

Northeast Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 21, 2010
10:00 a.m., Itasca County Sheriff's Office Training Room - ITV

Proceedings:

Vice-Chair Tim Thomas calls the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. This was our first ITV meeting. Roll call attendees are as follows:

1. Bill Bernhjelm, DPS/ARMER
2. Brian Belich, Carlton County Sheriff's Office
3. Brian Snyder, DSC Communications
4. Brian Youso, Koochiching County Sheriff's Office
5. Bruce Hegrenes, St. Louis County Communications
6. Chris Lentz, Motorola
7. Dana Putzke, Duluth Police Department
8. Diane Thompson, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
9. Ernie Robinson, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe/Fire
10. Jeff Anderson, Kanabec County Sheriff's Office
11. Jim Wiinanen, Cook County Emergency Management
12. John Bowen, Crow Wing County Emergency Management
13. John Keenan, Consultant
14. John Strongitharm, Duluth Fire Department
15. Karla White, Aitkin County Sheriff's Office
16. Ken Johnson, Crow Wing County Sheriff's Office
17. Kerry Swenson, Cass County Sheriff's Office
18. Mark Falk, Cook County Sheriff's Office
19. Mark Smith, DSC Communications
20. Mark Stansberry, North Memorial Ambulance
21. Mike Fink, Motorola
22. Nell Hoey, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
23. Pat Lee, Arrowhead EMS
24. Pat Medure, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
25. Randy Fisher, Cass County Sheriff's Office
26. Renee Holmes-Holt, Pine County Sheriff's Office
27. Roy Holmes, Minnesota HSEM
28. Scott Camps, St. Louis County Sheriff's Office
29. Scott Heide, Crow Wing County
30. Steve Olson, Lake County Sheriff's Office
31. Steve Ovick, Pine County Sheriff's Office
32. Steve VanKekerix, Lake County Sheriff's Office
33. Tim Thomas, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
34. Tom Ralidak, Minnesota State Patrol

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions are made by those in attendance.

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II. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

MOTION made by Kerry Swenson to accept last month's minutes as submitted. Scott Camps seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

III. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

A. Training (Mark Falk)

Nothing to report at this time.

B. Policy (Pat Medure)

Pat reports that the sales tax exemption bill made it on the Senate side and still remains to be seen on the House side, and some retro work is being discussed from 2006 and 2010. Pat states that Senator Bakk told him that he would do what he could do to get the sales tax exemption bills passed. Pat reports that there may be a compromise: all the retro may go to the wayside, and this would affect three counties (Meeker, Kandiyohi, and Itasca). Pat states that he is okay with that and believes it is more important to get the sales tax exemption passed for those not on the ARMER equipment yet than the other three counties getting retro dollars.

C. Technical and Operations (Steve Ovick)

Steve reports that at the regional emergency management teleconference last week, there was discussion of the PSAP/ARMER link grants and whether or not the RAC needed to approve anything. Steve adds that the original grant came about long before the RAC was developed, so there should not be issues. Steve states that it is obvious that Mn/DOT will approve it and then Kanabec County will pay the bill. Scott Camps adds that this sounds right and that we should make sure the RAC and RRB are aware of who gets the funds out of the 2009 emergency management grant and that approvals would be needed to make the link. Steve asks if there is a desire for Cass, Crow Wing, and Aitkin to get the first round of grants to get their link up and running, as they will be the next build outs, and the final three counties being Pine, Kanabec, and another would go for the second round. Scott Camps states that because Kanabec is the grant holder for 2009, they could fund their link out of that--to make it easier. He adds that out of Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, Carlton, and Pine, the next two that are ready can tap into the 2009 money, and the grant contract for 2010 should be coming soon.

D. SRB Operations and Technical (Bruce Hegrenes)

Bruce states that the OTC met Tuesday at 1:00 p.m., via video-conference, and they had a busy schedule. He states that there were 17 participation plans up for approval; 2/3 of the plans were for final approval; 1/3 of the plans were waiting the final plan from the consultants. He adds that the Itasca County ID request was passed and went on to the SRB. Bruce states that a couple standards were passed and there are other participation plans coming up for the next meeting.

