

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
January 19, 2016, 12:30 pm  
WMEMS, 168 Industrial Drive, Northampton, Ma.

**In attendance:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Gretchen Johnson (FRCOG), Gary Cromack (SAIC), Melissa Nazzaro (Spfld Comm), Butch Garrity (MSP SC), Suzanne MacBain (SAIC), Bernard Forgea (CFD/CPD), Dennis Nazzaro (NFD), Robert Garriepy (HPD), Matt Barstow (MSP), Jason Breault (BCSO), Wendy Snow (MSP SC), Thomas Grady (BCSO), Pablo Madera (LPD).

The meeting was brought to order by the Chair, Melissa Nazzaro at 12:30 pm. A round of introductions followed.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the December 15, 2015 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Butch Garrity moved to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2015 meeting as presented. Thomas Grady seconded. Motion passed unanimously.</p>
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A round of introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair**

Melissa stated that the Statewide Radio System RFQ has been released and it is hoped that a consultant will be on board in February. SIEC will be heavily involved. The project will span two fiscal years.

Melissa stated that the Next Generation 911 system is still in testing, and should be ready to deploy out to the pilot sites in March or April. The three pilot sites are Duxbury, Foxboro and Wilbraham. Due to delays, the Verizon maintenance contract for the existing 911 equipment had to be extended. Melissa noted that Verizon has been working well with the contractor of the Next Generation 911 system, General Dynamics.

Melissa announced that the Council approved the WMLEC Tactical Communication Trailer.

**Project Updates**

*Great Hill to Borden Microwave Link*

Gary Cromack stated all of the pre-cutover has been completed. The switch to the new microwave system is scheduled to happen on Friday. Raine Brown stated that she needs a quote for the flexible wave guide cable that was approved last month. Gary replied that he would like to hold off until the cutover is complete to be sure there are not any further additional pieces needed to complete the project.

*BCSO Mobile Command Unit Pneumatic Tower*

Jason Breault reported that the consultant received the purchase order for the nycoil, dvr and camera. Installation is expected to occur in February.

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*FCECS Engineering Study*

Raine reported that Walter Tibbets was not able to attend the meeting today. The consultant will be giving an update at the FCECS meeting on Thursday. The last step of the consultant's contract is to finalize the recommendations which should be finalized in February.

*WMLEC Tactical Command Trailer*

Melissa stated that the SIEC approved the project. Gary stated that he is finishing up the technical specifications for the RFB. Gary will send the specifications out to be reviewed before it is put out to bid.

**Interoperability Consultant Report**

Gary stated that his report was covered during the previous discussion.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

Berkshire County – Jason stated that Berkshire is not experiencing any issues at this time.

Franklin County – Butch Garrity stated that a microwave is scheduled to be installed on Friday. Melissa asked if there was any concern about the predicted storm. Gary replied that all the preparations have been made in advance and there are backups. It should be a smooth transition.

Butch stated that the towers in Erving and Plainfield are still down but the issue is being worked on.

Hampshire County – Bernie Forgea stated the Hampshire System is not experiencing any issues.

WMLEC – No update was given.

CMED – Melissa stated that there has been some interference experienced on the Med 4 channel. It seems as though it may be coming from Franklin County. Gary stated that Franklin County was set up to use the Med 4 channel as a hailing channel ten years ago. Discussion followed.

Melissa stated that AMR is using Med 9 or 10 to dispatch inter-hospital transfers. Melissa checked with SWIC to be sure that those types of calls are allowed for those channels. Steve Staffier stated that those channels are primarily for dispatch and secondary for interops. AMR agreed to change to allow for interops use of those channels.

MSP – Matt Barstow stated MSP is preparing to participate in an active shooter drill and for other upcoming events such as the Blarney Blowout.

**Budget Review**

Raine stated that there is \$64,526 left unallocated in FFY15.

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**Requests**

No requests were presented.

**Old Business**

*Helicopter Communications*

Raine stated that Lindsay Stromgen was unable to attend the meeting but asked that his email be read concerning ground to air communications for medical helicopters. Lindsay brought up that Franklin County has adopted a policy of using UHF TAC channel as the standard for communication between the landing zone command and incoming helicopters, to the Hampshire County Fire Chief's Association to see if they would be in favor of adopting the same policy. It was brought up that many Hampshire radios are not fully UHF capable and that VHF TAC would make more sense for Hampshire County. Lindsay wanted to bring the issue to the WMRIC for discussion.

Tom Grady stated that he thought MEMA suggested using VHF TAC 14 to standardize the air to ground communication channel used. Standardization would be valuable in a large scale incident.

Melissa suggested not making any policy changes until the updated MIFOG is released. She stated that contacting the helicopter companies just prior to the MIFOG updated would only cause confusion.

Raine stated that she will relay this discussion back to Lindsay.

*Equipment tracking*

Bernie stated that he would like to revisit the discussion of equipment tracking that he had brought up last month. A system of accountability of maintenance, deployments, etc. should be in place that would enable the Council to report on how effectively the Council funds have been spent. Bernie passed around a proposed policy. Bernie proposed forming a working group to discuss this further.

Raine stated that the when the Council purchases any equipment a host agency is identified prior to the purchase. The host agency agrees to house and maintain the equipment. There is no system currently in place to track that maintenance is being conducted, or to report deployments.

Tom stated that there was recently an issue with a Council purchased generator's maintenance. Raine stated that it would be difficult to go back and ask for this type of information for past years but that a system could be started and then continued for all future equipment purchases. Discussion followed regarding using paper or digital reports, how to best phrase the request to get the best compliance and factoring depreciation of assets.

Butch suggested that this issue be discussed at the next Council meeting. Tom stated that he will bring it up at the next Chairs meeting to see if other Councils have a system in place.

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**New Business**

No new business was discussed.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair**

No business unforeseen was brought forward.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2015 at 12:30 at WMEMS.

There being no further business Tom Grady motioned to adjourn. Bernie Forgea seconded. The motion was voted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:47 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by  
Gretchen Johnson  
Homeland Security Program Assistant  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments