

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 15, 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), Walter Tibbetts (FCECS), Wendy Snow (MSP SC), Suzanne MacBain (SAIC), Bernard Forgea (CFD/CPD), Dennis Nazzaro (NFD), Steve Kozloski (WMLEC), Robert Garriepy (HPD), Manny Litos (Motorola), Jeff Coe (DPD), Peter Rosamilia (SAIC), Paul Madera (LPD)..

The meeting was brought to order by Melissa Nazzaro at 12:35 pm. A round of introductions followed.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the July 21, 2015 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Walter Tibbetts moved to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2015 meeting as presented. Peter Cowles seconded. Motion passed unanimously.</p>
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A round of introductions followed.

### **Updates from the Chair**

Melissa stated that there were two items since the July meeting that were approved by herself as chair because they were under \$10,000. One was funding installation of the BCSO Mobile Command Unit pneumatic tower as the original estimate didn't include installation, and the other was for the Great Hill to Borden Microwave project that experienced higher than anticipated labor costs. Both items were approved at the Council meeting earlier today.

Melissa asked that an SIEC update be included on the agenda. Melissa stated that prior to the SIEC meeting, the Policy and Programs Subcommittee met to discuss the MIFOG update. Asset and system lists need to be updated for Western Mass including the 800 trunked channels. There was a lengthy discussion about the format of the MIFOG. The subcommittee would like to print the document in a binder form so that future updates can be sent out printing just the updated pages. It was suggested that FCECS change the PLs on Franklin County trunk channels 1-6 to see if that helps with the interference. Melissa announced that Kurt Wood is the new chair of the SIEC. Steve Staffier is now working full time on the SWIC. There is a \$68.3 million bond for radio initiatives. \$1.25 million has been allocated to hire a consultant to do an 800 system statewide analysis.

### **Project Updates**

#### *WMLEC Borden Fiber*

Melissa tabled this discussion until the Consultant Update.

#### *Hovey Hill*

Melissa tabled this discussion until the Consultant Update.

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*Great Hill to Borden Microwave Link*

Melissa tabled this discussion until the Consultant Update.

*BCSO Mobile Command Unit Pneumatic Tower*

Raine stated that the unit has been ordered.

*FCECS Engineering Study*

Walter Tibbets stated that one proposal was received. An interview was conducted. The sample reports and current projects looked good. References have been checked. The references given by the consultant were all excellent but a company that the consultant mentioned working for was also checked. Their report was cautious. A special meeting was called. FCECS has decided to move forward with the contract. Raine stated that the purchase order is in process. Discussion followed about reports on the project.

**Interoperability Consultant Report**

WMLEC Borden Fiber

Gary Cromack stated that the project was completed in July.

Hovey Hill

Gary stated that this project was also completed in July. As soon as Motorola completes the P25 upgrades the power will be turned up.

Great Hill to Borden Microwave Link

Gary stated that two vendors bid on this project. Green Mountain was the lower bid. Gary is waiting for their timeline on the project.

Gary stated that some preliminary review work has been done on the Northwest Regional coverage issue.

Gary passed out a map and gap improvement recommendation report on the Hampden and Hampshire Hills Fire and EMS Enhancement project. Melissa asked if Huntington end users have been consulted. Dennis Nazzaro stated that all of the small town fire departments in that area operate on their own separate channels. Gary replied that he has not yet. He stated that he had reviewed the gap analysis that was done a few years ago.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

Berkshire County – No update was given.

Franklin County – Walter Tibbets said that the owner of the New Salem tower been difficult to work with. The engineering study on the tower was done but a notice to proceed to move the antenna has not been given yet. Work on the other towers has begun.

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Hampshire County – Bernie Forgea indicated that the Hampshire County System is working well. Matt Barstow from MSP is expected to be at the October meeting to give guidance on the engineering work needed to improve the Hampshire Hills Fire & EMS project. The project has a single point of failure and will likely be expanded. Alternative funding is being sought. The project will likely be done in phases.

WMLEC – Steve Kozloski stated that the P25 upgrades are being installed on all of the SIM 1 channels and then SIM 2 channels will be worked on. The whole system is expected to be upgraded before winter. Mt. Tom and Hovey can accept P25 regional traffic but updates will be needed to some of the other towers. The equipment has been purchased. Steve will talk to MSP about installation.

Paul Madera asked about the communication trailer proposal. Steve stated that the Subcommittee may want to revisit that project. Steve stated that he will discuss the trailer with WMass Police and WMass Fire. Raine stated that the trailer project was stalled because an owner of the trailer and plan for maintenance needed to be identified.

CMED – No update was given.

MSP – No update was given.

### **Budget Review**

Raine stated that the FFY13 funds were spent down completely. This Subcommittee has 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 800 system project. Raine stated that the FFY15 Investment Plan budget was included in the meeting packet.

### **Requests**

No requests were presented.

### **Old Business**

#### *Video Downlink Discussion*

Melissa stated that she asked Raine to get a quote for an upgrade for four units previously purchased by WMRIC. The quote was included in the meeting packet. Due to the cost of the quote, Melissa asked how much the technology is used and if two upgrades be sufficient for the region's needs. Lindsay Stromgen asked about the work-arounds that may be available. Discussion followed. Melissa tabled the discussion until next month.

### **New Business**

Melissa explained that SIEC has created a list of items that are exempt from needing approval from SIEC. The list was included in the meeting packet.

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*Multi-Band Radios Software*

Steve stated that the software for the Harris radios that the Council purchased is outdated. He asked if an upgrade could be purchased. Raine noted that she spoke to Harris and the updates are only available through an annual subscription not through a onetime software purchase upgrade. Steve suggested purchasing one subscription to get all the radios up to date. Melissa tabled the discussion until next month.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair**

Walter stated that Comtronics was awarded the maintenance contract for DCR tower sites. He shared this as information only.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2015 at 12:30 at WMEMS.

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

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 pm.

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