

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2015, 12:30 pm
WMEMS, 168 Industrial Drive, Northampton, Ma.

In attendance: Raine Brown (FRCOG), Gretchen Johnson (FRCOG), Gary Cromack (SAIC), Peter Cowles (WEMA), Melissa Nazzaro (Spfld Comm), Lindsay Stromgen (AFD/HCFCA), Butch Garrity (MSP SC), Suzanne MacBain (SAIC), Bernard Forgea (CFD/CPD), Dennis Nazzaro (NFD), Steve Kozloski (WMLEC), Robert Garriepy (HPD), John Paciorek (DPD), Sarah Meyuck (EOPSS), Matt Barstow (MSP), Thomas Grady (BSCO), Jason Breault (BCSO).

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

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

<p>Motion: Tom Grady moved to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2015 meeting as presented. John Paciorek seconded. Motion passed unanimously.</p>

A round of introductions followed.

Updates from the Chair

Melissa stated that there was no SIEC meeting held last month.

Project Updates

WMLEC Borden Fiber

Raine Brown stated that this project has been completed and should be taken off of the agenda.

Hovey Hill

Raine Brown stated that this project has been completed and should be taken off of the agenda.

Great Hill to Borden Microwave Link

Gary Cromack stated that the vendor has removed the equipment from Lenox and it has been sent out for maintenance and reprogramming before it is re-installed at Great Hill. There is no outside installation required but access to the site may be an issue until Spring. The funding for this project ends on July 31, 2016.

BCSO Mobile Command Unit Pneumatic Tower

Jason Breault reported that the installation is scheduled to start on Monday and will take about a week to complete.

FCECS Engineering Study

Raine stated that the kick-off meeting with the FCECS Oversight Committee was held last week. Site visits will be conducted this week. A draft report will be completed in November. The project is anticipated to be completed by February. Melissa asked that the findings on the system be presented at the December meeting.

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Interoperability Consultant Report

Gary passed out maps outlining the gap improvement recommendations for the Hampden and Hampshire Hills Fire and EMS Enhancement project. Gary explained that the third map shows 96% coverage and the implementation should be able to fit within the proposed budget.

Melissa asked that the Hampden/Hampshire Hills Fire/EMS Improvements under old business be discussed now since it is a related project.

Matt Barstow stated that the Hampshire Council of Governments (HCOG) drafted a letter to the towns that are benefited by the system to ask them to take ownership and to support the maintenance, licensing, and related legal fees. MSP will continue to conduct all regular maintenance of the system. Matt reviewed the handouts included in the meeting packet that outlined the issues with the system. Matt emphasized that the upgrade would improve the existing system but not extend coverage to new areas. The HCOG is seeking alternate funding but wanted to have the WMRIC Committee aware of the project.

Dennis Nazzaro clarified that this is not the project that has been allocated homeland security funds. Raine stated that if the Hampshire Hills Fire and EMS are all using different frequencies then they will need to discuss ownership, governance, maintenance and insurance issues prior to moving forward with the project. Raine suggested that the users organize and seek assistance from this subcommittee. Discussion followed.

<p>Motion: Tom Grady moved to return the FFY15 \$150,000 for the Hampshire Hills Fire and EMS Enhancement project back to unallocated funds. Butch Garrity seconded. Motion passed with two abstentions noted.</p>

Melissa tabled the discussion about the Consultant hours for this task until next month.

Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update

Berkshire County – Tom Grady stated that the town of Adams has requested to become a user of the Berkshire County System. The additional equipment needed to provide this service will be paid from alternate funds.

Franklin County – John Paciorek stated that the engineering study of the system is underway.

Hampshire County – Bernie Forgea stated that the Hampshire Hills issues were covered in the earlier discussion.

WMLEC – Steve Kozloski stated that the P25 upgrades have been installed on all of the SIM 1 channels and the SIM 2 channels for nine out of the ten sites. The tenth site is being worked on now.

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Steve stated that a plan is being developed to make the regional channels mixed mode compatible.

CMED – No update was given.

MSP – Matt stated that the system went down a few times for short periods due to a circuit issue. MSP is in the process of winterizing the generators.

Budget Review

Raine stated that there is approximately \$59,000 left unallocated in FFY14. If the Subcommittee doesn't allocate the funds by November, Raine suggested allocating the funds to the next phase of the Hampshire Hills 800 system project. Raine stated that there is \$150,000 in FFY15 that is now unallocated due to the return of the Hampshire Hills Fire and EMS Enhancement project funds.

Requests

No requests were presented.

Old Business

Video Downlink Discussion

Melissa asked Matt to find out what the response time would be for an emergency need if a video downlink is requested and what the time requirement is to set up a downlink for planned events. Melissa stated that maintaining the directional feed with Visilink would be helpful for areas without broadband access. Melissa asked what the current usage is of Visilink. Jason Breault stated that the Berkshire one would be used more if it were housed at the Berkshire County Sheriff Office Command Center. Raine stated that the Franklin Visilink is used in the Field Comm 40 vehicle fairly regularly. Melissa reported that the Visilink in Springfield is mainly used for planned events. Lindsay Stromgren said that the Hampshire Visilink is going to be housed at the new Fire Training Center.

Melissa tabled the discussion until Matt reports back. She suggested inquiring about purchasing a new system and possibly trading in the current system. Raine stated that she will ask about trading in the current system and the cost of a new system. Discussion followed on alternative ways to receive the information.

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Hampden, Hampshire Hills Fire/EMS Improvements

This discussion occurred earlier in the meeting.

New Business

Multi-Band Radios Software

Steve requested that this be removed from the agenda.

Business Unforeseen by the Chair

Raine stated that the FBI would like to work with the Council to conduct an Active Shooter Conference. It will be open to all disciplines and will also include schools, hospitals, local government, etc. The Training and Exercise Subcommittee approved \$25,000 to coordinate a conference for up to 400 attendees. The FBI will arrange the subject expert speakers.

Tom stated that there is concern about lack of Western Mass participation in JHAT. Tom asked for nominations of someone to train for the team. Discussion followed.

Tom stated that there was a Tech Rescue presentation at the Council meeting and there is concern about communications in remote wooded areas. Tom suggested discussing possible communication system or equipment. Steve stated that he will re-review the portable repeater trailer request.

Jason stated that he attended the Harris trade show. Harris is allowing trade-ins if purchasing the Harris XL multi-band radio. Discussion followed.

Next Steps/Future Meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2015 at 12:30 at WMEMS.

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

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.

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