

**CENTRAL MINNESOTA USER COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday, July 8, 2008, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Long Prairie-Grey Eagle High School Choir Room**  
**Todd County**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

1. Douglas County – Dave Pedersen
2. Grant County – Jon Combs
3. Kandiyohi County – Stacey “Ace” Bonnema
4. Meeker County – Rich Christianson, Joel Engler, Greg Gilbertson
5. Morrison County – Pat Boone, Jeff Jelinski, Mike Nieman
6. Otter Tail County – Jim Rieber, Doug Whiting
7. City of St. Cloud – Tom Justin, Chuck Koetter
8. Stearns County - Paul McIntyre, Jay Sikkink, Gary Curtis
9. Stevens County – Judy Diehl
10. Todd County - Bob Cuchna, James Kreemer, Steve Peterson, Kelly Saarela
11. Traverse County – Stan Churchill
12. Wadena County – Donald Snorek, Donald Weniger

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

13. Benton County
14. Big Stone County
15. Mille Lacs County
16. Pope County
17. Sherburne County
18. Swift County
19. Wilkin County
20. Wright County

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Meeting called to order by Chair Paul McIntyre at 6:35 p.m., quorum present with 12 of 20 entities present.

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

Chair McIntyre welcomed everyone and conducted introductions.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

*Dave Pederson moved to approve minutes of June 10, 2008 with amendments, Judy Diehl second, upon a vote, motion carried* (Amendments – under RRB Update add the word “know” – Dave Pedersen stated by August 1<sup>st</sup>, he needs to know what the county is doing so he can make those decision. Under Other Items of Interest – Dave Pedersen asked if we should draft some documentation in a manual as to how to put a system together with each step explained.)

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

No communications since last meeting.

**INCIDENTS:**

No incidents since last meeting.

## **REPORTS:**

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

Jay Sikkink stated they are busy rolling out additional tower sites in the area, Lincoln, Long Prairie, and Freedom.

### **OTC Update:**

Did not meet this week, last month part of the changes to the ARMER plan is to go 95% state wide to county-wide, added five - six more tower sites for this area (phase 3) to meet the change to 95% coverage and is awaiting SRB approval. Working on concept for aviation for Lifelink and state patrol on air communications, plan is in testing stage.

Discussed state-wide numbering standard and procedures so it has the same look and feel statewide in the metro as outstate MN. In Central Minnesota we border all areas so numbering is of concern and are in the process of renumbering for state-wide plan.

### **RRB Update:**

Approved recommended 2009 budget and cost allocation to each county, it is the same amount of money as 2008, currently there is a surplus in budget, although anticipate a lot of expenses coming ahead and is good to have a surplus as we will need to hire consultants.

Another topic is the grants and disciplinary discussion; this group had a lengthy discussion last month as did the RRB.

Debbie stated they also requested a letter be drafted to legislators asking for sales tax exemption for each entity to send to their legislative body.

### **RAC Update:**

A lot of the conversation was on the studies which are in process, Geo-Comm is working on studies, are behind schedule and there is a lot of inaccuracies, hopefully they will meet the revised timetable as grant money is a big issue and the studies need to be completed. Their recommendation is the same as this group with the PSIC money distribution.

Tom Justin stated the Technical College is looking at putting in a training center and Tom Larson is spearheading this. He stated Geo-Comm will be coming to the RAC meeting on Friday to present a plan as how to fix the assessment and participation plan. Judy Diehl stated she spoke to Geo-Comm today and tomorrow there will be a meeting of the radio staff and Geo-Comm and will be straightening things out.

Bob Cuchna asked Geo-Comm how things were going as he has not seen much progress yet.

Jay stated technical college is interested in being a training site and allow people to go into their facility to utilize for training, a big concern is what it will do for capacity on the system, will we need to add frequencies, etc. because of the added traffic. Bob Cuchna asked how this will intertwine with Ridgewater College as they are working with the Sheriff's Association to get a training project going.

