

Northeast Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 24, 2010
10:00 a.m., Pine County LEC

Proceedings:

Vice-Chair Tim Thomas calls the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Attendees who signed in or who were recognized are as follows:

1. Bill Bernhjelm, DPS/ARMER
2. Brian Belich, Carlton County Sheriff's Office
3. Brian Snyder, DSC Communications
4. Chris Lentz, Motorola
5. Dewayne Kvande, Roger's Two-Way Radio
6. Dewey Johnson, St. Louis County 911
7. Diane Thompson, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
8. Jeff Anderson, Kanabec County Sheriff's Office
9. Jim Wiinanen, Cook County Emergency Management
10. John Bowen, Crow Wing County Emergency Management
11. Judy Sivertson, Cook County Sheriff's Office
12. Karla White, Aitkin County Sheriff's Office
13. Kerry Swenson, Cass County Sheriff's Office
14. Mark Falk, Cook County Sheriff's Office
15. Mark Gieseke, Mn/DOT Electronic Communications
16. Mark Smith, DSC Communications
17. Mark Stansberry, North Memorial Ambulance
18. Monte Fronk, Mille Lacs Reservation/ DPS/EM
19. Nell Hoey, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
20. Pat Lee, Arrowhead EMS
21. Pat Medure, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
22. Renee Holmes-Holt, Pine County Sheriff's Office
23. Rey Freeman, GeoComm
24. Rick Juth, Minnesota State Patrol
25. Scott Camps, St. Louis County Sheriff's Office
26. Scott Heide, Crow Wing County
27. Steve Olson, Lake County Sheriff's Office
28. Steve Ovick, Pine County Sheriff's Office
29. Steve VanKekerix, Lake County Sheriff's Office
30. Tim Thomas, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
31. Tom Hannon, Governance Consultant
32. Tom Ralidak, Minnesota State Patrol
33. Tony Pogorels, Hibbing Fire Department

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions are made by those in attendance.

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II. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

MOTION made by Steve VanKekerix to accept last month's minutes as submitted. Dewey Johnson seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

III. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

A. Training (Mark Falk)

Mark Falk reports that the T.A.G. may be reinstated--more information to follow.

B. Policy (Pat Medure)

***(Pat is out of the room, and this matter is addressed later)**

Pat reports that there is nothing new on the policy side, but he states that we sent a letter out from the NE MN RRB to all the reps and senators in the NE Region regarding the sales tax exemption issue. Pat reports that he also went to the District 2 Sheriffs to seek permission to send a letter from them as well. Pat reports that Senator Bakk (who represents Lake, St. Louis, and Cook Counties) is Chair of the Tax Committee and refuses to have a committee hearing on the matter. Pat states that he called Sheriff Ross Litman to see if he would make contact with Mr. Bakk, which he did, and found out that Bakk stated there is no money and he was not going to give a hearing. Pat spoke with Senator Engebretson, who told him that Bakk had promised Engebretson a hearing this year and now is stating something different. Pat is hoping to meet with Senator Bakk tomorrow to see if we can at least get a hearing on the matter. Tim Thomas stated that public safety is also in support of this and it is on the emergency managers' agenda, chiefs of police, fire, EMS, and sheriffs' agendas as well. Pat encourages everyone to call their state reps and senators and tell them they are just looking for their fair share as well. He tells them to ask for a phone call back and that you don't care what time of night it is. He states that Bakk is a very powerful guy on the Tax Committee. Pat states the he told our reps that if they did not want to pass it (when Itasca County was going to ARMER), he would let it be known to every taxpayer that they were part of the problem of why it would cost Itasca County some \$360,000.00 extra.

C. Technical and Operations (Steve Ovick)

Steve reports that the six-county consortium met recently and selected GeoComm to do the PSAP Consolidation Study. Pine and Carlton Counties also selected GeoComm to do their participation plans.

D. SRB Operations and Technical (Bruce Hegrenes)

Bruce is absent for today's meeting, and no one else had anything to report.

