present:

1. Tom Cherney – DPS/ARMER
2. Jamie Nixon – School District 742
3. Troy Langlie – Grant County
4. Robert Peper – Traverse County
5. Greg Lillemon – Grant County
6. Eric Sonnenburg – Wadena County
5. Paul Anderson – Douglas County Commissioner

Meeting was called to order by Chair Tom Hannon at 10:20 a.m.

Chair Hannon welcomes members and guests, introductions conducted. 11 out of the 12 members in attendance with a quorum present.

Approval of Minutes:

Chair Hannon asks for a motion to approve RAC minutes of May 18, 2007.

A motion by Jay Sikkink and second by Dan Hartog. Upon a vote to approve the RAC minutes of May 13, 2007 with no changes, motion carries.

Communications:

Chair Hannon reports Grant and Traverse Counties are requesting membership in the RAC and have submitted written applications.

Motion by Mark Englund, second by Jeff Norlin to approve Grant and Traverse applications for membership. Upon a vote motion carries.

Reports:SRB/ARMER Update, MnDPS/MnDOT:

Tom Cherney reported funds have been received to build out system and they want to be certain to build the system correct. Geo-Comm and Alliant have been authorized to conduct planning for the entities to ensure proper build-out. He stated prior to progressing with build-out, they are looking at the preliminary plan and fine detail it to see what adjustments need to be made county by county to be certain they receive the best system for the funds spent. Counties can then take the plan and numbers to make a sound business decision.

Scott Mattison stated they would like to keep the Strategic Plan as a “plan of plans and a system of systems” as an outcome of the current plan, he stated the plan appears confusing to agencies and additional training needs to be provided.

Ron Whitehead has retired and is replaced by Scott Wiggins, and Ron will continue to work with DPS, but in a consulting role with reduced hours.

OTC Update:

Scott Mattison stated the next OTC meeting is June 12th and there has not been a meeting since the last RAC. Items of discussion will be the addition of the Holdingford site onto the St. Cloud simulcast system and reallocation of frequencies which will directly impact our region.

Interop Sub-Committee:

Jay Sikkink stated the Interop is getting representation from a few new entities, the next meeting is June 27th in Albany at 6:30 p.m. Tom Hannon explained the interop initiated with a goal of how to build a system and now has grown to how to operate the system; is a forum of discussion and issues dealing with the day-to-day tactical interoperability. Jay stated he has involvement of agencies such as fire, police, hospitals, schools, emergency, state patrol, natural resources, etc.

The meetings alternate one month during the day, the next month in the event to allow an opportunity for all entities to attend. Jay stated Gold Cross asked for participation on the system and if Stearns County will sponsor them. They will have to go through the application process for system access, however there are a few more issues that need to be resolved before Gold Cross and any other non-governmental agency can come onto the system.

Discussed scanning by entities and the possibility of one entity overriding the other and is a programming issue of priority scan. The training model needs to be changed as the current plan of trainers providing additional training to other individuals is not working as they do not feel comfortable training. They are looking at a few dedicated trainers to provide all of the training yet it is an issue with time available. There is a subgroup working on the training, suggestion is to get two from police, two from fire, etc. as trainers.

Tom Cherney stated training is so important to the system; a barrier is you can't take two sheriffs from different entities in the same training as they have different talk groups and different radios. He stated it is critical to have training with just that individual agency and with like staff i.e. police, fire, public works, etc. Tom Cherney stated Homeland Security funds could be utilized for training if the training follows the State defined guidelines. Bob Cuchna asked to check with Tech Colleges as they can write grants for funding.

Jay stated they are working on a standard as various entities from the Metro came to St. Cloud to assist and had issues trying to find a common talk group, and realized they needed to have an encrypted talk group. There will be four state-wide encrypted talk groups and currently Jay is working on a standard for approval. It was clarified that the State will manage the state-wide keys yet the individual agencies will be responsible for their programming of the talk groups.

Jay passed out a draft of the User Committee By-Laws and stated they are having concerns with what defines a quorum. He stated the best decision was at least half of the entities present and if they needed to change by-laws, a 30-day notice was necessary. Mark Englund had concerns with the voting be weighted by one type of entity i.e. majority police or fire present and stated perhaps there be no more than two from any one group as their representatives. Mark's concern is in some counties the same individual represents several disciplines. Tom Larson stated he didn't think finding one individual from each discipline would be difficult.

Standards, Protocols, and Procedures Update:

Previously Adopted Standards:

Micah stated the OTC's next meeting will be reviewing standards, he would like to wait and see what the State is adding for protocols before they proceed.

Other Pending Recommendations:

None.

Sub-Committee on Patch Device:

None.

Programming Radios – Outside Contractors:

Micah stated he met with Granite and identified some concerns with non-governmental agencies programming radios, he will be working with the State and with committee members Bill Swing and Dan Hartog and have an update at the next RAC meeting. Some concerns will be audits, procedures for protection of programming devices, background checks, secure data transfers, talk groups, designing code plugs, etc.

Regional Radio Board Creation:

Update on Approvals:

Tom Hannon stated Big Stone and Grant both approved agreements this week, he will be going to Douglas County next week.

