

**Northeast Minnesota Regional Radio Board Meeting**  
**ITV Sites: Grand Rapids/Courthouse (Host), Lake County Service**  
**Center; Pine County Jail, St. Louis County EOC**  
**October 22, 2009; 10:00 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Fenwick/Cook   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tony Cuneo/Duluth                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul Thiede/Crow Wing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tim Harkonen/Hibbing  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catherine McLynn/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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Turner/Aitkin County  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Ovick/Pine County          |
| <input checked="" 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 Wolf/City of Hibbing                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pat Medure/Itasca County               | <input type="checkbox"/> Brian McBride/City of Int. Falls            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steve Schulz/Kanabec County            | <input type="checkbox"/> Steve Van Kekerix/RAC                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rich Sve/Lake County                   |                                                                      |

**Guest Speakers:** Bill Bernhjelm (RIC, DPS ARMER); Kerry Swenson, User Committee

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting is called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Jim Dowson, Cass County.

**APPROVE THE AGENDA**

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda. No motion was made to accept and there were no questions, additions, or corrections stated.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the August 27, 2009, meeting stood as approved with no additions or corrections. No motion was made.

**REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES**

- Scott Camps reports that the PSIC reallocation letters had gone out.
- The SHSP grant is a grant Itasca County received for radios for counties surrounding Itasca County; a limited participation plan for the ARMER system was presented to the RAC. Scott reports that it is better to have one letter instead of individual letters from each entity. Pat will put together a letter and a request for 50 unit identification numbers for St. Louis, Koochiching, Aitkin, Cass,

- Beltrami, and the City of Hibbing. If any of these entities migrate to ARMER, they will apply for full participation and those unit numbers would transfer over for them. These numbers will be given to the public safety agencies that will be doing business in Itasca County. A motion is made by Scott Turner to allow Pat Medure to submit a letter on behalf of the Region for the limited participation plan. Commissioner Sweeney seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.
- User Committee letter is presented for Board approval. The RAC approved it at yesterday's meeting and it pertains to asking Mn/DOT to expedite tower work in the counties migrating to the ARMER system (Aitkin, Cass, and Crow Wing). Kerry Swenson elaborates that the engineers are predicting a two-year out date for Cass County towers. Jim reads the letter Nell typed up to SRB Chairman Tim Leslie regarding this matter so it can be approved and e-mailed to Pat Medure today, as he is in the Twin Cities for the SRB meeting. A motion is made by Commissioner Sweeney to sign the letter and get it off to the State Radio Board. Councilman Harkonen seconds the motion. Discussion ensues. Commissioner Clifford has reservations as Lake County knows the Highway Patrol will use ARMER towers and wonders if approval will cause delaying the Highway Patrol using the Lake County towers because they would have to be built later. Scott Camps explains that this is just a letter asking for preference to counties actually signing up to be on ARMER to work on those tower sites and not drop plans for implementation in other counties. Commissioner Clifford asks if this can be guaranteed; Scott Camps states he could never guarantee that and adds that there is no guarantee that Mn/DOT will acknowledge the letter--it is just a recommendation. Commissioner Hallan states that he supports it but has some concerns as well. He asks if each entity will need a letter of support, as they are thinking of going to ARMER, too. Bill Bernhjelm adds that many more counties are going to ARMER than what was anticipated. Bill states that others may surely ask for priority as well but that they may get so many requests that it will go back to how it was before. Bill also explained that the reason for the two-year out date for towers is there are so many steps needed in the process (land acquisition, FAA clearance, environmental clearance, construction plans have to pass through the Department of Labor Industry, etc.). If county-owned land can be transferred to Mn/DOT, this can expedite things. Commissioner Clifford asks if all the towers have to be built before the ARMER system can be functioning. Bill Bernhjelm states, no; that the microwave links must be available, but the one in the north has been constructed and these towers should be coming on the air shortly. Bill states that if the towers in the three areas mentioned in the letters are not built, it would be a coverage issue. Upon a vote, the motion that was on the table was then passed. The secretary then leaves to e-mail the signed letter to Pat Medure for the SRB's approval.
  - Funding was received from an IECPG (Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program) to cover participant expenses. They are asking for grant applications. Application deadline is November 13, 2009, at 1600 hours. Up to \$700,000 is going to the State of Minnesota. Eighty percent would be passed through local jurisdictions with 20% available for state agencies. It is available to RRBs; HSEM regions; Urban Area Security Initiative Region; and

the DECN. Scott explains more details regarding the goals and requirements. The recommendation from the RAC is to give approval to make application for the funding in the amount of \$210,000. Commissioner Peg Sweeney makes a motion to give approval for application. Commissioner Marv Bodie seconds the motion. Discussion: Commissioner Sweeney asks if a local match was required. Scott reports that there is no match required but 3% is allocated for management and administrative purposes. Commissioner Thiede asks what the average cost is for the participation plan. Bill Bernhjelm states that it is around \$30,000. Scott adds that the average cost for Aitkin, Cass, and Crow Wing was approximately \$27,000 per participation plan, but they got it as a combined group for \$57,000. Upon a vote, the motion on the table passes.

### **SPECIAL REPORTS**

- Chairman Dowson asks Commissioner Fenwick if he would care to comment on Pat Doyle's article in the Sunday Tribune, as he was quoted in it. Commissioner Fenwick asked what he was quoted as saying. Chairman Dowson states that it was something about coverage in Cook County because of rocks and trees. Commissioner Fenwick states that they are always skeptical about anything that is central to the airwaves and every effort is being made in Cook County to make sure that any communication system in Cook County be not totally dependent on theirs. He states that the ability for them to do 800 MHz is confined to small areas. Chairman Dowson then explains that the article was rather negative regarding the ARMER system in Outstate Minnesota. Bill reports that much information did not get into the article and that trying to compare the Minnesota system with the Wisconsin system is comparing apples to oranges. Bill further explains that Minnesota is building a statewide system that fully attempts to integrate local users; Wisconsin is building a radio system for their state patrol with no ability for local counties or agencies in Wisconsin to join that system. He says radio communications and how best to provide it has been studied numerous times by numerous consultants during the development of the ARMER system. Commissioner Fenwick appreciates hearing about the article and states that Cook County by no means indicated that they aren't doing everything they can to be a part of the overall system and states that their difficulties are their own, and they intend to link up to the statewide system and intend to get fiber to every tower available in the County. Commissioner Fenwick desires to emphasize that if ever given the opportunity to speak in favor of the overall state system, they would be very much in favor of it. Chairman Dowson states that this RRB would be very supportive of Commissioner Fenwick's efforts. This prompts Commissioner Sweeney to ask if it would make sense for an editorial piece to be written to the Duluth Tribune regarding where we are going and what we have done, which would counter the negative article. Chairman Dowson states that the news article idea is a good idea and mentions to include the RAC, though he does not want to respond to Pat Doyle's article. After discussion, it is suggested that Scott Camps and Pat Medure would do this. Nell is asked to nominate Pat, and she is thrilled to be able to do so. Scott says he is willing to do it as well.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- A copy of the insurance policy from MCIT for the RRB is finished and will be mailed to all administrators.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Bill Bernhjelm reports that there are new state laws regarding electronic meetings for the Open Meeting Law. Commissioner Thiede mentions that if we are operating under the Open Meeting Law and that is in our bylaws, this would be an automatic and that we would not have to adopt any special policy. (*Secretary's notes: This is true under Section 3, Subd. 7 of the Joint Powers Agreement.*) Chairman Dowson states that we can include it into the policy manual. Telephone meetings require that each vote be conducted as a roll call.
- The Training Advisory Group is meeting Friday, October 23, 2009. They are developing curriculum for radio users and are moving along promptly. They are investigating the delivery of training over the Web.
- The SCIP is going to be revised; there will be a meeting on November 3, 4, 2009 in the Metro Area.
- The State Strategic Technology Reserve is being developed and that workgroup met yesterday.
- Federal Engineering is rolling out studies in the northern part of the state. Bill will be at a sessions in St. Louis County, Carlton County, and Cook County on Tuesday a.m. They are doing presentations for the users, if desired, and the county boards. Feel free to contact Bill with questions.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- Commissioner Clifford asks about the timetable for receiving a report from Federal Engineering. Bill Bernhjelm states they should have something within the next few weeks, in terms of a draft. Bill states he will check on the matter.
- Commissioner Fenwick brings up the PSIC reallocation and mentions that Cook County is still interested in proceeding with those funds and plans. The State PSAP group is working, and the commissioner has actually made a request to AMC to make a presentation on what he hopes to be a finished document by the time the AMC meets in Minneapolis for its annual conference. Commissioner Fenwick states that he believes the commissioner is requested to make a presentation to the Public Safety Housing Committee regarding the salvation of PSAPs and the booklet that is being put out by the State for that purpose.
- Commissioner Thiede states that he wants to revisit Commissioner Sweeney's public policy statement. He suggests the best method of public statement would be our own representatives to the RAC, User Committee, and RRB. He also mentions that there are a lot of people who do not read the Duluth Tribune or the Star Tribune. He adds that he feels any statement to Pat Doyle's story, as an example, would have the tone of a reaction and this would not be in the best interest to advance the system.
- Nell clarifies that regarding the PSIC reallocation funds, she received correspondence from Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, Itasca, Kanabec, Pine, and the City of Hibbing. She reminds the group that the letter was due the middle of September. She explains that the remaining dollars have already been divided. Commissioner

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Thiede states that Crow Wing sent a letter. Nell reiterates that she only heard from the seven entities. Commissioner Fenwick asks Nell to contact Mark Falk because that was not his understanding and that he believed it was the end of October. Nell will look back. Sheriff Turner mentions that Aitkin County held off purchasing anything until the exact amount was known. He would like the amount sent to him in short order. Nell reads the letter she sent out to the RRB that clearly mentioned the stipulations and request for a response ASAP so it could be presented at the October meeting for approval. Discussion ensues and there is confusion over the matter from Commissioner Thiede. Commissioner Hallan states that he remembered the discussion in August and how the time element was short for response. There is no vote on this issue. Nell will check things out.

- The November meeting has been cancelled due to Thanksgiving. The December meeting will be December 17, 2009, 10:00 a.m., ITV (Itasca County Courthouse, Pine County Courthouse, Pike Lake EOC, Lake County Service Center in Two Harbors).

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourns at 11:00 a.m. with no motion.