

Northeast Minnesota Regional Radio Board Meeting
Grand Superior Lodge, Two Harbors
June 25, 2009; 11:00 a.m.

Board: (☒ = present; ☐ = not present)

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

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Brian Belich/Carlton County	<input type="checkbox"/> Keith Nelson/St. Louis County
<input type="checkbox"/> Dick Downham/Cass County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Strongitharm/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 type="checkbox"/> Rich Sve/Lake County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Van Kekerix/RAC
<input type="checkbox"/> Steve Ovick/Pine County	

Guest Speakers: Tom Justin (Central Region RIC); Tom Hannon (Consultant); and Tim Lee (Mn/DOT)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting is called to order at 11:30 a.m. by Chairman Jim Dowson, Cass County.

APPROVE MEETING AGENDA

A motion is made by Commissioner Theide to approve the agenda as submitted. Commissioner Sweeney seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Bodie makes a motion to accept last month's meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Damm seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

- Scott Camps reports that the RAC did not send a letter of support to CTC, as per the direction of the RRB members that were present at the May meeting, as it was felt it was hard to draw the line between one group and another, it could be a conflict, and it should be an individual county decision.

Commissioner Thiede expresses his disappointment in this decision and states that Commissioner Fenwick's issue is if you send a letter, you dilute the amount of

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available dollars. Commissioner Thiede states that he understands the withdrawal of the support, but he is not sure if he personally agrees with it and wishes to express his concern. Scott Camps explains that some of the opposition was whether or not the RAC should be representing themselves in sending a letter or if it is the RRB's job to do the recommending. Jim Dowson explains that when Bill Stroot appeared before the Cass County Board, they felt that CTC should get resolutions from the county boards where CTC functions, which would probably be adequate to support the application for a grant. Jim also brings up a point regarding an issue in Cook County where the power company is going to go after a grant application, but in order to do that, they have to be an internet provider. He states that the power company is going to negotiate with Boreal Internet Service to buy them out and asks if the RRB wants to get involved in something like that. Commissioner Sweeney adds that there is an effort underway with ARD where they are working on a mapping project where there is already broadband accessibility that isn't available to the general public and how there are many competitors competing for the stimulus dollars. She states that ARD is looking at how to get everyone connected. She also states that she believes, as well, that the counties themselves should be the ones making those supportive decisions and not the RRB, as each county knows its own needs.

- A budget for 2010 was submitted and e-mailed to all. Scott states that Pat Medure's recommendation is to adopt a clone budget from last year. The RAC is now sending it forward for review and approval.

John Strongitharm wants to make note that the information states that the City of Duluth has 2,000 portables, but 600 would be more accurate. He does not want anything changed, he just wants it to be known that he does not want an impression given that they will need 2,000 in the near future.

Commissioner Clifford asks about the clerical time and if there was a way to know how much more time will be needed. The Chair suggests that Nell keep track of time utilized when she gets the chance.

Commissioner Clifford makes a motion to approve the budget as presented. Commissioner Bodie seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

- Scott reports that the User Committee will have a convening meeting on August 12, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., at the Hibbing Fire Department. He encourages those present to let anyone in their jurisdiction know who may be interested in being on this committee. Commissioner Thiede asks if there is a limit to the size of the User Committee. Tom Hannon states that each member of the Joint Powers Board will appoint not more than five individuals to represent the user community from within their jurisdiction, and it needs to be multi-disciplinary. Commissioner Thiede asks about expense payments for these individuals. Scott states that part of the expense reimbursement will come from the local jurisdictions and that there is funding available to encourage participation. Tom

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Hannon states that the funding comes from the ICPG, which the RRB already has applied for. This grant is for reimbursement of mileage and meals.

- Scott states that there are three counties looking at migrating to the ARMER system and that they either have or will have assessments completed within the next week. The RAC voted to accept the assessments from Cass County, Crow Wing County, and Aitkin County and improve their intent to participate in the ARMER system, with the condition that the RAC would like to establish a subcommittee to start looking at interoperability planning as they migrate and how they will interop with the surrounding counties. Scott reports that a subcommittee was established including: Tim Thomas (Itasca), Steve Ovick (Pine), Bruce Hegrenes, Marcus Bruning, and Scott Camps (St. Louis), Scott Turner (Aitkin), Bill Bernhjelm (NERIC), Scott Heide (Crow Wing), and Tom Hannon (assisting consultant). A motion is made by John Strongitharm to accept the assessments for the three counties listed above and their intent to participate in the ARMER system. Commissioner Troupe seconds the motion. Discussion arises. Commissioner Thiede's concern is that the RRB would rule on Crow Wing's application and could put restrictions/additions on it. He states that his concern is that he does not have a technical basis for his concerns, but he raises it because he does not know what the issues are regarding what the subcommittee may want for the NE Region and how that may be a problem between the regional boards. Scott states that a big function of the subcommittee will be to look at those interoperability issues between the regions. He reiterates that the whole purpose of all the regional radio boards feeding into the State Radio Board is that we are developing local policies which will not be in contradiction to the SRB and their plans for statewide interoperability. Tom Hannon clarifies that the NERRB is the board that sets the policy and adopts procedures and that the subcommittee will only be making recommendations that go to the RAC, which makes recommendations to the NERRB. Commissioner Thiede wraps it up by stating "All things being equal, not all things are equal in the Northeast Region." Commissioner Clifford asks if it is necessary to approve the entities that do not go onto the ARMER system as well. Tom Hannon states that there will be assessments coming back for every entity within the region. The assessments before them today were done by GeoComm. Federal Engineering is doing the balance and the RRB will need to make choices based on the options in the assessment. After this discussion Scott reminded the group about the motion that was on the table by John Strongitharm and seconded by Commissioner Troupe regarding the assessments and the intent to participate. The motion carries.

UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

The Chair mentions that it seems there is a lack of participation on behalf of the tribes, the Coast Guard, the Border Patrol, etc., and asks if those folks should be at the table or if they will move in at some point in time. Scott states that their participation has always been encouraged from the RAC and that there are participants from the other agencies at most meetings. He also adds that the hospitals, fire agencies, etc., are all included. Nell stated that these folks get an e-mail of the meetings as well and know when the meetings

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are scheduled. Tom Hannon adds that the Northeast Region has done an excellent job in reaching out to the tribal entities and NGOs to give them opportunities to participate in the process. He states that the RAC has given them a good reception and values and considers their opinions.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Ron Whitehead approaches the Board with a short notice item. Ron explains that one of the investments, as part of the PSIC grant, is to place two radio-control stations for the ARMER system in every PSAP in the state and one in every EOC. St. Louis, Carlton, and Lake Counties are involved in the planning for the Hell's Angel convention in Carlton County. They requested expedition in implementing this so there would be a command-level chain between the PSAPs. Ron is asking for authorization in a limited participation plan to put 11 control stations in place: 3 in Carlton County (2 in the PSAP and 1 in their EOC); 5 in St. Louis County (2 in each of the two PSAP's and 1 in their EOC); and 2 in Lake County (1 in their PSAP and 1 in their EOC). Ron states that he will be coming back with the PSIC grant, which has to be done before September 20, 2010, and doing this across the state to make sure every PSAP has that level of connectivity into the ARMER system, thereby having the ability to patch local resources into a talkgroup if needed. Ron states that his request was brought to the RAC and approved for submittal to the NERRB.

A motion is made by Commissioner Bodie to approve the limited participation plan. Commissioner Sweeney seconds the motion.

Before the motion is officially passed, Commissioner Thiede asks if this support will lock us into something down the road and asks if we are going to end up with this anyway. Ron Whitehead explains that because there is no regional interop plan, this is a temporary situation. Ron states that the DPS will be asking the regional radio boards to do more planning, as it will be done in all the counties in the state. Commissioner Thiede states that the 11 radio control stations would eventually get there anyway and these can be reprogrammed. Ron agrees and states that Crow Wing will be offered three radio control stations as part of their implementation.

After the discussion, the motion on the table is voted on and carries.

WEBSITE UPDATE

Nell reports that Chris Worth is still working on the website and will send the format forward for approval when he has completed the task.

Nell also moves ahead in the agenda to talk about the ITV sites that were set up in advance, as per direction of the RRB at last month's ITV meeting. Discussion on whether or not other sites may be also suitable ensued. Commissioner Hallan explained that the sites chosen were the ones who volunteered to make sure things are done on their end and that there may be a geographic advantage to have it somewhere else. Commissioner Thiede states that this is a discussion that we should have in the future, as there may be places that would be optimal.

NEW BUSINESS

- Tom Justin filled in for Bill Bernhjelm, who was on vacation. Tom is the Central Minnesota RIC. He refers to the document about the plain language standard, which was sent electronically. Tom states that the SRB adopted plain language, which will mean 10 codes will not be utilized universally at large scale incidents, which are multi-discipline or multi-agency.
- Another item passed out and received electronically is a map Tom passed out, which shows the condition of the ARMER build out as it relates to tower sites.
- Regarding the agreement between the NEMNRRB and MnDOT, there was much discussion. Tom Hannon explains that the RRB is required to have an agreement with Mn/DOT for sharing services and facilities. There will be issues that need contracts, and the RRB will be a part of these agreements. This agreement allows the RRB to enter into three-party agreements to accomplish local improvements. Commissioner Thiede questioned the contract regarding the Little Davis Bacon Act and could not find the language in the contract at that time. Mr. Thiede questioned if we were tying ourselves (the RRB) into doing work on the ARMER system with the Little Davis Bacon Act. Tom Hannon stated that it did not affect the local agreements to get the work done, and it just specifies the rules that Mn/DOT could operate under. Commissioner Thiede states that he did not understand it that way but would accept it.

