

**Northeast Minnesota Regional Radio Board Meeting
The DECC, Duluth
March 26, 2009; 10:00 a.m.**

Board: (☒ = present; ☐ = not present)

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Wedel/Aitkin | <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas Clifford/Lake |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marvin Bodie/Carlton | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stephen Hallan/Pine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Dowson/Cass | <input type="checkbox"/> Peg Sweeney/St. Louis |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Fenwick/Cook | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tony Cuneo/Duluth |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul Thiede/Crow Wing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tim Harkonen/Hibbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rusty Eichorn/Itasca | <input type="checkbox"/> Tim McBride/International Falls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kevin Troupe/Kanabec | <input type="checkbox"/> Jeff Damm/Virginia |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charles Lepper/Koochiching | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Camps/NE RAC |

Alternates: (☒ = present; ☐ = not present)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Belich/Carlton County | <input type="checkbox"/> Keith Nelson/St. Louis County |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dick Downham/Cass County | <input type="checkbox"/> Garry Krause/City of Duluth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doug Houge/Crow Wing County | <input type="checkbox"/> Rick Wolff/City of Hibbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catherine McLynn/Itasca County | <input type="checkbox"/> Brian McBride/City of Int. Falls |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rich Sve/Lake County | <input type="checkbox"/> Marcus Bruning/RAC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steve Ovick/Pine County | |

Guest Speakers: Sheriff Pat Medure (Itasca County); Tom Hannon (Governance Consultant); Bill Bernhjelm (RIC, DPS ARMER); and Mark Gieseke, Mn/DOT

CALL TO ORDER

Due to the absence of the NERRB Chair and Vice-Chair, a motion is made by Commissioner Thiede to ask Commissioner Fenwick to chair the meeting, which is seconded by Commissioner Bodie. Commissioner Fenwick agrees and calls the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance is said by all in attendance.

APPROVE MEETING AGENDA

There were two changes to the agenda: Bill Bernhjelm asks to be placed on the agenda under “8) Special reports,” and Pat Medure asks to have “a. Policy documents by RAC Policy Chair Pat Medure” removed from the agenda and put on next month’s agenda. Motion made by Commissioner Hallan to approve the agenda. Commissioner Lepper seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries unanimously.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Commissioner Thiede to accept the minutes of the February 12, 2009, meeting as submitted. Councilman Cuneo seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries unanimously.

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

- Scott Camps reports to the group that the State Grant Interop Committee had a teleconference yesterday to try to decide on the 2009 interop communications allocations. Another teleconference is scheduled for two weeks from now. They are still trying to pare down the \$21 million in requests for less than \$6 million in funding allocations. They are looking at what is a “need” and what is a “nice to have.” *At this point in the meeting Commissioners Fenwick and Thiede state their thankfulness for receiving RAC minutes. Councilman Cuneo states his thankfulness for all the “heavy-lifting” work the RAC is doing.*
- Governor’s PSAP consolidation work group. Sheriff Medure will be a member of this committee. The RAC recommends Commissioner Fenwick as the NERRB rep to sit on this board. Scott puts out a motion to support that recommendation from the RAC. Commissioner Fenwick states his appreciation regarding the RAC’s confidence in him and says he would be please to do whatever the NERRB would like to do. He also states that he is pleased to work for the group if given the opportunity. Commissioner Fenwick accepts Scott’s motion. Commissioner Bodie seconds the motion. There is further discussion. Upon a vote, the motion carries unanimously. Commissioner Fenwick encourages those present to please talk to him if there is anything he can take to the meetings. The first meeting is April 16, 2009; at 3:00 p.m., the location is to be determined.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Bill Bernhjelm states the following regarding grant information and other items:

- A grant opportunity with Rural Development for community assistance in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns up to a population of 20,000. He will forward the info to Nell for dissemination.
- Stimulus bill has \$250 million for the development of broadband service in underserved areas in the country (Broadband Technology Opportunity Program, aka: BTOP). More information is available at www.ntia.doc.gov and on the Rural Development website.
- One-time \$12 million for the conversion from the present 911 system to Next Gen over the next few years.
- \$5 million line item for grants to assist with local enhancements to the ARMER program for agencies that will come onto ARMER. It will be a 50% match program. It is not passed yet, but do keep your eye on it. Not for mobiles and portables.
- Frequency planning project with FE (Federal Engineering) is winding down. They have come down with some information on frequencies that may be available for an interop program statewide. The interoperability infrastructure project is just starting. Data project was awarded to FE, and they are just beginning their work on that project.
- A Certificate of Appreciation is presented to Scott Camps by Bill Bernhjelm, which comes from the Commissioner of Public Safety, Michael Campion, for Scott’s dedication to the mission of achieving seamless statewide interoperable communications and for displaying steadfast leadership in chairing the NERAC.

