

NORTHEAST MINNESOTA MEETING
Fond du Lac Community College
February 2, 2011
Owners & Operators Committee and Users Committee

Users Committee President Erik Jankila asked for a roll call at 10:20

Present were:

Erik: Minutes from meeting held 1/5/2011 were sent out. BJ Kohlstedt made a motion to accept the minutes. Pat Lee seconded. Any discussion of those minutes? No discussion. Motion carried.

Bill Bernhjelm -

- NECP (National Emergency Communications Plan) update – two meetings were held. Thanks to BJ Kohlstedt we're in really good shape in the NE due to the communications exercise held last fall. Will be able to use that for the exercise portion of the requirements. Every county level agency is required to complete a capabilities assessment. New information is available on that, new resources, and Bill will be sending that out.

- STRs – work is being done on the standards for STR. Need to complete a regional participation plan for that, a limited participation plan to cover those radios. Those radios also include a proposed contract with MNDOT and Bill has templates for that he will send out. MNDOT won't release the radio IDs unless there's a participation plan on file that needs to be submitted by the region and will include the contact information for the regional cache. In the standard, there are three zones in the radio that are required with additional space in the radios for other talk groups. Bill is getting pressure to get this moving quickly.

- Nextel Direct Connect – how many agencies use this? Nobody. Coverage is limited. This is a cell phone that works like a radio. Nextel is terminating this in 2013.

- Last week's Radio Board meeting reinforced the need for good committee input and technical support at this level. Items moving through the Users and Owners & Operators Committees need to have good documentation and be given to the Regional Radio Board members, perhaps in a packet, before their meeting when they are expected to say yes or no to agenda items. Need to build trust between staff and governing body.

Interoperability Conference was last week. Dewey Johnson commented that he learned more out of the educational items last year when everything was new so maybe the level of the educational items needs to be kicked up some. He also felt good networking was done at the conference. Bill commented that we're being expected to put together standards on something that we're not that familiar with at the same time as we're being educated to use the system.

Steve Olson asked Bill if there was any difference in the strategic reserve policy between regions. Bill thought the differences would come up with how radios are programmed and how to manage the delivery/loaning of them. Other differences will come up when the actual towers are purchased and distributed. Erik Jankila noted that Standard 3.330 Strategic Reserve spells out what the state requires the regions to accomplish.

Erik Jankila heard compliments at the conference for the NE region and our good attendance.

Dewey Johnson – he sent out end user train the trainer class schedules. Three classes are being given by Tom Justen. The class in Hermantown is full, the one in Two Harbors will be two days, February 17 & 18, and one at Eveleth Fire Department on February 24, 25 & 26. We're going to look at holding an end user train the trainer and dispatch training quarterly. The grant will cover these initial trainings and also lodging if needed. For registration or concerns, send an email to Dewey.

John Keenan requested a brief synopsis of the last Regional Radio Board meeting for those who were not in attendance. Erik attended the RRB meeting and again mentioned that when we have something to go to the RRB, we need to put together an overview, a brief explanation of what we're looking at. Everything we've adopted through here has made it through the RRB, seven policies and procedures that directly affect our region. They will be going to Nell to get on the website.

Erik - the policy and procedure concerning the radio cache and towers was brought up at the last RAC meeting and it was agreed that St Louis County would take the lead on storing the cache of radios and tower in the Hibbing area since that would be pretty central to the northeast region. The RRB was notified that this policy concerning the radio cache and towers would be coming soon and would require some funding.

Also at the RRB meeting there was extensive discussion about the upcoming training Dewey has been organizing, to spend the \$16,000 grant funds before the end of March, and how many trainers have to be trained.

Erik - the policies and procedures brought before the RAC in Grand Rapids, the original ones and the two new ones, went through without any issues. The RAC is working on some additional grant funding.

John Keenan - information from the RRB and RAC meetings needs to come back to the Owners & Operators and the Users Committees. Erik Jankila noted that as the website is developed, updates will be posted on there. You'll be able to click on anything to find out the status of standards. The expenditure for this website passed at both the RAC and the RRB. Right now it is a difficult link to find.

Erik - has the official list of User Committee members that was presented to the Regional Radio Board. As a User Committee representative, please stop by after the official

meeting to make sure you're on that list. If you are not on that list and want to be, you need to talk to your local officials.

Dewey - we have letters from every county for the Owners & Operators Committee.

Erik – Dewey already presented on training. Any other questions on regional training?

John Keenan – Linda (?) with Alexandria Tech presented at the Interoperability Conference, an Interoperability 101 course. She is preparing that and all the agencies need to know it is available online under Linda's name. They need to apply for a password to gain access to the three programs that are available on there now. They are also available to the region on a CD. Both John and Dewey have the email address for Alexandria Tech and Linda.

