

CENTRAL MINNESOTA REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)

Meeting Minutes

Friday, August 15, 2008 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC)
Morris MN, Stevens County

Members/Alternates Present:

1. Micah Myers – Vice-Chair – Designee of St. Cloud
2. Pat Bettenberg – Designee Benton County
3. John Haukos – Designee Big Stone County
4. Tom Egan – Designee Douglas County
5. Troy Langlie – Designee Grant County
6. Stacey “Ace” Bonnema – Alternate Kandiyohi County
7. Jeff Norlin – Alternate Meeker County
8. Mike Smith – Alternate Mille Lacs County
9. Jeff Jelinski – Alternate Morrison County
10. Mark Englund – Designee Otter Tail County
Judy Siggerud – Alternate Otter Tail County
11. Tom Larson – Delegate Pope County
12. Jay Sikkink – Alternate Stearns County
13. Judy Diehl – Designee Stevens County
14. Scott Mattison – Designee Swift County
15. Bob Cuchna – Alternate Todd County
16. Trevor Wright – Designee Traverse County
17. Scott McKellep – Delegate Wadena County
18. Dawn Mund – Alternate Wilkin County

Members/Alternates Absent:

19. Sherburne County
20. Wright County

Guests Present:

Tom Hannon, ARMER
Tom Justin, Central MN Interop Coordinator
Tim Lee, Mn/DOT

Meeting was called to order by Micah Myers at 10:08 a.m.

Chair Myers welcomes members and guests, introductions conducted. 18 out of the 20 members in attendance with a quorum present. Micah welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their time to attend.

Approval of Minutes:

Chair Myers asks for a motion to approve RAC minutes of July 11, 2008. *A motion by Trevor Wright, second to Jeff Jelinski to approve minutes, upon a vote motion carries.*

Reports:

ARMER Update:

Tim Lee stated they are continuing to work on phase 3; most of bids are awarded except Litchfield and Dodge Center, all other tower awards have been let. Chair Myers asked for clarification of phase 3, Tim stated Phase 3 is still of original definition which is St. Cloud and Rochester area. There have been a few additional sites brought into the plan that were not in original area such as Starbuck, Duelm, and a few in Goodhue. Scott Wiggins stated they are to build out the system. If you go back to the implementation plan as approved by DPS and SRB – taking Hoffman and Herman into the phase 3, it lists all of the sites in phase 3.

Tim stated they are funded for the whole state although the \$45 million is for those determined in phase 3. Tom Larson asked if the build out will be in phases once the \$45 million is spent, Tim stated now it is to finish the build out, it is phased with \$62 million each of the next upcoming years.

Mark Englund asked if they could get a map that would list the original tower sites and then the additional sites. If they thought they were in the original phase 3 and now are not, it would set them behind their original plan. Tim stated he asked Jim Mohn to come up with a map with different colors that would be state-wide and would indicate where it is at. Mark Englund asked if Otter Tail will be considered in phase 456 following phase 3, Tim stated all of state would be built out together. He stated MnDOT has a lot of tower sites across the state, they already issued the contract for the two zone controllers - one in Detroit Lakes and one in Duluth – Motorola already have the orders for them. Tim stated they have microwave in place with current sites to help fill in the 75-80 sites to get them on the air by December 31, 2009. He stated as they get approval for additional sites, they will get the bids out as soon as possible. They have a couple of digital hops that will be required. Mark asked if there is a goal for all of the sites, Tim stated it is by 2012 with the narrowband requirement.

Scott Mattison asked if there is a priority of the sites which are in this region and are not in phase 3. Tim stated it is difficult to prioritize basically the whole state is a priority. Tom Justin asked if there is a priority for the ring sites that are in phase 3, he also asked about population maps.

Tim stated for the 456 area, zone controllers will be installed early 2009, and linked to remaining zones. They will upgrade the system from 7.2 to 7.6.