Planning for Initial Radio Board Meeting – Continuation of Plan Development:

The date for the first Regional Radio Board meeting is June 20th in St. Cloud, the Governor is not able to attend. Plan to date is to send out invitations with a social at 9:00 and meeting starting at 10:00. Chair Hannon reviewed the proposed agenda. One change is the grant item by Bruce West to be at a future RRB meeting as he is not able to attend.

Discussion regarding the amount of time needed to discuss the financial obligations and commitments on behalf of the counties, and removing committee reports, interim by-laws, etc. until a future meeting and replace with budget, structure, cost, and liability of the Joint Powers Board. Chair Hannon will make changes and email revised agenda for the RRB.

Tom Justin suggested adding something with the history of the structure that brought us to this point since we are taking out the committee reports. Tom Hannon will provide this information. Tom Cherney stated it is crucial we emphasize this system is public safety which is of greatest importance.

Invitation and draft letter for the invitation list was reviewed, Debbie will mail merge and send to each entity to email or mail their self. The board members will receive the agenda electronically and copy of the Joint Powers Agreement. Meeting notices for open meeting law was determined that each jurisdiction is responsible for posting at their own entity for the law.

Jay stated he created two additional topics to the listserv – the RRB and RRBMembers to utilize like the RAC.

Updates from Partners on Current Projects:

Traverse and Grant Counties:

Todd Pieper sent a sample to the five new counties to start their planning process, Chairperson Hannon stated the entities can open up a RFP or add on to Todd County to amend their contract. The entities will need to bring a scope of the study which is regional in nature and to be incorporated into the regional plan, then request this group to reimburse the cost. To date the RAC has been approving 100% of the plan costs which meet our requirements. The RAC has not refunded the PSAP studies. Grant and Traverse Counties need to receive the information yet. Wadena County is welcome to join the RAC or start their own regional radio board, it was suggested they intended to join the Central MNRAC.

Wright and Sherburne Counties Planning Project Update:

Plan from Geo-Comm provides for completion of Sherburne County in July and OTC in August, somewhere in between it needs to be brought back to the RAC. Mike Mazzitello recapped their process in their plan for Wright and Sherburne Counties. Discussion regarding meeting deadlines and Geo-Comm is confident in meeting the deadlines.

Kandiyohi, Meeker, and Todd Counties Planning Project Update:

Bob Cuchna stated they are working with Geo-Comm and looking forward of June 22 for their plan.

Kandiyohi, Swift, and Big Stone Counties want to look at their PSAP facilities, the State is willing to fund the study, funds need to be allocated by June 30th and spent by November 1st. Scott Mattison stated Swift, Big Stone, and Kandiyohi have similar needs of decreasing population and increased needs and are looking for the plan to assist in future planning.

Regional Plan Update:

Chair Hannon stated Geo-Comm is working on the county plans and as they are completed they will proceed with the regional plan. Mike Maazitello asked if there was a deadline for the regional plan for grants and Tom Hannon stated yes.

Discussion followed regarding non-governmental entities using the system, Mike Mazzitello stated Metro utilizes an internal repeater that is operable with the system.

District 742 Planning Efforts:

Jamie Nixon is in the process of surveying school districts, they will start testing this summer to see where there needs are. The study is funded by a grant to study interoperability and is available to all school districts on an annual basis. Jamie does have a copy of the grant application and will forward to Micah to be put on the website.

Items of Interest:

Strategic Planning:

Scott Mattison stated the Department of Commerce funds need to be submitted no later than September 30th. Alliant is working with on the plan and looking at SafeCom criteria.

General Discussion and New Business:

Funding for Big Stone, Kandiyohi, and Swift Counties PSAP Study:

Question was asked if the RAC was willing to accept the responsibility of contracting with the three counties to provide the funding and accept the funds from the Department of Safety and secondly reimburse their expenses. Geo-Comm would start the work no later than June 21st and have the plan completed by October. It was clarified this is not grant money and would not have an impact on funds the RAC receives for grants. *Tom Larson moved, Bob Cuchna second for CMNRAC to contract with Swift, Kandiyohi, and Big Stone for the completion of a PSAP study from Geo-Comm with the funding provided by the Department of Safety. Motion approved.*

Other Items of Interest:

Funds:

Tom stated \$100,000 had been approved for infrastructure and \$25,000 for a tactical plan. Requesting to reallocate previously approved \$125,000 funding dollars to planning uses and submit to Homeland Security for approval. *Motion by Bob Cuchna to seek authorization for reallocation for infrastructure funds for planning, second by Tom Larson. Motion carried.*

Chair Hannon states a change in the RAC by-laws is required due to adding Big Stone, Otter Tail, Pope, Douglas, and Swift Counties. The by-law change was discussed and will be presented for action at the next RAC meeting.

Website Update:

Micah Myers stated all of the minutes, agendas, etc. are on the website, for any suggested changes contact him, website is cmnradio.org , semradio.org is for the southern website.

Upcoming Meeting, Set Date, and Location:

Next meeting will be Friday, July 13th at 10:00 a.m. in Douglas County, Alexandria Fire Station. August meeting will be in Willmar at the Kandiyohi Law Enforcement Center, August 10th.

Tom stated this is his last meeting chairing the RAC, Micah will chair next month.

Micah Myers moved, Scott Mattison second to adjourn the meeting at 2:20p.m. Motion carried.

Minutes recorded by Debbie Backes, Recording Secretary.