Jay stated there is a state-wide interoperability committee and Micah Myers is on the funding committee. Discussing what is the best way to work on interoperability between entities that are 800 and those that are not. They are initially working on the MNSEF concern as it moves and is harder to work with things such as chases. Hopefully in the next couple of months we will have a better idea; State Patrol has been involved significantly and will be sure the resources will be patched as necessary as the incident is moving across the state.

## **REPORTS: (CONTINUED)**

### **RAC Update: (Continued)**

Once this has progressed, then will be addressing state-wide fire, NIMS, and EMS, and will be reporting back as they are working on the most difficult situation first which is the fast-moving chases.

Tom Justin stated Ace is the Region's CASM rep through Kandiyohi County, at a later meeting this group will be demonstrating the CASM tool. He stated the CASM tool is a website based where you can select a county and draw a line to another county and it will tell you what they have in common such as radios, frequencies, talk groups, number of radios, etc. Tom stated it will be a very good tool to utilize for system interoperability as it maintains a lot of data. Andy stated there are frequencies when you get into the 800 ARMER system and has talk groups, frequencies, cache of radios including model and makes, lists the system administrator, etc. Tom stated it will automatically create a matrix i.e. input the agencies which you have interest in and it will tell you what all of those agencies have in common. He stated not anyone can utilize it as it is a secured site and a password and name is required to access.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of June Granite Electronics was approved by the SRB as a radio programming company.

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION AND NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Tower Sites:**

Chair McIntyre stated we discussed tower sites previously, from St. Cloud to Long Prairie he had fair to exceptional coverage and excellent in-building coverage in Long Prairie. Bob Dickhaus from Stearns County provided a brief demonstration of his radio with dispatch; Tom Justin stated he would not want to remain on his Stearns channel in Long Prairie as he would bring all of the traffic with him so he turned to roam as it does not bring additional traffic with it. He stated the RSSI is better in this building than any building in St. Cloud so coverage here is exceptional.

Tom is trying to identify the Freedom site as he was informed there is a stand alone site at Camp Ripley and according to the state, the Camp Ripley site is Freedom and he is in the process of clarifying. It was indicated that State Patrol states they operate on Camp Ripley yet MnDOT stated it is Freedom, Tom will have an clarification by Friday RAC meeting.

Tom stated he did not lose signal from Wadena all the way to St. Cloud as he was bouncing off of Baxter, Leader, and Lincoln sites. Andy Faith may be able to get a hold of radios for individuals to test with or Tom Justin will try and get some. Chuck Koetter stated anyone can go to a regional ATAC, LTAC, etc. (or any statewide tactical) right now in this facility and can communicate with anyone else on the system. Jay Sikkink stated a couple of months ago he received some calls from fire departments and they asked if they should bring their 800 radios with in assistance. Jay stated because they did they were able to utilize those radios by just switching over to a common talk group.

### **Funding and Grant Writing:**

Chair McIntyre asked if anyone has any information to let him know. He stated Gary Curtis is a great resource with success for writing grants on the fire side. Gary stated Willmar received a grant and utilized Waite Park's grant.

Dave Pedersen asked if there is anything towards hospitals for funding, Chair McIntyre stated not that he was aware of at this time. He stated they had a regional RCC meeting and are looking at getting the other hospitals in the region a consellett.

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

### **Funding and Grant Writing: (Continued)**

Jay stated via an email he received there is suppose to be a new interoperability Homeland Security grant coming out. He is waiting to verify the lead and will provide more information as he is aware of it.

### **Telecommunicating or Centralizing Meetings:**

Chair McIntyre stated we talked about a way to televise meetings or centralize them and asked the group for input. By centralizing or telecommunicating, it would minimize the need to travel as much around the region and hopefully have better attendance. We would not be able to televise every site, but could have three – four different sites.

