

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Friday, March 17, 2006
12:00 p.m.
City of St. Cloud, City Hall

PRESENT: Tom Hannon, Micah Myers, and Debbie Backes (Recorder) City of St. Cloud; George McClure and Jay Sikkink, Stearns County; Bill Swing and Greg Howe, Wright County; Pat Bettenberg and Doug Brinkman, Benton County; Gary Petersen, Sherburne County; Mike Disher and Jeff Jelinski, Morrison County; Ron Whitehead, Minnesota Department of Public Safety; Andy Faith and Mike Kahl, Granite Electronics; Mike Mazzitello, Geo-Com; Frank Karnauskas, Karns Services; Jamie Nixon, St. Cloud School District 742.

Call to order at 12:15 p.m. and conducted introductions.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Introductions conducted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Bill Swing moved, 2nd Mike Disher to approve minutes, motion carried.

ARMER UPDATE:

Ron Whitehead stated he was happy to see so many different entities at this meeting. State is proceeding with the phase 3 build-out, have given money from the 911 Fund to MNDOT to continue building out their system and the biggest issue right now is the zone controllers. They are looking at bonding after July 1st and moving ahead soon. Have specs drafted for the zone controller and it indicates there is concern regarding a second version coming out i.e. 6X versus 7X and the issues it raises. Discussed what type of issues the Steering Committee will be addressing as they proceed to build out the system. Also stated once the towers are put up, agencies can use them to put enhancement equipment on them.

Ron talked about the study in process, how the operational costs will be handled and they realize this is a big issue and are working on a solution once the Business Plan is returned. Jay asked Ron the date for the plan deadline and Ron stated May as they have 180 days to come up with the plan, although it won't be in time for the current legislation session.

Geo-Com was hired to do a Local Enhancement Study to determine what enhancements each county would need. This would provide the State-Wide Radio Board information as to what the different counties would need and is only applicable to the southern region and four counties in this area. The State realizes there were nine counties that were overlooked in the central region and need to look at them as well.

The Funding Committee is chaired by Bill Mund, St. Cloud's Fire Chief. Maintenance continues to be an issue and security is a big concern. Will be doing a security assessment of the system to see what needs to be covered.

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ARMER UPDATE: (CONTINUED)

Jay asked about Homeland Security money and the possibility of getting radios into the hands of users. Ron explained the funding which may be available, what it could be used for, etc. and indicated there may be some opportunities although there are a lot of other things that need to be funded as well. Ron will check into the date and let Jay know when he may expect to hear and stated it should be shortly after May 1st.

STANDARDS, PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES DISCUSSION:

Last meeting Jay and Micah picked a couple procedures to review, make changes and bring to meeting for discussion and approval. Jay stated the procedures they utilized came from the Metro Radio Board, one is a Talk Group Permission Letter and the only change was the wording changed from Metro to Central MN and the approvals. This is to provide authorization for entities to authorize other entities to use their talk group.

Jay stated since we do not have a chair for this group at this time, we need to decide who is authorized to sign the agreements. George stated he thought we should put CM (Central Minnesota) put in front of the RAC wording in the heading, Bill stated we have already been using the CM and thought we should continue with this.

Mike asked Jay to explain why it is important to have authorization to use talk groups, etc. Jay explained the necessity of the approval, the programming, monitoring versus talking, etc.

Tom stated internally the City already utilizes this procedure between departments. Jay stated this was brought to the Interop sub-committee meeting last month and there were no issues with it and would like to keep things consistent. Mike felt he would like the CM Radio Board as the heading, Jay stated there is a location for date approved, revised, etc. and will be utilized.

Jeff asked for a clarification of being able to monitor only, monitor and transmit, etc. It was clarified that the radios do not allow for monitoring only, they are monitoring and transmit but they needed prior approval to transmit or what talk groups are put into radios prior to programming.

Mike stated if this is utilized electronically, be sure to retain it so the paperwork trail is archived. Jay asked if there should be a file kept centrally by region or if each entity should keep their own? Tom asked the board for adoption of Appendix C, Section 2.4, Bill moved, Pat seconded to approve with discussed changes. Motion carried.

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STANDARDS, PROTOCOLS & PROCEDURES DISCUSSION: (CONTINUED)

4.10 Section on Maintenance is the second policy for approval, which allows anyone who works on the system needing to be certified prior to allowing them to work on it. Jay stated he also handed out appendix 9 and 10 as section 4.10 talks about these appendixes. Jay stated this document talks about a lot of committees although at this time this region does not have the committees in place yet but should be left in because we would need it as we proceed. These changes would not take place until there is a board in place and asked if this committee wants to approve until a board is established? Ron explained the struggle the state has and indicated they would like to do a master contract indicating what vendors and technicians are qualified to work on the system and then turn it over to the regional board which can have additional criteria.

Tom stated he would like to see vendors be on the state list and then would need to meet our criteria. Mike thought we should have a separate list of approved contracts and contracts in development. Mike moved to table this contract and George second until things developed with the State Radio Board. Motion carried.

Micah and Jay will use their own discretion as to which two they will bring to the next meeting. Mike stated he would like to see an acronym list for them to use to become familiar with terminology; Frank has this and will send out electronically.

Tom stated he sees several basic items in section one that would cover some objectives we are planning; therefore Jay and Micah will come up with two items from section one, Jay indicated 1.9A is pertinent and will have one other. Jay stated the permission letter will be put on the CMN Radio System and any subsequent forms will be put there in addition to the index, etc. as we adopt them. Micah will work with James, the City's Webmaster on implementing to the website.

Mike asked what procedures other entities could utilize if they didn't like a policy or procedure that has been approved? Jay indicated this will be important as time goes on to the entities that are not on the system yet and these policies and procedures are able to be changed.

Jeff brought up discussion regarding the cost of operating the system if an entity came on board. Tom explained the costs that could be anticipated such as software assurance and hardware, discussion followed regarding operational costs, who is responsible for costs, etc.

Bill asked Ron when the Local Enhancement Plan will be complete and he indicated the end of March. Bill stated this would be helpful for Wright County's study/plan. Tom stated the City and Stearns County met with the Risk Assessment Committee and appreciates the cooperation between entities; and the state talking to people in addition to just the state and we appreciated the opportunity to participate.

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STANDARDS, PROTOCOLS & PROCEDURES DISCUSSION: (CONTINUED)

Tom stated the next State Radio Board meeting is next Thursday at 1:00 p.m. George asked Ron who should all attend from this group for the update, and discussion followed regarding what would be helpful for the State. Mike, Gary, George, and Tom will attend and perhaps Greg and Pat if schedules allow. Ron asked for an update on Central MN's planning efforts and we need to be reminded that there is still an open seat for an out-state representative and we would be the first out-state board in place.

Mike asked if there was discussion of Tom staying on with the radio process and board issue as a mentor. Tom indicated this is something the City has talked to him about. He will notify committee members regarding progress on this issue.

DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL RADIO BOARD CREATION:

Tom indicated we are required to have a commissioner from each of the counties and an elected official from each of the cities that are parties to the agreement. We need to determine who is required to be on the board and then who we have on the board and what chairs or committees we determine to be a part of it also. Jay provided handouts regarding representation of Regional and State Radio Boards. Tom asked for direction regarding discussion of committee members. Bill stated the first question would be how often the commissioners would need to meet, timeframe commitment required, is there a per diem, etc. George stated this is required by statute and therefore is not optional and perhaps we discuss what positions are optional at this time. Tom indicated he envisions this group would act as an advisory board in the future. George felt it was important to have an elected official as well as a person from the entity who is the expert in the area. George asked about the possible number of people this group would involve including project sponsors, Tom indicated up to 30-40. George felt each entity should only have one vote even though two people are there. Tom suggested the entities can appoint one voting and one non-voting member from each agency and they can have an option to appoint replacements as needed.