E. SRB Interop Standing Committee (Scott Camps)

Scott reminds the group of the request submitted from the NE RRB for \$450,000 for the PSAP to ARMER link and another \$100,000 for end user ARMER equipment. A method of allocating funds was looked at and a partial allocation was derived based on the number of counties and population. Direct allocations

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were made to the DECN. They asked for \$3 million. The committee agreed on \$1.75 million for DECN to be used for participation plans, end user equipment, and infrastructure assistance to jurisdictions transitioning to ARMER. The other direct allocation was to the Metro Emergency Services Board for channel enhancements and equipment replacement. The rest was put into the general pot of partial allocation based on population and number of counties. The highest-ranked regional project would receive 29% of available funds; the sixth highest (last) would receive 5% of available funds. The grant workgroup recommended the following allocations by rank:

No. 1	Central MN RRB	Receives 29% of available funds
No. 2	NE MN RRB	Receives 24% of available funds
No. 3	SW MN RRB	Receives 19% of available funds
No. 4	South Central RRB	Receives 14% of available funds
No. 5	SE MN RRB	Receives 9% of available funds
No. 6	NW Region	Receives 5% of available funds

The workgroup proposal went to the Operations & Technical Committee, where they passed it. It was then presented to the Finance Committee, where they had some questions and withheld approval of the recommended allocation for the NW RRB, saying that they did not really address improvements to interoperability, but they were allowed to redefine their proposal of interoperability. That recommendation was approved by the Interoperability Committee and will be presented to the SRB on March 25, 2010. Scott says we should be getting money out of the 2010 grants.

There was also work done on the 2009 DECN allocations that some agencies have submitted. They did approve participation plan funds for St. Louis County, Pine County, Carlton County, and Crow Wing County's infrastructure request of \$175,000 and subscriber equipment for \$40,000. Mille Lacs Reservation received \$30,000 for their subscriber units as well. A number of other requests were deferred for further discussion, other action, or more information.

As part of the 2009 grants, funding was received and Kanabec County is the fiscal agent. It relates to funding up to three counties for the PSAP to ARMER link. Scott encourages those agencies to get in touch with Lowell Sedlacek to get it moving. Kanabec reports that they are moving forward to the ARMER system. Scott suggests to Kanabec that they use some of the 2009 money to complete the PSAP to ARMER link and two of the other counties could put in for that as well and the last three counties could use the 2010 grant, which would complete the link for the Region.

***Pat Medure then does the Policy report, as he is back in the room (see b. above).**

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F. Regional CASM (Karla White)

Karla states that Harry Algyer told her that most of our Region's information has been entered into the system and there has been some online training and proofing of submitted information.

G. NERAC Interoperability Committee (Scott Camps/Tim Thomas)

Nothing to report.

H. User Committee (Erik Jankila)

Erik is absent, and there is nothing to report from anyone else at this time.

I. Owners and Operators Committee (Dewey Johnson)

Dewey states that they had their second meeting and states that as of this time, the O&O will meet following the RAC meeting. He states that they are still trying to find their way and will start reviewing policies. Judy Sivertson, from Cook County, will be their secretary.

IV. Old Business

A. ARMER Update (Bill Bernhjelm)

- Working on an application for border interoperability involving counties along the northern Canadian border. A draft of the grant proposal has been distributed and a request was sent out to get board resolutions and a resolution from the RRB to support the grant application. Deadline request to have resolutions back to the State is April 8, 2010 (cushion date).
- Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program: Application period is coming up. Bill went to a workshop in Virginia. The grant guidance should be released any day with a brief open window of about 30 days. He states that nationally the grant funds for equipment have diminished some over the last three years and more is going for staffing, but there is plenty of money available. He states he has heard positive things about the grant writer people this Region has used. The power point should be posted online if you cannot make it in person. He states there is a strong preference for regional grants (two or more eligible agencies) and justification for the communication side is to improve interoperability. He states that when that is done, the umbrella is expanded, which could include law enforcement/infrastructure matters in the grant. He states that there has to be a host agency. Bill encourages people to go online and look at the 2009 guidance because the new one won't be too different and that way, they can start building a data package. Workshop sites were added, and they have been sent to all. There will be one on March 30, 2010, at the Brainerd F.D., at 6:30 p.m.; Pine City Technical College on April 5, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.; AARF Center in Duluth at 6:30 p.m. are some workshops coming. Ambulance services can be tagged on as well.