Commissioner Thiede has another question regarding Article IX, where it states “At the time of this agreement there is no apportionment to the Board---“ and continues--“In the event the Statewide Radio Board apportions, the Board shall work cooperatively to renegotiate this section of this agreement to provide for the collection of the apportioned operating costs.” Commissioner Thiede says that right now we do not have apportioned costs, but this leaves the ability to put them in there. His concern is that someone will say, “Here is your portion we would like you to pay.” Tom Hannon addresses the issue, stating it is a long and controversial issue. Ron Whitehead adds that the language simply says that they would come back and renegotiate it, but there is sound revenue until 2012. He states the money comes from a special revenue account and they have no reason to believe it will change, and with the funding of the system, the Legislature committed funds for operating costs.

A motion is made by Commissioner Hallan to approve the agreement and authorize the Chairman to sign it on behalf of the NE Region. Commissioner Sweeney seconds the motion.

Commissioner Clifford points out that on the first page of the agreement, it says that Mn/DOT will maintain the ARMER backbone and then it also states that the RRB will be maintaining and operate regional improvements. He gives an example of a generator that is needed at one of the tower sites and it goes from a

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5,000 watt generator to a 6,000 improved generator. He asks who will take care of that--the RRB or the State. Tom Hannon states that the enhancements and improvements which are addressed in the contract deal with capacity and coverage that are added for local units of government. He gives an example of Crow Wing County migrating to ARMER and finding out that they need an additional channel to all the sites within Crow Wing County to account for additional traffic, then Crow Wing County would be responsible for paying the maintenance cost on that one additional channel, but not on the base infrastructure. In the case of a generator that needs to be replaced, that would be considered backbone and is not considered a local enhancement. Tom states that enhancements are clearly defined in the State plan as those things added by a local unit of government to enhance capacity or coverage.

Commissioner Clifford has another question under Article XI, under 6.08 and asked for an explanation. Tom Hannon explains that it is the issue of providing software upgrades to the radios, chargers, etc. It states that agencies may elect to put on those pieces of additional coverage, and they are covered in the State contract. Tom states that this section means that the Board may enter into agreements with its members or regional users to act collectively on their behalf to deal with those issues on a regional basis. He states that it gives the RRB the ability to negotiate those agreements regionally rather than allowing each agency within the region to act on that.

Commissioner Thiede questions 7.04 of the agreement and points out that Mn/DOT is invoicing participating entities unless there is a regional contract and asks where the RRB enters that contract. Tom Hannon gives the example of the St. Cloud Metro Area: Stearns County and St. Cloud has a subsystem where there are local enhancements and additions that have maintenance costs. He states that those costs are bid as part of the state master contract and Mn/DOT bills those agencies for their enhancement contracts. The language in the agreement merely points out that Mn/DOT shall maintain that contract and will invoice unless there is a regional contract and the regions decide to do it. Commissioner Thiede states that that is where his question lies, as we have the Cities of Duluth, Hibbing, and Virginia, and if they have a subsystem, would those enhancements be billed directly to those cities. Tom Hannon states that they would be unless the NE Region decided that they were going to assume the overall responsibility for dealing with it. Tim Lee adds that the Metro Area actually has staff. He states that he has nine counties to deal with and a couple cities and that he just sends the bills to the MESB and they do the collecting. Commissioner Thiede points out that it is the language he is questioning because we have no regional contract established and unless we talk about that as a RRB and actually get one, there is none and so the cities would be billed by Mn/DOT. Scott Camps points out that Tim Lee is currently billing Itasca County, as a member of the NE Region and one who is on the 800 system. Scott states that as more users are added (Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin, Pine, etc.), it may be better for the Region to enter into a contract and Mn/DOT send the billing to the region.

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Tim states that this is a decision the Board would have to make, as staff is needed for this task. (Nell is shaking her head in a polite “no” fashion, as eyes turn her way.)

Chairman Dowson brings the group back to the motion on the table which was as follows: A motion is made by Commissioner Hallan to approve the agreement and authorize the Chairman to sign it on behalf of the NE Region. Commissioner Sweeney seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Commissioner Bodie asks about the timelines for the PSIC grant. Scott states that the letters of intent were needed by July 1, 2009. Tom Hannon stated that the funds needed to be encumbered by January 31 and actually expended about June 30, 2010. Ron Whitehead points out that the grant runs out September 2010. Nell reported receiving letters of intention from the City of Hibbing, Cass County, Cook County, Itasca County, Kanabec County, Koochiching County, Pine County, and the City of International Falls. The City of Duluth declined. Ron Whitehead points out that one of the statutory requirements of the PSIC grant is that the interests of the NGOs and tribal governments need consideration, in particular if the some of the money is not going to be used by the other entities.
- Nell asks if the third week in December is okay to meet by ITV and if she should cancel the November date, as the fourth Thursday would be Thanksgiving. The Board gives her permission to make this change.
- The next meeting of the NEMNRRB is scheduled for July 23, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., at the courthouse in Pine City.

ADJOURN

A motion is made by Scott Camps to adjourn the meeting. Scott Camps seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 12:37 p.m.