ARMER Update:

Mark Englund would like to propose to the SRB that because Central MN is so far out in buildout that they prioritize the Central MN Regional sites to include the entities that are in the Central Region but are in the 4, 5, and 6 phase. It has put those agencies at least 18 months out behind their original plan. Troy Langlie second, upon a vote, motion carried. Chair Myers stated we can approach them but can not guarantee it will make a difference. Mark Englund stated they were under the impression the whole Central MN area was in phase 3 and recently informed they are not and it set them back 18 months

Mark Englund will contact all of the sheriffs not in phase 3 that are in this region and put together a letter for the RRB to submit to the SRB and will attach the letters from the sheriffs. Tom Hannon stated it may be more appropriate to ask the SRB for the immediate development of those resources where the commitment has been made by the counties to come onto the ARMER (referred to as a collar county). Mark's concern is they have not gone to their county board yet but could make reference to entities who have made a commitment and resources. Tom stated the issues we are dealing with in phase 3 also affects southwest and it makes it difficult for MnDOT to manage their plan. Chair Myers stated the RAC will address it next month and the RRB in October to submit to the SRB for their November meeting to address our proposal.

Reports: (Continued)

SRB Update:

Nothing at this time.

OTC Update:

Chair Myers asked for a motion to remove Jay as the interim and vote him as the representative, *Scott Mattison moved, Judy Diehl second, upon a vote, motion carried.*

Jay stated they met on Wednesday – three items addressed: 1. State is still working on aviation plan with helicopters and Life Link and hope to have a plan in place this fall. 2. Standards in general a concern – Metro had standards and the state adopted them. Now they are going through and trying to determine what should be a state standard. Jay has been working on the numbering standards to get that organized state-wide in a master document. 3. Olmstead County was at a Motorola meeting, they are looking at 800 paging and is seeking additional support for the 800 paging. Looking for a geographical page, radios have an ID, pagers would have to have an ID also, it was suggested that an agency would have one ID and they would share that on the system versus each pager having a separate ID. Jay is seeking input on the 800 paging.

RNC is coming up, Jay asked for Central MN information as there will be some reserved talk groups for the convention and would like to know which ones will not be available. Scott asked if pagers will utilize more resources, Tim stated if they are looking for in-building coverage.

Interop:

Chair Myers stated there is another pool of money, some associated for planning, some training, and the members had discussion as to what the funds could be utilized for. There is a cost for the volunteer agencies and the Interop Committee will be voting on this next week.

Tom Larson asked if the controllers designated by the PSAP are for interop. Chair Myers stated yes and a timeline for installation of them have not been determined. Tim Lee stated they originally put these controllers in the Metro so if any 800 user in the area wanted to use it, they could. He stated in the plan, depending how an agency wants to use it, depending on scanning, etc. will determine where it needs to be located. He did not know if there were funds included for installation. Scott asked if the consollettes were already purchased and sitting somewhere, Tom Justin stated he did not think so. Tom Hannon stated they were control stations for the Metro which were used for a short period for interoperability and as the system expanded, they were not used. Tim Lee stated the ones Scott was referring to are being sold. As a backup plan for entities once coming onto the 800 will still need a control station for that. Tim stated he thought Metro purchased them with the 911 fee, and there may have been some additional Homeland Security funds for phase 3 for control stations. Tom Justin will check with Ron Whitehead if there are consollets purchased. Bob Cuchna stated once the consollettes are received, the entities need to get trained as to how to utilize them whether it be fore backup, etc. versus assuming the installer will know. Tim stated the consollettes are being sent to the RACs and it is left up to them what they want to do with the control stations from the PSIC money.

User Committee:

Tom Justin stated they went through their bylaws, anyplace there were changes suggested it will return to the user group at the next meeting and be sent to the RRB for approval. The User Committee themselves can not change their bylaws it takes the RRB the past discussed video conferencing, there are no physical limitations. There is no meeting in September due to elections, October will still be the 2nd Tuesday and November they will start with the 3rd Tuesday of each month as more volunteer firefighters can attend.

Reports: (Continued)

Regional RAC Committees:

Tom Hannon stated the radio boards are forming quickly, in September 18th the SW will have meeting and SC on the 30th. In the north goal is to have their board formed by the end of the year. The NW RAC and regional RRB met earlier this week, because of the distance, they have RAC meeting first, then the RRB later that date. RRB meets every other month, the RAC holds work group meetings on the off months. One problem they encounter is a lot of the counties have part-time staff on the RAC and other committees and there was no funding for travel expenses in their budgets. A number of counties expended their travel budgets so members are not attending meetings. Board addressed a policy through grant funding that would provide for the Chair of the RRB to pick up mileage expenses for delegates and members who had problems.