Commissioner Fenwick explains that there is money available to link the seven border counties together. He believes the plan includes the link being done by a microwave system. He adds that in Cook and, perhaps, Lake County a microwave system across the county is not very feasible, is expensive, and probably would not be well-liked by the community. Cook County stated that in the course of the discussions of finishing the process, they believed it may be wise to consider Cook County's desire for broadband build out, coupled with its need for redundant access of broadband into the county with the notion that fiber could probably be used to create a link across the tier. He states that once they are out of the hilly area, the microwave link becomes more feasible. Commissioner Fenwick states that they are trying their best to coordinate their desire for funds for build out to also enhance public safety needs.

Scott Camps reports that there were a couple northern border grants. In 2007 it was to fund the microwave link from each PSAP into the State ARMER backbone system. The total was \$1 million, and each county was allocated per PSAP. In 2008 there was a series of dedicated bandwidth on towers to link those PSAPs in the seven border counties together. There is still talk going on regarding this. Around \$1 million was allocated for this project--probably \$800,000 less than what was actually needed. The 2009 request is to fund the remaining portion to complete the hops necessary in all seven border counties.

Commissioner Fenwick suggests people go to Representative Oberstar's website to view a 60-page document on how to access the stimulus money funds. He reports that another good source is the National Governor's Conference or National Governor's Association website on how to access stimulus funding.

Sheriff Medure brought up a couple points for the group to consider. One was that Itasca County was going to run fiber to the tower sites in Itasca County and on the last day of the rough draft contract with Paul Bunyan and the Blandin Foundation, Paul Bunyan pulled out because of the fear of competition. The cost to run that fiber would have been about \$4.8 million. The other matter was that a company from Hutchinson requested putting broadband equipment on every tower site in Itasca County to have broadband service in the rural areas. RFPs are going out to see if there are any other companies that may be interested in doing this.

Commissioner Hallan adds that if there could be a marriage of these services so cost could be neutral, it would be beneficial--rather than doing one thing with one project and another thing with another project. He adds that there is plenty of bandwidth to go around and we need to be smart enough to know how to package it.

Commissioner Thiede states that there are so many programs and asks Bill Bernhjelm who is the keeper of all the pieces. Commissioner Hallan states that he has found no communication czar. Scott Camps adds that there are three data communication systems out now and the State wants to know how to coordinate the use of them and marry them, thereby creating redundancy. Bill Bernhjelm adds that the study FE is doing is a first step, as it shows what people have and will help them in making good business decisions. He states that it is an evolving project. Tom Hannon adds that the keeper of the pieces does not exist and that the vision is split up among many agencies, jurisdictions, and

disciplines. He states that a goal is to get all the radio boards together to share their needs and desires and develop a long-term plan that is consistent in the entire state. There will be a meeting on April 27, 2009, in St. Cloud of the chairs of the RACs, users committees, and owners and operators committees to sit down and develop a vision statement to bring back to the boards to see if that is something they would like to do, which would mean common goals, objectives, and policy. Commissioner Fenwick adds that if you do not have broadband and quality service into your areas, you will be behind the times once again. He states that fiber is the only way to do it in his area. He says the IT person is critical to converse with, as they know what will work.

OLD BUSINESS

The final draft of the bylaws, dated March 26, 2009, was presented for final approval. Commissioner Thiede makes a motion to accept the final draft. Commissioner Hallan seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Interoperability Communications Forum:** Everyone received information about this forum. It will be held April 30-May 1, 2009. One attendee must be a publicly-elected official serving on a county or city governing body. Commissioner Lepper asks if a motion is needed to authorize this activity. Councilman Harkonen makes a motion to authorize the activity. The motion is seconded by Commissioner Lepper. Upon a vote, the motion carries unanimously. Because the application is due tomorrow, after much discussion, Scott Camps agrees to go and Councilman Cuneo will go if it is possible. Later on in the meeting a motion is made by Commissioner Hallan to authorize sending Scott and Councilman Cuneo to this event. Commissioner Thiede seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries unanimously.
- **Zoning Issues:** Mark Gieseke, from Mn/DOT gives a talk on ARMER towers and local zoning issues. He states that towers need to be about 20 miles apart and they do try to use existing towers if cost is affordable. Highlights include the fact that they are not bound to local ordinances. He states that they do try to follow them, but they cannot follow them all; i.e., painting or camouflaging a 330-foot tower; heights not to exceed 180-200 feet (as ARMER towers are typically 330 feet tall in order to function optimally). Please see Mark's handout for details. Commissioner Thiede asks why some of the private towers cannot be utilized, as this is a public safety issue. Mark states that the charge to be on another's tower can go up and they found out that it was more cost-effective to build their own.
- **Website Update:** Itasca County MIS is looking into this matter. Sheriff Medure hopes to have information by next month.
- **The next meeting:** **DULUTH - PLACE TO BE DETERMINED**
Date: April 23, 2009 Time: 10:00 a.m.

NE MN RRB Meeting - Duluth
March 26, 2009

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Hallan will take the lead on trying to organize us in using ITV and having four sites for the May meeting. He will coordinate with the Recording Secretary.

ADJOURN

A motion is made by Councilman Harkonen to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Hallan seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries unanimously, and the meeting adjourns at 11:24 a.m.