

**Northeast Minnesota Regional Radio Board Meeting  
Pine County Courthouse, Pine City  
July 23, 2009; 10:00 a.m.**

**Board:** (☒ = present; ☐ = not present)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <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 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 type="checkbox"/> Kevin Troupe/Kanabec             | <input type="checkbox"/> Jeff Damm/Virginia               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charles Lepper/Koochiching       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Camps/NE RAC    |

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

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

**Guest Speakers:** Bill Bernhjelm, DPS/RIC; Tom Hannon (Consultant); Darrell Knapper, Virginia Fire; and Rey Freeman, GeoComm Consultant

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting is called to order at 10:04 a.m. by Chairman Jim Dowson, Cass County. There isn't enough for a quorum, so the meeting begins with no action until someone can be reached by telephone.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance is said by all in attendance.

**APPROVE MEETING AGENDA**

The meeting agenda stands as accepted with no motion.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from June stand as accepted with no motion. \*After we have a quorum a motion is made by Commissioner Hallan to accept the June minutes as submitted. Commissioner Bodie seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

**REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES**

- \*Scott reports later when he joins the meeting by speakerphone from St. Louis County EOC. Scott reports about the State Training Advisory group represented by several members from the region (Mark Falk, Tim Thomas, Dewey Johnson), and they identified four issues to focus on: 1.) Interoperability; 2.) Dispatch Training; 3.) Radio Skills; 4.) Standard Operating Procedures. They will have another meeting on August 28, 2009, to work on these items.
- Another thing going on in the State Radio Board Interoperability Committee is that they are establishing a standard for Communications Unit Leader Training certification and re-certification.
- Public safety interop communications grant funding. Each member of the RRB received an equal allocation of that funding. Scott reports that three entities did not respond by July 2, 2009, in stating that they were going to use the funding and had match money available. The RAC recommended that Nell send out a reminder to the three counties (Aitkin, Lake, and the City of Virginia) to make sure and give them an opportunity. Nell updates the group and reports that Carla White took Aitkin County's back to Sheriff Turner; the sheriff of Lake County did not budget for it; and it was squelched in the City of Virginia, and that was confirmed by Darrell Knapper, who was present at the meeting. Sheriff Turner asks about the deadline. Scott Camps states that the funds need to be encumbered by September 1, 2009, and adds that he will recommend the deadline be extended to December 1, 2009, so the entities responding late can encumber the funding. Sheriff Turner asks when the deadline is for stating that you are going to use the funding. Tom Hannon states that the Board has the duty of making sure the funds are encumbered by January 31, 2010. If they are not, they will revert to the State for reallocation to other regions. Commissioner Thiede asks if the RAC has the power to extend the deadline. Tom Hannon states that the RAC has the ability to make a recommendation to the NERRB to extend the time and then adds that the NERRB is the only body that has the actual authority to make those policy and procedural decisions. Sheriff Turner states that Commissioner Thiede's point is well taken and asks if a motion is needed to follow the recommendation of the RAC. Steve Ovick states that the match money will increase with the withdrawal of the other agencies and reminds them of that for budgeting purposes. Sheriff Turner makes a motion to follow the recommendation of the RAC and extend the commitment time to August 19, 2009. Commissioner Bodie seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

**REQUEST FOR PSIC TRAINING FUNDS FROM CROW WING**

The NERAC recommended that a request from John Bowen be brought forward to the RRB for \$800.00 in PSIC funds which will be utilized for fleet map training for the Aitkin, Cass, and Crow Wing Counties' User Groups to conduct a multi-county training on fleet maps. Chairman Dowson ask what fleet map training is. Tom Hannon explains that a fleet map tells you what talk groups are going to be used by which agencies, at what time, and how they relate to one another. He continues: Aitkin, Cass, and Itasca Counties have adopted resolutions to migrate to ARMER; part of that resolution calls for a participation plan to meet State Radio standards for participation in that system. Tom

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states the fleet map is a critical component to an interoperable communications system. Tom commends the three counties for working together and claims it is a great step forward. On Target Training and Consulting is the firm they have been talking with to hold the training. A motion is made by Commissioner Thiede to approve the request by John Bowen/Crow Wing County. Commissioner McLynn seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

**ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PSIC GRANT MONEY**

Chairman Dowson states that the State sent a new form that vendors need to fill out and Board approval is needed. Chairman Dowson sends one of these forms back for John Bowen/Crow Wing County to have the vendor fill out for the above training.

