

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 16, 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), Suzanne MacBain (SAIC), Dennis Nazzaro (NFD), Matt Barstow (MSP), Thomas Grady (BCSO), Lindsay Stromgen (AFD/HSFCA), Peter Cowles (WEMA), Jeff Coe (DPD/WMCOPA), Anthony Gentile (WPD), Steve Kozloski (WMLEC)

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 January 19, 2015 meeting.

<p>Motion: Tom Grady moved to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2015 meeting as presented. Steve Kozloski seconded. Motion passed unanimously.</p>
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A round of introductions followed.

Updates from the Chair

Melissa Nazzaro stated that at the SIEC meeting last month it was announced the Tactical Channel Plan for state is complete. There are a few outstanding items needed to finalize the MIFOG update including the 217 channel in Franklin County. The SIEC discussed the statewide radio RFP. A consultant will be hired to assess current system and make recommendations. A single vendor applied. The Motorola 7000 series radios are being phased out.

Project Updates

Great Hill to Borden Microwave Link

Gary Cromack announced that the microwave installation is complete. Raine stated that she needs an estimate for the cable to issue the Purchase Order. Raine stated that she will work with Gary.

Gary stated that the link from Shelburne to Borden goes over the top of a mountain. It has never had a full strength signal. However, he found a few areas that have less signal strength than would be expected. The microwave on the Shelburne tower was re-aligned by Comtronics 10 years ago. At the time the cable broke and the microwave had to be lowered by 10 feet. Gary suggested checking the alignments if money available. It would likely cost about \$5,000. Peter Cowles suggested replacing the shorter cable and raising the microwave back to the original height on the tower. Gary suggested checking the line of sight before making that decision.

Melissa asked if it was discussed in this Subcommittee at the time of the change in the microwave height. She asked if Comtronics was told to fix the broken cable. Raine stated that she considers this issue a FCECS issue. Dennis Nazzaro suggested that this issue may be included in the FCECS Engineering Study Report. Gary stated that he will follow up with FCECS.

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BCSO Mobile Command Unit Pneumatic Tower

Tom Grady stated that Jason Breault is working on this project.

FCECS Engineering Study

Raine Brown stated that FCECS shared the findings with the Subcommittee. The consultant will present the findings at the FCECS meeting on Thursday. Raine stated that she is not sure what the next steps for FCECS will be but that many of the timing issues have been resolved already. Gary stated that one of his tasks is to explore recommendations for adding more coverage in the Franklin County area. Raine suggested that Gary meet with FCECS.

Gary stated that he mentioned a few months ago that he would reach out to Vermont Yankee and Bear Swamp to discuss their communication needs. Gary now has contact information. The next step will be to create a coverage prediction map. We know where the gaps are but we need to explore what can be done to fill in those gaps. Melissa stated that she needs to email Walter Tibbets about the Franklin County 217 channel anyway so she will also ask him to work with Gary on defining the next steps of this project.

WMLEC Tactical Command Trailer

Gary stated that the trailer was all set to put to bid but before it could be released Raytheon announced that the mechanism that allows communication has been discontinued. Gary is working to find suitable replacement. Gary asked to have a conference call with Steve Kozloski, Jason Breault and Dennis Nazarro on Thursday at 11 a.m.

Interoperability Consultant Report

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

Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update

Berkshire County – Tom stated that Steve Staffier and Jason Breault to further discuss bringing the Town of Adams into the County PSAP system. The town will keep using its own channels as before. This project is being paid through 911 development grants.

Franklin County – No issues were reported.

Hampshire County – No issues were reported.

WMLEC – No issues were reported.

CMED – No issues were reported.

MSP – No issues were reported.

Budget Review

Raine stated that there are still funds left unallocated in FFY15.

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Requests

No requests were presented.

Old Business

Helicopter Communications

Melissa stated that the MIFOG is in line with using VTAC or UTAC channels for communicating with helicopters. There is concern that communications are not working well with the National Guard helicopters. The older National Guard helicopters have limited LMR but the newer helicopters have better radio equipment. It would be beneficial for standardization purposes for WMASS to select a primary and secondary channel to use for communicating with emergency response helicopters. It would be best to wait until the MIFOG has been distributed to avoid any confusion. Lindsay Stromgen agreed and said he will report back to the WMASS Fire Chiefs Association. Melissa stated that any communities that have a strong relationship with helicopter companies can choose to continue using the channels they currently use.

Melissa asked that this be topic be placed on the March agenda.

New Business

Raine stated that she received an email from John Taylor regarding Harris software licenses. Dennis stated that there are 28 Harris radios that the Council purchased. Originally the radios were purchased with 5 software licenses. When the radios needed a firmware update the company offered the Council two updated software licenses at no charge. Now the software has upgraded again but will need to be purchased. The radios work fine as they are. Dennis stated that as the COML for the IMAT team he can work on the Franklin County radios when necessary. Dennis indicated he would talk to John.

Steve asked if Gary can use some hours to work on the WMLEC licenses to be sure that they are all under the WMLEC license. There are a few that are under the Springfield license because early on in the WMLEC project WMLEC was not formalized enough to hold the licenses. Gary stated that it would take about four hours. Suzanne MacBain suggested placing this task under 3C and naming it Shepherding WMLEC Licenses.

Raine stated that Gretchen Johnson has accepted a position with UMASS and this will be her last meeting. Melissa thanked Gretchen for her work for the Subcommittee and her monthly system updates prior to the SIEC meetings every month.

Business Unforeseen by the Chair

No business unforeseen was brought forward.

Next Steps/Future Meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2015 at 12:30 at WMEMS.

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

The meeting adjourned at 1:29 pm.

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