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Pat Medure adds that when we did our project, we had three Firefighter Assistance Grants and we looked at Itasca County as a region--16 fire departments came together. There were three different fiscal agents. The last grant had to do with laptops and the ambulance services were tagged onto that grant. He states that Lisa Wrath, out of Bemidji, did all three grants, knows the ins and outs, and knows one of the grant reviewers. Pat recommends Lisa and talked about how much information she put in the grants and states that she has it down to a science. Pat says the money paid to her for writing the grants was well spent.

Jeff Anderson states that the Mora Fire Chief (Kanabec County Chief Deputy) asked him if the RAC could advise the NE MN RRB to pass a resolution supporting the concept of fire departments seeking this funding. Bill Bernhjelm states that he did not think it would be allowed with the grant application because it is all entered via computer. Bill adds that if it would make the fire chiefs more comfortable to have the RAC/RRB issue a letter supporting the use of regional grants for communications interoperability in the NE Region, it would not hurt. Scott Camps adds that he thinks it would help as well. His comment is considered a first motion. Pat Medure seconds the motion and adds that Bill Bernhjelm and Nell can draft a letter for Chairman Dowson to sign. Scott adds that we may wish to include all public safety and private/public cities, counties and tribes, as our purpose is for interoperability. Upon discussion, the motion carries. Dewey encourages those present to get that application in and not to worry, as it is not that difficult. John Bowen adds that those present should remind their fire departments that they can still apply for the same grant separately. Dewey states that you can go regional, an equipment grant, and a vehicle grant--that they can actually put in three requests. Bill adds that you just cannot ask for the same items on multiple grants.

- Bill reports that we are up to 69 counties around the state that will be or are on ARMER. Bill reminds those present not to forget about local grant opportunities that are available.

MOTION made by Steve VanKekerix to support the Federal Border Interop Demonstration Grant and that the RAC move it forward to the RRB for support as well. Mark Falk seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

B. Website (Nell Hoey)

Nell reports that she has contacted Itasca County MIS, but they have not had time to put in all our information. She reports that we are still in the process, and she contacted Chris Worth's boss to see if we can get going on finishing the setup, which the RAC and RRB agreed to pay for at around \$40.00/hour, with further updates at around \$20.00 per hour. She will report what she learns from MIS at a future meeting.

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C. 2010 Grants (Scott Camps)

Scott did address this earlier. Pat adds that there was a bit of a firestorm with the Northwest Region when they were asked to address the interop issue better. He reports that he will be meeting with Commissioner Leslie and Scott Wiggins about the matter. Pat's main concern is that much misinformation is going around about it and encouraged those present to answer questions from senators, state reps, or any other person who is misinformed about the ARMER system. He states that those may hear from their reps regarding negativity of the ARMER system and if they do get questions, just reinforce that this is the right thing to do and the right business decision to make across the state. He adds that whether or not people elect to go to ARMER is not the issue--that is their business decision, and that in the end, we cannot be bashing one another regarding who is migrating and who is not. He states that in the end, it is all about interoperability and to focus on that and support one another. Kerry Swenson adds that one bit of misinformation going around in an e-mail is that there will be a new governor and that new governor is going to nix the whole 800 system. Scott Camps adds that when they looked at the grant applications, they looked at what would lend itself to interoperability and an upgrade of three repeaters for law enforcement was not seen as a great interoperability addition.

D. PSIC (Scott Camps/Pat Medure)

Scott points out that there are still counties that have not requested reimbursement from Itasca County. He urges them to get moving. Jeff Anderson adds that Kanabec's sheriff's thought is that if they don't need to spend it (as they are 18-24 months away from going live), he wants to keep the money there because technology may improve and the price of radios may go down. He adds that if it would hinder any grant for the Region, he is not opposed to spending it, either. Scott states that he does not think it will. Bill Bernhjelm will check on spending deadlines, as it is believed that it ends in 2011 and possibly 2012 with federal approval. Bill will send those dates to Nell so she can ship it out to everyone.

E. TIC Plan Update (Harry Algyer)

Harry is not present, but the report is forthcoming. Harry is receiving a lot of information and will submit the final report in the next two weeks.

F. Canadian Interop Meeting (Bill Bernhjelm)

Bill states they made contact with officials from Manitoba and Ontario and the result of those meetings is the grant application talked about today (Interop Demonstration Grant). Bill states that things are being done and the right people are being connected.

G. Gateway Training (Dewey Johnson)

Dewey passed out handouts he received at the training. He states that he learned a lot, and Bruce enjoyed the technical portion. Dewey submitted an expense form for \$124.66 (meals and lodging). This bill will be paid out of the PSIC training funds.