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E. SRB Interop Standing Committee (Scott Camps)

Scott states that they meet every other month, unless something big comes up, so they did not meet in April. The next meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2010.

F. Regional CASM (Karla White)

Karla states that the training schedule for April was cancelled and moved to May.

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 was absent, but Steve Olson passed on information from Dewey, who wants to remind the group that there is a Regional Leadership Group meeting in St. Cloud on May 10, 2010, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the Mn/DOT offices on Highway 15.

IV. Old Business

A. ARMER Update (Bill Bernhjelm)

- Bill reminds the group of the interoperability conference going on next week and to please register if you have not done so. He states you can register via a link off the SRB website: www.srb.state.mn.us.
- Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program: The grant application period should be coming any day with a brief open window of about 30 days. Bill states that the qualifications for the grant are fairly broad and that when you write it for interoperability, you are able to pull in law enforcement, NGO's, etc. He encourages those present to look closely at the grant guidance.
- Bill states that there was a RIC meeting on Monday and many issues were discussed. He adds that there will be a disaster drill in St. Cloud on May 20, 2010, and it is open for observation. Tom Justin is the contact if anyone is interested in going to it.
- An issue faced in Bill's office includes not enough people to keep all the grants straight, so they are in the process, at ECN, of hiring a grant specialist and a technical specialist.
- Bill tells the group to contact him or Tom Johnson and let them know if anyone is going to have an exercise because FEMA Region 5 is trying to keep track of them so they can make it available to folks in other states, perhaps, should they want to observe the exercise.
- Regarding Next-Gen, they are proceeding along with Phase 1, which should be done in June, and then Phase 2 will commence. Full implementation is expected by October of this year. Phase 3 will see abilities to take text messages, etc. Decision-making regarding Next-Gen

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is being done by Scott Wiggins and Jackie Mines, and they have an advisory group. The idea has been proposed that perhaps this should be a function of the SRB and that decisions could be made regarding Next-Gen by an advisory committee under the SRB. Bill states that this has created controversy, and he will keep the group informed.

- Bill states that there are currently eight different groups of counties in the state that have applied for PSAP consolidation study grants. One of the studies can be viewed at www.dps.state.mn.us. Bill states that you need to hit the ECN link and you can get to the GeoComm study, which comes from the Southwest.
- Bill reports that a number of people in the ECN office have been working on training issues and hopes to learn more at the interop conference.
- Regarding the future of broadband data in public safety, the FCC has come up with a recommendation and submitted a bill to Congress that would take the D-block of 700 MHz spectrum that has been reserved for public safety and make it available for sale by auction to cellular providers. Part of the proceeds of the sale would be made available to build out a national broadband network. Public safety groups (IACP, Fire Chiefs, National Sheriff's NENA, APCO etc) and national organizations representing government leadership (NACO, National League of Cities etc), and the major cellular providers and radio manufacturers are opposing this and feel that the spectrum should be reserved for public safety for their data needs. There is currently not much interest in Congress for the FCC plan but it is something to be watched. More info is available on the FCC and IACP websites. *(Post meeting clarification was used for this segment in the minutes.)*

B. Website (Nell Hoey)

Nell reports that she received more information from Scott Camps regarding the Owners and Operators Committee, which she will send to MIS. She reports that the User Committee and O&O Committee can have their minutes and agendas posted on the website as well.

C. TIC Plan Update (John Keenan)

Tim Thomas reminds everyone that John Keenan was contracted by the Arrowhead Region Emergency Management Association to be the planning project coordinator. John joined by video-conferencing and states that they are waiting for a contract extension from Kanabec County for Shetak, and rather than wait on the extension, they are still moving forward.