Dewey - St Louis County is looking at hosting a COML (Communications Unit Leader) training this spring. He is still working on details for that. A prerequisite for the class is having up to the ICS300 class. Crow Wing County is offering an ICS300 class coming up in February 23 & 24. There is a state standard for the COMUL listing the prerequisites. COMUL is modeled off the federal incident management system largely developed through wildland firefighting used by the USFS and DNR. The Feds are also developing a COMT (Communications Technician) class.

John Keenan - why the STR doesn't go to the cache at MIFC. Bill feels the state wanted it more widely distributed and this is a way to keep the Regional Radio Board more plugged into the process. The STR is mandated as part of the PSIC grant and Bill thinks they want it more widely available for things MIFC wouldn't be contacted for such as county fairs and other times extra radios are needed.

Steve Olson - Mark Falk needs to be kept in the loop on any training information since he is the chair of the training committee for the RAC.

Erik - questions on the system administrator/system manager thought process and feels we need to move forward on this issue. John Keenan reported there was a standards panel at the Interop Conference. We need to educate ourselves on these standards to be able to deal with the issues as they come up. We are governed by these standards and make changes to them as needed for the region, adding to them but not taking away. Standards 1.1.0, 1.2.0 and 1.3.0 address the system administrator. Participation plans will list a system administrator. The state is looking for a 24/365 number to call for an administrator who can make day-to-day decisions. This person/number could even be Motorola or anyone who works on the system. John suggested this person/number not be written into the standard or listed on the web site.

Bill - the state standards were written broadly, basically adapted from metro standards where each county has their own tech person. Out state counties probably won't have their own tech person on staff and won't have their own system management terminal either which would require the full scale Motorola training just to operate. Whether it's a

cooperative arrangement between governments or contracting for service with a private shop, ultimately the responsibility for arranging a tech person is going to be with someone from the agency who signs the participation plan and enters into the contract with MNDOT. Whoever is hired as a tech will have to pass a background check as they will be working in secured areas unsupervised.

Tim Thomas asked Bill if the online course for system administrator is directed towards the technical person who will touch the radios or the system administrator who will be the point of contact. Bill said the course is for the technical person who will have access to the system management terminal and have the authority to make changes to the radio, such as talk group changes, kill radios in the system, enable radios in the system, etc.

Bill explained that the system management terminal is essentially a laptop that has the ability to be tied directly into the system, through a microwave connection that comes into the PSAP or can physically be taken directly to a MNDOT tower for access.

John Keenen suggested going to the Statewide Radio Board website and start perusing the standards to get some sense of what governs these groups, try to get ahead of the curve. Check the master list of standards as that will note which standards are being worked on or have been changed, etc.

Erik thanked John Keenen for the direction he's given this group and the assistance in getting things moving.

NEW BUSINESS

Erik - as a group we've already had committees working on standards that were set as a priority for our region. We had a meeting in Silver Bay with John Keenan where Dewey, Leif, Steve, Judy and myself, Jim wasn't able to make it, got together in a little work group to identify priorities. We need to be able to delegate work to committees like was done with the training standards and are looking for some people who are willing to tackle a policy and then bring back to present to the group.

Dewey – One of the things we discussed with John is that we already have to abide by the state standards, whether we adopt them or not. It really is an educational component so what I'd like to do is assign each county three policies to go through and bring back to this group with an explanation. If you think some need change, we'll change them but probably 90 % of these won't have any changes. I broke down the list for section one, giving each county three policies and my proposal is that six standards are brought back to the group each meeting. We only have a couple counties that aren't real active, and I'm reaching out to one of them today and will reach out to the other one soon. Dewey will email the list of policies and county assigned to each. Aitkin County and Cass County have been assigned the first six standards.

John Keenan – when reading the standards, the purpose at the beginning and the management at the end are very important.

Erik – Standard 3.330 is the establishment of the technology reserve. This spells out what the state requirements are. Three specified talk groups have to be programmed into the radios. This standard addresses tower care and management and requires documented training of people who use and/or deploy the tower. The SRB has some additional requirements and the RRB will have to make some fiscal decisions to meet additional expenditures to meet these requirements.

Dewey – St Louis County has offered to host the cache and the tower unless another county has a burning desire to do so. We have full time radio technicians. Dewey also asked Bill if the batteries that will need to be purchased every couple years were state funded. Bill said any future reprogramming, battery purchases, accessories, any of that stuff will be on the RRB.

Erik – In reading 3.331 on the radio cache and tower, if a county is using the tower and the tower is damaged, the county who has the care of the tower at the time of the damage is responsible for repairs.

Dewey – Standard also says deployment is to be authorized by the RRB.

Bill – That's something to be addressed in the Standard.

BJ – It does say under STR 3.330 that these resources are owned, maintained and operated by various local governments.

Bill – For purposes of that, I think what they mean is the RRB because it is a Joint Powers Agency, and is the local unit of government.

Erik – How can we get that clarified?

Bill – Put it in your Standard.

Erik – So that would make the RRB ultimately the fiscal agent.

Dewey – STR 3.33.2 says the transportable tower shall be exercised every six months. Is that an expectation of St Louis County, that once every six months we have to drag it to an exercise.