They hired the contracted employee that would assist in the planning and training efforts – it was funded by Homeland Security grant for their region - \$50,000 first year including salary and expenses. One other item of note, there is a lot of discussion about holding a radio board conference later this year or early next year. The conference would provide multiple tracks from the development, implantation of plans, interoperability, governance issues, coordination of RRB and RACS, legislative proposals, etc. The outstate can then coordinate some of the activities for outstate between the regions; they are looking at having funding for this.

Many of the other regions are kicking off their assessment studies and a vendor has been selected. Some will be complete in November, the remaining next spring.

RRB:

The RRB finalized the recommendations of the Legislative letter for the tax exempt requests. They approved the PSIC funding between all entities, made a few modifications to the bylaws to accommodate the meetings. They will review the bylaws on annual basis.

Regional Training Facility:

Tom Larson stated Scott Berger and himself met with several executives at the college discussing the opportunity for the \$10 million expansion to the Law Enforcement program. They are looking at funding and the school is very interested. Scott stated there is a designated dispatch area within the proposed plan for up to a four-person dispatch console, they are currently digging footings at this time and are wondering if there is anything they should be including at this time before the construction is complete. Scott Mattison asked if it is entry level training, Scott Berger stated they are looking at entry level and if they are setting this up, is there other things they can include as continued educational training as well as an emergency type system in case something happened as an agency can come in and utilize their facility in the interim. Tom Larson stated the MN Sheriff's Association has been involved and interested in hosting dispatch training at the site, it can be utilized for PSAPS, local cops, emergency backup dispatching, etc. with a lot of opportunities. Scott Mattison stated the Sheriffs have been trying to get PSAP and dispatch certifications processed and highly recommends the technical college look at that. Tom Larson stated his initial thought is having the four-person dispatch in place would be invaluable to this region. Chair Myers asked what is their next steps. Tom Larson stated as soon as the college gets some solid figures on the cost to outfit the dispatch center, they will meet again and have additional discussion. Scott Mattison asked if the college could be certified to train the trainers and keep their certifications up. Tom Larson thought if we could bring the state in, it would help with certification.

Bob Cuchna asked if Alex Tech considered that Ridge Water is looking at having some classes and if they can work together. Tom Larson stated if there is any possibility the RAC could look at any grants they could secure to help with the center would be helpful.

Reports: (Continued)

Regional Training Facility: (Continued)

Tom Larson moved that he is looking for some commitment from this group for a portion region's planning monies for the Alex Tech expansion. He would like a commitment from this group to formalize or recognize a formal working relationship with the Alex Tech, and if there is planning funds available to initiate a study as to how the college comes onto the ARMER system, etc. Scott McKellep second, upon a vote, motion carried.

His other concern is if the group would be willing to commit some of the planning funds for the expansion, Tom Hannon integration of the technology college training facility into the backbone. Judy Diehl second, upon a vote, motion carried.

Jay stated Mille Lacs is present and doesn't have funds and felt it should be a priority. Tom Larson stated he felt there would be sufficient funds available for Mille Lacs's study.

Regional Radio Board:

Central Minnesota Project Coordinator:

The RRB tasked the RAC with developing a contract for the Central MN Project Coordinator. Jay asked if this was about 500 hours per year, \$60 per hour, and approximately 50 hours per month. And would it be enough time or do we need to add hours, or start with what we have. Tom Hannon stated the group needs to provide money for travel expenses and mileage. He stated his time averages about 11 days a month. Chair Myers stated this is for discussion purposes, do we want to split this position up for duties, do we want to add to the description, etc. Scott Mattison asked if we are looking for a person through a contractor. Chair Myers asked if what we are requesting is it reasonable to ask for one person to provide everything or does it need to be split up. Tom Larson asked if this could also be the person who writes the TIC Plan, Tom Hannon stated this contract responsibility should be to develop the TIC Plan, assist the member agencies in coordinating the implementation of their assessments and develop interoperability if utilizing Homeland Security funds. We do have extra funds such as PSIC MNA money which requires local match, although can not co-mingle Homeland Security and PSIC Funds. It needs to be defined separately and a separate contract. One issue NW MN ran into, the form they utilized is the states form for single agreements. They had two proposals presented for consideration, it was then obvious one thing not clearly defined is the fact the contractor needed to have significant experience dealing with government such as open meeting law, data practices, posting, etc. Tom Hannon suggested as the group goes forward, to clearly define what we would want to accomplish and move forward and include government knowledge in description. This RRB and RAC are running under the Rules of the City of St. Cloud as they are the fiscal agent and are referring to professional services. This group has the authority to do it as a single source but would be good to run it independently.