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MOTION by Monte Fronk to pay the expenses Dewey submitted. Steve Ovick seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

H. NERAC Conference (Pat Medure, Tom Hannon)

Tom states that Monte Fronk was a significant participant in the process for developing the program and there was great participation from all over the state to make sure it is representative of what everyone needs. Dates: April 28-30, 2010, in St. Cloud. Registration should open the first week of April on the web, by mail, by phone, and they will invoice. Make sure to check the box if you are sponsored by your RRB, to qualify for the reduced registration fee. Nell will send an announcement to everyone the day before the website opens for registration. Then a general notification will go out the next day to everyone else. Paid expenses agreed upon by the RAC and RRB were expense of up to \$300.00 each for up to three from each of the JPA agencies. Interest from others will then be gauged. Nell reports that the count is as follows: 3 from Carlton; 2 from Itasca; 3 from Lake; approximately 3 from Aitkin; 2 from St. Louis; 2 from Mille Lacs Reservation; 2 from Cook; 2 from Cass. Scott reminds the group that the reason for the count was to make sure we would have enough funding. Expense sheet with total amount spent (even if it's over \$300.00) and invoices need to be turned in to Nell. Pat states that no reimbursement will be over \$300.00, and if less was spent, less will be reimbursed. Dewey revamped the expense sheet so it will tally automatically and will send it to Nell. Nell will send it out to everyone. Pat states that each agency will pay the expenses of the individual going, a bill will be submitted to Nell, and the NEMNRRB will reimburse the agency. Pat states that we will need to know a final count going so the RRB can be informed. Scott asks everyone to let Nell know if they are going to register, so the RRB can be informed at the meeting in April. Tim reminds those interested in going to the conference that they each have to go to the website to register. Tom Hannon states that there are two hotel choices: Best Western (least expensive) and the Radisson.

V. New Business

A. Border Interoperability Demonstration Grant Resolution (Scott Camps)

Previously discussed.

B. Cook County Resolution/ARMER (Mark Falk)

Mark reports that the Cook County Board passed a resolution to migrate to ARMER and it was e-mailed to Scott Wiggins. He states that he also applied for participation plan funding and forwarded that to Tom Johnson. A motion is not needed to accept the resolution; this is just an FYI. (The motion to move the participation plan funding request to the RRB comes later in the meeting.)

C. Lake County Resolution/ARMER (Steve VanKekerix)

Steve states that the Lake County Board passed a resolution to migrate to ARMER, which was sent to Nell. Steve states that he sent it to Tom Johnson, and Bill Bernhjelm stated that Scott Wiggins got a copy of it as well.

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* **Additions to Agenda - Port Security Grant and Participation Plan Funding (Steve VanKekerix)**

FYI: Steve reports that he put in for a Port Security Grant for user equipment which covers the ports of Two Harbors and Silver Bay (mobiles and portables).

MOTION made by Pat Medure to recommend to the RRB that Lake County's request for application for participation plan funding be approved. Scott Camps seconds the motion. Upon a vote the motion carries.

MOTION made by Kerry Swenson to recommend to the RRB that Cook County's request for application for participation plan funding be approved. Dewey Johnson seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

ADDED THOUGHT: Scott Camps adds that at the very least, it would be nice for the RAC and RRB to be aware of other grants out there that are applied for-- not that approval is needed yet, but it would be a good idea to keep everyone on the right path and consistent in projects.

Tim Thomas asks if we should have an agenda item added, which could be entitled something like "jurisdictional updates." Others comment on how this is a good idea and the feeling of the group is that it will be added monthly (perhaps under Old Business).

UPDATE: Monte Fonk states that they brought a resolution down to the Indian Affairs Council last month to get their support on creating a tribal talkgroup. It was approved. Monte will be going down to the OTC to present it to them next month.

VI. Future Meetings

- April 21, 2010, Itasca County will host the meeting via video-conferencing. Nell will e-mail everyone when we figure out what we have to do. For those driving to Grand Rapids, the meeting will be in the Itasca County Sheriff's Office training room (downstairs).
- May 19, 2010, Brainerd will host, and they will try to do a hookup for Cook County.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourns at 11:35 a.m. with no motion.