Bill – It could be a relatively small exercise, set it up, test the equipment.

Steve – Who will be authorized to transport that tower? Whose responsibility is it to transport the trailer. And can the tower even go without a COMT.

Dewey – Our plan is to have the four radio techs we have now trained for this.

John Keenan – Background information that needs to go to the RAC and RRB is estimated cost, how it will be deployed, who deploys it, a tow vehicle, insurance, and a process for payment back and forth between sheriff's offices.

Erik – We have two distinct standards here and we're waiting on Bruce Hegrenes with St Louis County for what he thinks will be the operational cost/maintenance for St Louis County to house this equipment, i.e. techs, batteries, things like that. We have one that deals with the 30 cache radios and one that deals with the tower. We're looking for some volunteers to tackle each one of these. The following volunteered:

STR for the radio cache – Doug Rotta
Steve Olson
Dewey Johnson

STR for tower deployment - Neil Porter
Mark Stansberry
Erik Jankila

John Keenan – Could grant funds be used for future costs?

Bill – Typical grants don't provide funds after deployment.

Steve – The next RAC meeting is before our next meeting. Do you want these two standards to go to the RAC and then come back to this group, so before it's presented to this group it will be presented to the RAC?

Erik – When Dewey comes back with figures, the ultimate decision at the RAC level will be is St Louis County going to be the confirmed host. Will that be a formality?

Brian – How these caches and resources are deployed should be consistent across the state of Minnesota. Should there be statewide deployment through the duty officer?

Bill – With the PSIC grant, there's only so much that can stay in state hands. The Strategic Technology Reserve was one of those things. Despite the fact it would be distributed state wide, they didn't necessarily want the state to own it. The state was willing to use the grant money to buy it, but then distribute to the Regional Radio Boards for the operation and maintenance. I'm assuming these will be listed with the duty officer as an asset that's deployable but it won't necessarily be a state asset. Another thing to be addressed is it may be deployed outside the region.

Brian – Should the State Radio Board establish a base fee for maintenance and require the Regional Radio Board to contribute a certain amount annually for maintenance? I'm concerned about St Louis County having the equipment and not knowing how it will be taken care of and the costs involved.

Bill – Committees, don't get hung up on what you can't decide. Figure out how it will work operationally and the cost estimates will be there. If you want to request the tower and cache for a county fair, structure it as an exercise and Homeland Security money may be there. If there is a disaster, then FEMA gets involved.

Steve Olson – What's the deadline for the committees? Is it the RAC meeting or our next meeting on March 2nd?

Dewey – I think it should come back here March 2nd and then go to the RAC.

Erik – Are we going to do the meeting in Silver Bay again? That will be in two to three weeks.

Erik – Item 6.3 under New Business. Mark, just a brief rundown of the EMS Standard.

Mark Stansberry – That's the communications best practice guide put together by a work group formed by the OTC. Basically they came up with a statewide talk group of channels that you may put in your 800 radios. They do realize that everyone may not go 800 so there is a VHF Interop along with the standard. We're going to have a statewide hailing frequency. If you're out of your area going to a hospital in the metro, or if you encounter problems on the way to the metro and you divert off to St Cloud, you can do a statewide hail to the West Metro communications center and they'll pass off patient information for you to the other hospital. And in this document, they do stress the need for regional involvement to set up regional groups for your hospitals that you do day to day business with. East Metro will be the backup to West Metro. They want plain language patient information. They want patient's name, date of birth, social security number which will bring up some HIPPA issues within the organization so that needs to be solved. And they want a red, yellow or green as far as triage on your patient, agency unit ID and what you're bringing the patient in for. It addresses the state mandated and national mandated talk groups.

Erik – There will be one following pertaining to hospitals?

Mark – Hospital work group is going to meet Friday in St Cloud. We're going to tackle public health at the last one.

Bill – If you're doing county participation plans, make sure you build that ambulance/hospital talk group into your fleet map

Dewey – We have a Owners and Operators quorum today so need to do elections for Owners and Operators Committee. Present officers are Chair – Dewey Johnson, Vice Chair – Steve Olson, Secretary – Judy Sivertson, RRB Representative – Scott Heide, and RRB Alternate Representative – Steve Olson. At this time we'll take nominations for Chair.

Pat Lee made a motion to keep the same board.

Dewey – Is anyone interested in any of the positions?

Steve Olson – interested in being the representative to the Regional Radio Board.

Dewey – Does anyone think Scott will mind being the alternate representative to the Regional Radio Board? Scott wasn't present and someone answered for him that he wouldn't mind. Steve will be the representative and Scott the alternate. Any other nominations? Anyone want to second the motion?

Dylan seconded.

In favor? Opposed? Motion carried.

Dewey – ITV? Discussion followed that determined no one was interested in attending via ITV. Next meeting is March 2nd.

John Fredrickson made a motion to adjourn.

Pat Lee seconded.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Sivertson