Question was asked how many sites had televising – Tom Justin stated that emergency managers have some area they can teleconference, it was stated that hospitals also have that, Jim Rieber stated Otter Tail does it all of the time. Tom Justin stated there are regional hubs that could be utilized such as Camp Ripley, Otter Tail County has three-four different sites (Perham, Fergus Falls), City of St. Cloud as well as Stearns and Kandiyohi Counties. Tom stated there is no reason why we can not continue the face-to-face and when there is a shorter meeting to televise at four – six different sites. Chair McIntyre stated a suggestion was to do every other month face to face and another time would be televising. If we had around three sites, it would be a combination of face to face as well as several sites. Jim Rieber stated we need to have a centralized location for the public to attend since these are public meetings.

Jay volunteered to find out additional information to teleconference and the limitations and report back. Tom stated if it is not feasible to do teleconferencing, perhaps a centralized meeting may be a thought.

### **10 Codes – Plain Talk Radio Communications:**

Chair McIntyre stated a request was to have training at each meeting. Tom Justin stated this came from ARMER as one of the mandates under NIMS (Incident Command System) is everyone needs to commit to move into plain language talk-groups, i.e. 10-88 would mean something different to various agencies. Homeland Security grants are tied to plain language as grant opportunities are tied to that commitment; Jay and Tom are both on the committee to work on this. Tom stated there are several issues if going away from 10-codes, as everyone needs to know when a situation arises they are clear what the other individual is stating. This state-wide standard would indicate that only the authorized list of 10-codes will be allowed to be used. Bob Dickhaus stated Stearns County still uses a few 10-codes although it is minimal. Several fire departments in attendance stated they utilize very few 10-codes. Tom stated ARMER is pushing hard to come up with a standard list as it will affect grant funding as plain language is required.

Jay stated he knows they brought up that agencies should get use to using plain language as individuals will use what they are use to. Bob Cuchna asked if there is anything indicating when DNR or law enforcement want to contact dispatch, who is suppose to contact who. Tom stated there is discussion on this, now with the 800 and encryption they utilize actual names versus codes, etc. Bob stated law enforcements are the worse individuals utilizing 10-codes. Gary Curtis stated dispatchers will also be hard to change. Tom Justin stated there will be some times where you will need to use 10-codes such as the incident you are in and you can't use plain language. Question was asked if there is a national standard, Tom stated he is not aware of any, such as each of the different branches i.e. Army, Navy, National Guard, all have different codes.

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

### **10 Codes – Plain Talk Radio Communications: (Continued)**

Tom Justin stated there may be some codes that we can not go away with such as 10-33. Gary Curtis stated an incident a few months ago in St. Cloud there was approximately ten different agencies called to the site and were able to communicate. He stated a big thing is to have standard protocol and to practice it. Ace stated in reference to plain language, we need to decide what we want to use as standardization. Tom stated as Tim Lee indicated in his email, there is a time for 10-codes, but which ones are necessary. Tom stated the SRB will make the decision as to the approved 10-codes and that he and Jay are gathering input on now to report back to them.

Jon Combs stated there may be some comfort in knowing that a lot less people have scanners that are able to pick up the radio traffic. It was suggested perhaps this list will change as there is a starting point and it is realized that there will need to be things changed and it will be a living document.

Bob Cuchna stated we didn't factor in what sheriff's their selves feel as input to the discussion. Jim Kreemer stated they utilize dispatch and with their 10-codes the volunteer fire departments have no idea what they are referring to and the plain language is a great thing. It was the consensus of the group that there will be some 10-codes needed and the fire department felt they do not need any 10-codes. Tom Justin stated in the last few months the state realized if entities are utilizing state-wide resources, protocols will need to be utilized and indicate how the various tacticals are utilized. He stated other regions will be looking to this region for direction. He feels there will be a recommendation coming from the sub-committee, then through the SRB, then to the User Committees. He also feels there will be protocols on how to use the tactical channels as well will need User group input.