**MCIT INSURANCE**

Annual cost estimate for insuring the Regional Radio Board is \$2,005. At this point Commissioner McLynn asks if we could get one of the Board members by telephone so we could complete our quorum. Nell reaches Commissioner Sweeney, who happens to be at the Pike Lake EOC with Scott Camps, and Brian Belich (this will make a quorum). They join by speakerphone. A motion is made by Commissioner Bodie to approve the quote. Commissioner Thiede (in person) and Commissioner Sweeney (by speakerphone) both second the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

**LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

There will be regional leadership training in St. Cloud on Monday, July 27, 2009. Social hour at 9:30 a.m. Training from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Mn/DOT offices on Highway 15, at the edge of St. Cloud. Tom Hannon states that this is their second meeting. He explains that it started with the chairs and vice-chairs of the RACS, User Committees and Owners and Operator Committees from the Greater Minnesota RRBs. The goal is to provide interregional communication and coordination of issues. There will be a wide variety of issues: grants, regional issues, regional plans, etc. The Statewide Radio Board would like to see the group expand to include the Metro Region. The meeting will be in St Cloud again this month but will be held at the Mn/DOT offices on Highway 15 and 13th Street North. At the last meeting there was consensus that each region should invite the Chair and Vice Chair of the Regional Radio Board. Please notify any additional persons within your region that should participate in this meeting. No one present or by speakerphone volunteers to go.

Commissioner Thiede asks if we are behind as other people are getting assessments and plans done and we have a difficult time to get people to our NERRB meetings and asks how to get more people involved.

Steve Ovick enters the room and announces that there are three more people who wish to join us by speaker phone. We then have enough for a quorum and can vote on issues previously mentioned. \*We now digress back to items previously mentioned.

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**MOU 2009 STATE HOMELAND SECURITY PROGRAM FUNDS**

Bill Bernhjelm explains that this MOU allows the DECN to manage funds for local enhancements, equipment, and participation planning via a statewide pool, as opposed to sending funds to various radio boards to be distributed. Bill states there is \$2.6 million to be used statewide. He states that because of the variety of progress in the different regions, it makes better sense to allow the DECN to handle it on a statewide basis. The RAC approved it to move forward to the RRB for their approval.

Commissioner Thiede asks if his understanding of the approval is correct in that it doesn't mean we will get the money. Bill Bernhjelm further explains that because different regions are at different positions to be able to use the money, it would make more sense to manage it as a statewide pool of \$2.6 million. He uses the example that Cass and Aitkin can apply for the money for participation planning. Bill explains that this money is actually one element of the local enhancement process and ARMER migration process. He states that \$5 million is coming through an appropriation from the State. Bill adds that money will be coming through Homeland Security as well.

A motion is made by Commissioner Hallan to authorize the Chairman to execute the MOU. The motion is seconded by Commissioner McLynn. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

**UPDATES FROM MEMBERS**

Sheriff Turner reports to the group that they all got a copy of the resolution that was passed by the Aitkin County Board to support their migration towards the ARMER system and a copy of the assessment by GeoComm. He states that they are moving forward in conjunction with Crow Wing and Cass Counties to expedite the State build out. He reminds the group that the priority list is somewhat determined by areas where build out occurs where counties go together.

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

Rey Freeman provides a power point presentation of the Phase I Assessment, which he presented at the RAC meeting in Grand Rapids the week earlier. Questions coming out of this presentation are as follows:

- Commissioner Thiede asks if this is a region-wide study and if GeoComm did all the studies. Rey states that this is Phase I for all counties in the region. Commissioner Thiede asks if GeoComm did a separate report that covers the region and if they make an assessment for the region regarding interoperability. Rey states that they do not make a lot of specific recommendations. He states that one issue they found was that very few neighboring counties' dispatch centers could control the radio system in the county they were backing up. He reports that this is an interop issue. Rey adds that as they move into the ARMER environment, it will become more challenging.
- Commissioner Hallan states that one of Pine County's closest neighbors is Wisconsin/Chisago County and asks if they were factored in when considering issues. Rey states that they did look at those issues.

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- Commissioner Thiede asks why there is such a disparity in the number of agencies (Pine County has 18, Crow Wing has 39, Cook has 12). Rey explains that it is typically a certain number of cities and towns within the county and those either having police, fire, or EMS agency. Chairman Dowson adds that it also includes reservations.
- Commissioner McLynn asks Rey to check the number for Itasca later on and reports that the number on the slide earlier said 29 agencies and the slide currently displayed says 38. Rey states he will check the numbers.
- Commissioner Thiede asks if the number of mobiles in Rey's report include State Patrol. Rey states that they do not and that it is the county/city radio equipment.

Rey adds that all the other county sections have been completed and are available on the GeoComm website. He states that he will get people set up so they can pull those reports down and to contact him if they would like to do so.

Commissioner Hallan asks if Pine County's report is done. Rey states that he needs to clarify. He explains that the report GeoComm did was the Phase I process and that it is not in the ARMER planning that Federal Engineering is doing. Sheriff Turner adds that it was included in the Aitkin report because GeoComm did that component for them.

Commissioner Theide asks if GeoComm addressed the issue of cooperation for full coverage between counties in the regional plan so they can minimize the number of towers. Rey states that in the case of Crow Wing County, yes. Rey states that is because GeoComm did a VHF and ARMER plan for Crow Wing, Aitkin, and Cass Counties. Rey adds that they looked at tower opportunities between those three counties.

**WEBSITE UPDATE**

Nell reports that Chris Worth had to put the website project on hold as other items came up but that he promised to have something by next month's meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- Bill Bernhjelm reports that the State will be implementing a SCIP (State Communications Interoperability Plan) update project. The goal is to reduce the plan from 300 pages to "needs specific," manageable level.
- Future grant funding will be tied to the SCIP, the National Plan, and the TIC (Tactical Interoperable Communications) planning. Grant focus will be to focus on issues in areas that the planning processes identified as gaps and filling them.
- ICPG award was just announced. Over \$700,000 is coming to Minnesota. The focus of this grant has been/continues to be on governance. Minnesota was granted a waiver and can use the money for training and equipment, which other states cannot do. This is due to the governance structure we have in place in Minnesota.
- Homeland Security grant cycle. The intention is to move the cycle up and identify needs early so that when the notice of application appears, we will be ready to submit a grant application and have needs and requests identified early.

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- At the RAC meeting, the RAC requested that we start to look at a timeline for the ARMER migration process and create a chart showing the steps in the planning process and how long it takes for each sequence. Bill states that he will be working on this project with Mn/DOT. He adds to look at the ECN newsletter to see the description of the ARMER migration process, though the timeline is not included in that news item.
- The issue of P25. It is a suite of standards that allows for cross-manufacturer compatibility of radios and radio systems. One of the standards is that these radios be capable of operating in analog mode. The issue coming forth is whether or not to require that equipment be P25 compliant which is purchased under any of the grant programs coming through. The ARMER system is P25 compliant, but some areas are considering P35 VHF digital systems.

Commissioner Hallan states that when he looked at the Aitkin County report and saw the numbers, he was bothered by the amount the county could be held to. He asks what happens if things don't change and they don't have a half-million dollars. Bill Bernhjelm states that it would be an unwise move to count on the FCC to push out the narrowband deadline. Bill asked if they could do a bond or put together grants. He states that he believes that a lot of this money is thrown out there because of the hurricanes and other disasters. Sheriff Turner said everyone is in the same boat. Chief Deputy Ovick adds that the Aitkin County study included all public safety, fire, ambulance, etc. Sheriff Turner agreed and said that what drove up the cost was that it was figured for every entity in the county. Bill adds that it would not surprise him to see 60-70 counties in Minnesota join the ARMER system.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

- August 27, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., ITV (Itasca County Courthouse, Pine County Courthouse, Pike Lake EOC, Lake County Service Center in Two Harbors)

**ADJOURN**

A motion is made by Commissioner Thiede to adjourn the meeting. Sheriff Turner seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 11:47 a.m.