Tom Larson stated there is money available for TIC Plans so the \$100,000 is set aside for the TIC plan and wants to know how much we need. Tom stated he is hired by the State of MN and his focus is assisting regions and local units of government to make things work. Scott Mattison stated if we hired a single source person and if something happened, there is no backup and requested the contract is not for an individual person and if it was, it would at least be two deep to have a backup.

Scott Mattison moved that the RAC form a subcommittee to make a recommendation to the RAC regarding format and contract. Tom Larson second, upon a vote, motion carried. Committee consists of: Tom Larson, Scott Mattison, Mike Smith, and Tom Hannon as an advisor. Any communications will be coordinated through Debbie.

Updates from Partners on Current Projects:

GeoComm Resolution Update:

At last RAC GeoComm provided a presentation on studies status. Greg Ballantine stated last month they asked to be present today on the agenda to provide an update. At last month, he was disappointed for GeoComm not being where the group expected. They had a good number of comments regarding the revised report format and are on track for the timeline. Three of the four consultants are in attendance today in case there are individual questions following the meeting.

Swift County – report is complete and in final packaging, report updated with additional information and cost estimate per customer request and will be delivered next week and October 7th is the stakeholder meeting.

Big Stone County – report finished and will be delivered next week with next Tuesday making presentation to county.

Pope County - draft report submitted July 31st, currently reviewing draft report and requested additional time to complete review of draft. So far there are not major revisions customers are asking for. If conference call can occur next week, the final report will be presented before September 4th. Final report can be turned around if minimal changes.

Otter Tail County - draft submitted to customer on July 31st, the Sheriff representative was out of the office for a few days and was delayed until this week for review; suggesting an in-person meeting onsite with Otter Tail County next week. They have made the commitment that they will come onsite within 60 days of acceptance of the final report to their stakeholders even though it was not in the contract.

Douglas County – draft submitted July 31st, conference call conducted August 6th, onsite meeting held on August 13th, few minor modifications and final will be in hands no later than August 29th. There is a fair amount of local concern with ARMER sites not being etched in stone at this point, there are general locations but counties desire to have exact locations prior to making commitments.

Grant County - draft report submitted August 1st, conference call following week, August 13th meeting with stakeholders, final report in hands by August 29th.

Stevens County – making final round of telephone calls to local agencies, contacting some of the volunteer agencies are challenging. Draft report will be to customer no later than August 29th, follow up with conference call and submit final report by September 15th.

Morrison County - validating some data, draft report no later than September 26th and plan on meeting that deadline. Conference call later that week with final clarifications and final report immediately thereafter no later than October 6th.

Wadena County - no later than September 26th to customer, he anticipates to be early with revised timeline, conference call following week, onsite with no later than October 10th.

Wilkin County - draft no later than September 26th, call and report no later than October 10th.

Traverse County - they are validating information, on track to deliver as presented by August 29th, conference call following week and onsite no later than September 15.

Regional Plan Update:

On Hold.

Updates from Partners on Current Projects: (Continued)

Grant Money for Studies:

Chair Myers stated if anyone submitted reimbursement for grants and have not received payment, please let him know and if anyone has anything outstanding let him know as they are in the process of closing out the funds.

General Discussion and New Business:

PSAP Contact Information Update:

Debbie received last contact yesterday and she will be forward to Ace.

Other Items of Interest:

Legislative letter – Jay stated he was in contact with his representative, and she indicated she will support the tax exempt for the area, and encouraged everyone to contact their legislative person that the letter is coming out and explain it to them. We will then need to have someone sponsor it as it is brought on the floor. Perhaps it will have an impact if it came from the Sheriff's Department.

Tom Hannon asked Jay for her reaction for the retroactive part and he stated he did not discuss that. Tom stated that is a critical concern. Mark Englund stated we could wait until after the elections to discuss with them and to decide who to approach. Tom Larson to his knowledge he heard it is important to find someone to sponsor it now as they are already deciding on bills, who is going to sponsor them, and what bills will be brought forward once the session starts. His past experience he was working on language in July and was told it was too late. Mark stated we should find someone who has been around for a while, Chair Myers and Tom Hannon will discuss it with Larry Haws. Scott Mattison suggested working with a lobbyist. Jay stated he already talked to him about the RCC and he was willing to support that. *Mark Englund moved, Bob Cuchna 2nd to authorize the Chair to discuss with legislators and find someone to support. Upon a vote, motion carried.*