### **Review of By-Laws and Clarification of Voting Procedures:**

Chair McIntyre stated the bylaws for the User Group are in the packet. There were questions from last month's meeting regarding voting. In the bylaws it states each entity can have up to five members on the user group, there are 20 agencies. Discussion on what constitutes a quorum and final discussion was that 11 entities were present with at least one person from each member present. There are two exceptions – one being a change in the bylaws and the other is if there is an actual fee to the agencies - there will then be a 30 day notice required to allow time to get all of your representatives present to vote and provide additional time to discuss how to vote. Dave Pedersen asked if a paper note would allow for a vote, Chair McIntyre indicated the bylaws state that the individual must be present to vote. Roberts Rules of Orders is followed with the exception of what constitutes a quorum. Therefore the vote was voted on according to bylaws, it was stated the concern is there were 23 individuals present voting. Jay stated he was one of the individuals who spent nine months coming up with the language to try and come up with the most diversity yet be fair to everyone. It would be unrealistic to have 51 people as a quorum; it is each county's responsible to get your representatives at meetings. It was felt that 23 people could make the decision for the whole group. Tom Justin stated he was also present with the discussion, he said there was fear in financial matters, that is why a 30-day notice was put in there if making a financial decision. He stated the bylaws also indicate that no entity can have more than two individuals from any one discipline, so individuals who are on several disciplines within that county, they need to decide what discipline they are representing.

Tom stated perhaps a tighter agenda would be helpful for everyone to know what will be on the agenda. Bob Cuchna stated counties need to think about who they are assigning as a representative. Tom stated this is the only committee that can send two individuals to the RRB although they can not vote but can have input. He stated with the concern of the motion, it also goes to the RAC for them to vote on it. Jay stated counties need to be sure they are finding individuals who have an interest in attending meetings.

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

**Review of By-Laws and Clarification of Voting Procedures: (Continued)**

Tom stated the bylaws could be amended to have all items needing a 30-day notice to be voted upon. He stated the bylaws are a draft with the understanding the User Committee may chose to amend them. *Tom Justin moved to table bylaws to the next meeting for discussion to make any proposal to bylaws, motion second by Pat Boone. Upon a vote, motion carried.*

**Other Items of Interest:**

Chair McIntyre asked what items members would like to see for the next agenda, Jay stated a group had a strategy planning meeting as a regional control system for the hospitals. The Regional Control system in the Metro is funded by the legislature and funding is given to the regional control centers and is pursuing this although would need legislative changes to fund this. Bill Becker is working on figures needed for a central Minnesota regional control system, it is a long journey although are still pursuing it. Jay asked for individuals who have experience working with the EMSRB to let him know as they could use their input. Chair McIntyre stated they will be inviting everyone in the region to work together and include the hospitals, EMS, ambulance services, counties, cities, etc. and learn how they will interop and communicate together. If you are interested in attending something like this, let Chair McIntyre or Jay know.

Jim Rieber stated nine years ago they worked with legislatures to see if they can get funding to respond to emergencies and looking at having the sunset of 2010 removed, there will be some buzz coming up in the next year regarding this. They are working with the Minnesota ambulance service to work with counties and agencies to try and get this passed.

Tom Justin asked if everyone reads things in packets, it was the consensus they do.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

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

The August meeting will be August 12, 2008, 1:00 p.m. at Traverse County Social Services Building, in the Commissioner's Room.

The September meeting is scheduled for September 9<sup>th</sup> and is the night of primary elections and had discussion if the meeting should be rescheduled or cancelled. Judy Diehl asked if it could be a week later. *Bob Cuchna moved to skip the September meeting, Jeff Jelinski second, upon a vote, motion carried to cancel September User Committee meeting.*

The October meeting will be in Wadena.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*Mike Nieman moved to adjourn meeting at 8:15 p.m., Pat Boone second, motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Backes