Doug explained what they have on the Emergency Services Board and how the representation is covered. Bill felt he did not think this board should consist of a lot of IT/technical members as they should act as an advisory group. Jay indicated perhaps we have a representative from the Police and Fire Advisory Boards. Frank stated in the Metro, if there was anything technical that needed to be approved, the issue needed to be brought before the technical committee and once approved, was then brought before the board. Technical advisory group chair would have a spot on the radio board but would not have a voting right. Tom will draft up recommendations and have available for discussion at the next meeting.

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DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL RADIO BOARD CREATION: (CONTINUED)

Second item is what level of participation is required for someone to be on the committee, i.e. have a financial investment requirement to be on the board or have a commitment to invest, etc. Tom suggested a minimum you would have to have a commitment to be on the system, have infrastructure investment, etc. It was the consensus of the group that each county would have a seat on the board to represent the cities within their county. Cities within the counties would only have a seat if they have an investment in the infrastructure. Tom clarified that for a county to be on the board, they need to have a commitment to join, have a plan to implement and have an investment in infrastructure such as additional capacity or coverage or dispatch upgrades to provide system integration.

Tom stated the By-Laws this group previously approved makes reference to a minimum of a Policy, a Planning, a Technical, and an Operations Committee who would be a representative on the committee.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Updates from Partners on Current Projects:

Three Channel Expansion:

Three channel expansion should be complete with the acceptance testing scheduled for March 28th, the STA is in hand and will be turning the channels on.

Items of Interest:

N/A

UPCOMING MEETINGS, SET DATE AND LOCATION:

Next meeting will be Friday, April 21, 2006, at Benton County in Foley at noon.

GRANT PLANNING FUNDS, PLAN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES, PLANNING ISSUES:

Wright and Sherburne Planning Proposal:

Stearns and St. Cloud Grants has funding for regional planning for which Stearns County is the fiscal agent, Wright and Sherburne Counties have come up with a joint plan for the two counties. Bill stated Jeff Nelson provided a proposal for both counties and would like the committee to make a recommendation to proceed with the plan. Gary stated he doesn't see anything different in the proposal than what he received prior for Sherburne County in the amount of \$38,000 and some prior consulting fees for Wright County in the amount of \$3,634 which he would like included. Tom stated the \$3,634 was charged after the grant became available and asked Ron if these fees could be included and he stated he thought so but wasn't certain.

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GRANT PLANNING FUNDS, PLAN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES, PLANNING ISSUES: (CONTINUED)

Wright and Sherburne Planning Proposal: (Continued)

Tom asked for a motion to approve plan not to exceed \$38,000 for a joint plan between Wright and Sherburne County and \$3,634 unbilled in planning expenses for Wright County. Pat moved, George seconded to approve motion. Motion carried.

Tom stated he would like to proceed with the committee to seek proposals on the same type of plan on a regional level and come up with a plan to include Benton, Stearns, and Morrison Counties and the City of St. Cloud. George asked if an RFP is needed and Tom stated he felt there was only PSC Alliance and Geo-Com qualified to quote and Geo-Com can't bid until after April once they are done with their piece with the state. Doug asked if Geo-Com's study would have an effect on this study? Ron stated the RCC may be interested in business in this area after working on the study.

Development of Regional Plan:

Jay stated he would like to see this expanded to include Meeker and Todd County if possible. Geo-Com's study should be presented to the State Board in April.

Andy stated that Stevens County showed an interest in being involved in the radio project in addition to Meeker and Todd Counties. Ron stated if there is any inclination of other counties interested in being a part, please engage them as it will only be a benefit. Tom asked if anyone has contacts in these counties? Greg and Jeff will email Tom a contact for these counties and Tom will contact them, explain where we are at, why we are contacting them, and invite them to attend future meetings.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.