D. State Interoperability Conference (Tim Thomas)

Vice-Chair Tim Thomas recaps that the conference is next week, it starts at noon on Wednesday, the 28th, and concludes around noon on Friday, April 30, 2010, and there is still time to register.

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E. Other Old Business - Addition to Agenda (Scott Camps)

Scott states that the emergency managers of the NE Region purchased some Motorola dual-band radios using 2007 grant funding. Bruce Hegrenes states that there were about 65 radios and it was not decided as to how to distribute them. He states that a list of frequencies to be programmed into the radios is needed and that a group needs to be assigned (possibly the User Committee) to look at fleet maps for these radios. Bill Bernhjelm adds that the regional talkgroups were created when Itasca County came on the system, but they may have to be renamed. Scott states that he believes the recommendation is to allow the Metro to use the one they established and to recommend that the others use the Central Minnesota naming standard. Pat Medure adds that a few months ago, the RAC passed that we would standardize the naming of our NE Region talkgroups to follow the St. Cloud area. He states that anyone wanting the VHF frequencies needs to get them sent to whoever should have them and the second point he makes is that our Region did vote to name our regional talkgroups by following St. Cloud, which would be on the 800 side. Pat volunteers Tim Thomas' help with this matter. Tim adds that it should go to the User Committee and to get information from the Central Region, which would help know how it was set up and the thought process behind it. Steve VanKekerix suggests that once it goes through the User Committee, it should go to the Owners and Operators Committee and on to the RAC, with Tim's assistance. Bruce Hegrenes offers his assistance with the fleet maps and the rest. Pat Medure suggests that maybe some people from the User Committee could be pulled together at the upcoming interop conference to start discussions. Bill Bernhjelm suggests a draft be put together regarding what currently exists in Itasca and then do a spreadsheet that converts it over to the new names; this, in turn, would be pushed forward. Bill states that he will get the documents being put together at the work group, to make sure they match up. He states that that document can get passed through for final approvals and then the programming changes that need to be made will be made in the master system. Bill adds that the VTAC channels need to get programmed and on the 800 side, the ITAC channels need to be programmed in as well. Training issues are also discussed. Bruce Hegrenes adds that each county will need an agreement with Mn/DOT. Tim Thomas asks Bruce Hegrenes for a checklist so we can present a complete package at one time instead of in pieces. Steve Ovick requests that we have a deadline for getting frequencies to Bruce. Pat Medure suggests that a standardized form be utilized for filling in frequencies and tones and send it to Nell, so she can send them out with a request letter and a deadline. Bruce will work on a form and get it to Nell. Pat asks Bruce for a sample users agreement that the State has so it can go to our User Committee. Bruce states that he has asked for that form and Pat Medure states he asked many months ago for it. Pat suggests that some pressure be put on Tim Lee to come up with one, as it is their agreement that they want locals to sign. Bruce will contact Tim Lee. Bill Bernhjelm states that there is a template out there for the Mn/DOT contract and that he will do some checking and send it on to Bruce if he finds it.

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V. New Business

A. Cass County's Desire to Seek RRB Approval to Seek Grant Funding Through DECN (Kerry Swenson)

(This was incorrectly billed on the agenda as participation plan funding.)

Kerry asks for approval from the RAC, which will move to the RRB, for DECN funding for \$175,000 for infrastructure and \$40,000 for end user equipment. Scott Camps asks Kerry if he will be applying for part of the \$5 million--up to \$1 million in funding for infrastructure through DECN. Kerry states that he is in the process of finishing that request up now and hopes to bring that up at the next RAC meeting. Scott asks Kerry if he would like to have the RAC vote on it now and then finalize it for the RAC/RRB meeting next time. Kerry agrees.

MOTION made by Pat Medure to accept Cass County's request to seek grant funding through DECN for \$175,000 for infrastructure, \$40,000 for end user equipment, and up to \$1 million in infrastructure through DECN. Steve VanKekerix seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

VI. Future Meeting

May 19, 2010, Crow Wing County will host the meeting via video-conferencing.

VII. Adjourn

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