Chair Myers discussed how this group is getting the 800 information that comes out of this group to other jurisdictions. Tom Larson stated they have a public safety meeting and Rey was providing a presentation and there was a lot of discussion in the Chief's meeting that the Sheriff's are taking all of the grant money and no one is telling them what is going on. Tom stated a lot of the studies are not complete so until they are there aren't a lot of decisions to be made. They have a User Committee that should be participating, and there is not a lot of grant funding available to date and discussions will need to be addressed at the county boards. He suggested the members have discussions with their police and fire chiefs. Tom wasn't sure if that was because they were not interviewed during the study process, we need to make sure we communicate with them as they are under the impression that the counties are getting all of the money. His understanding is that also was the report from the state's chief's meeting.

Rick Tenan of GeoComm stated in his conversations with agencies in Grant County, there was questions about available funding and grant mechanisms for upgrades; in the case of Elbow Lake Medical Center he was specifically asked if there was funding that would be trickled down to them. From his knowledge of what the funding streams are, he was unable to answer the question effectively. If there is some way he and his colleges could be informed, they could pass this information to the agencies as they are conducting interviews.

Tom Larson stated grant funding is available to NGO's, some hospitals have been told their funding can't be passed on to ambulances, Tom stated he was told it was not true – it was a local decision. He is waiting to hear back on a clarification of this. Scott Mattison stated they have a standing agenda item of radio updates. Jay stated Stearns County has monthly meetings with their users, one month it is during the day and the next month is in the evenings and this is where they pass the information on, they have 27 Fire Departments and 14 Police agencies in Stearns County. They have been doing this for four years and they recently decided they still need to meet monthly to keep current.

General Discussion and New Business: (Continued)

Other Items of Interest: (Continued)

Tim Lee stated he sent Chair Myers the first cut of the contracting process now the SRB put a group in place for the contract. The members need to know what is required of them to come onto the system. He is trying to get someone from the State/OTC at our next RAC. Tim stated history of what they did in the Metro each county had a plan, the region had a plan, a lot of the contract follows that plan.

Chair Myers stated the state standard 1.98 was handed out at the last RAC. Tom Egan asked if there is a way on the ARMER website if the state can keep each county updated on the tower build out. Tim stated there are a couple of status reports passed out at the SRB. Jay stated there has been concern with posting the tower sites for security. Troy stated if there is some concern maybe put on the NIX website.

Tom Larson stated an update on emergency manager's money, the region realizes \$100,000 is for the TIC plan from the 2007 grant and \$300,000 is for the RAC, they would like to know from the RAC by their next meeting in October how much of the \$400,000 they need for the completion of studies and the TIC plan person. Some counties can use these funds to purchase radios such as Wright County, Sherburne is not in their region. Tom stated they have until June 30, 2010 to expense it. Tom Justin asked if the additional \$300,000 is only be used for the 700/800 purchases, he stated it was for studies and if there is money left over it can be used to purchase radios, consoles, subscriber units, and they needs to be P25 compliant. Chair Myers stated there are a lot of decisions that needs to be made to provide an answer, although this group should set a timeline and if we don't meet that, the emergency managers can expend accordingly and October may be too early of a date to provide a number. This will be on the agenda for the next RAC, Chair Myers will see what is left in the region to be accomplished, get some numbers and funding the TIC plan will be important, completing studies, etc.

Scott Mattison asked who is our legal council, Chair Myers stated we had this discussion and it was determined it will go back to each of the member's legal council. He stated at some point this group will be addressing litigation and how will it be addressed. Tom Hannon stated the JPA provides for an administrative agent and that is the City of St. Cloud and they will be the attorney for the RRB and is already figured into the budget. It will then be the City of St. Cloud's policies unless the board votes otherwise. This was a recent issue in the northern area as well.

Upcoming Meeting, Set Date, and Location:

September

Next meeting will be at the First Presbyterian Church in Foley, Benton County, on September 12th. *Tom Larson moved, second Judy Diehl, upon a vote motion carried.*

October:

October will be Big Stone County on October 10, *Jeff Jelinski moved, Jay Sikkink 2nd, upon a vote motion carried.*

Jay moved to adjourn at 1:52 p.m., second Judy, upon a vote motion carried.

Minutes recorded by Debbie Backes, Recording Secretary.