

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

In attendance: Raine Brown (FRCOG), Brenda Codella (FRCOG), Gary Cromack (SAIC), Melissa Nazzaro (Spfld Comm), Paul Stensan (PVTA), Jason Breault (BCSO), Bernard Forgea (CFD/CPD), Thomas Grady (BCSO), Matt Barstow (MSP), Peter Cowles (WEMA), Peter Rosamilia (SAIC/Inter Ops Coms), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham), Walter Tibbets (FCECS), Robert Garriepy (HPD)

The meeting was brought to order by the Chair, Melissa Nazzaro at 12:34 pm. A round of introductions followed.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the February 16, 2016 meeting.

<p>Motion: Matt Barstow moved to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2016 meeting as presented. Tom Grady seconded. Motion passed unanimously.</p>
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A round of introductions followed.

Updates from the Chair

SIEC Update

Melissa Nazzaro reported that Verizon is on strike. Most action is picketing. Springfield had a 911 position go down and Verizon reported that there would be a delay in getting it back up due to the shortage of workers. At SIEC last month it was discussed that 100% of CGIS fiber have been meeting FBI encryption requirements.

Project Updates

Great Hill to Borden Microwave Link

Gary Cromack reported this task is complete.

BCSO Mobile Command Unit Pneumatic Tower

Jason Breault reported the unit is working well.

FCECS Engineering Study

Walter Tibbets reported that CDCG provided FCECS committee with the final version of the futures recommendation report last month. The report lists five possible options FCECS could pursue to improve functionality and sustainability of the system. The options include converting to P25 and transitioning to the statewide 800 system. FCECS is looking at the 800 system as a possible long term solution, but they will likely stay with what they have and make the short term recommend improvements. The FCECS committee will discuss how to proceed with the information in the report at the next FCECS meeting and Walter will inform the Council of their decisions. Melissa requested Raine forward her an electronic copy when available.

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WMLEC Tactical Command Trailer

Gary Cromack reported that the bids have come back and they are being compared to see if the low bid meets or exceeds the id specifications. The specs on the low bid show a 2-axle trailer which is not what was specified in the bid. The specs requested a single axle. Gary is waiting to hear back from the review team before he makes a final recommendation for purchase. Raine stated we need to move forward with this item. The funds are coming mostly from FFY14. If WMRIC feels the lowest bid doesn't meet the specs they need to move on to the next bid. Melissa would like to have confirmation from Steve Kozlowski regarding the axle. Raine asked Melissa to follow-up with Steve and to let him know this is a time sensitive matter.

Interoperability Consultant Report

Gary stated they have been working with FCECS regarding coverage in the northwest region of the system. At last month's FCECS meeting they discussed the approach and funding for the sites. His task was to see what the alternative coverage sites were and report to the group for their next meeting. They are considering 4 different sites as possible areas for enhanced coverage. Raine asked that the report be sent to her. Gary will update WMRIC next month.

Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update

Berkshire County – Tom Grady stated that the Town of Adams is closing their PSAP and consolidating with them. The State 911 system told Adams they would fund a process where they are today if they come into the County system. The project moved forward, but at the time of the award SIEC would not approve. Steve Staffier came to meet with the Town of Adams and Tom and move the project forward. Tom has been contacted by 3 towns in the last few weeks. Consolidation in Berkshire County is moving forward and county wide interoperability and info-sharing is happening. Berkshire County is the hub. Counties are migrating to the IMC server and will be sharing data. IMC has been good to work with. Melissa thanked Tom for the SIEC information.

Franklin County – Walter Tibbets stated in general things are working well. Erving continues to have an issue and is receive only at the moment. Other sites are being investigated for improved coverage. Montague Police build out site is still on-going. Poets Seat tower will be used to improve coverage in areas they were having trouble.

Tom reported he is testing a mic system by Motorola. It acts like a mini repeater. The system provides affordable coverage Montague may want to consider. They are putting in a control station on Shelburne Mt. that is independent of the microwave. Shelburne could talk with all regional towers if all local towers went down. Fairly inexpensive way to have a back-up.

Simulcast 2 in Shutesbury, Montague and parts of New Salem are still a problem. Part of the next meeting will be getting the coverage map going.

Hampshire County – No issues were reported.

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WMLEC – No issues were reported.

CMED – No issues were reported.

MSP – No issues were reported.

Budget Review

Raine stated that FCECS engineering study came in \$1,685.00 left in FFY14 funds. These funds will shift to the WMLEC Tactical Communications Trailer project. There is approximately \$64,000 left in FFY15.

Requests

Berkshire County Sheriff's Office Satellite Internet

Jason Breault reported that satellite internet allows you to be on scene and enter a location you need to go to and still have access to the internet. He noted that during and following Katrina, for example, cell service was down, and satellite provided reliable internet access. The proposed package provides 120 GB of data per year, which is approximately 10 GB per month. Overages are \$80per GB. Jason stated the contract includes 2 years of activation and installation. Raine questioned the installation because it is not stated on the proposal. Jason will confirm this detail. It was asked if the system supports voice as well as data and if voice is always a need and what equipment will need to be purchased to support the system. Jason will also check on the voice/data support.

Tom noted it will be interesting to see how the communication drill goes at Six Flags next week, and whether such a system would be helpful. He would like to get feedback from others at the drill on the system. The request was tabled to next month.

Old Business

Helicopter Communications

Melissa stated that the MIFOG is still not yet released and will update on progress at next month's meeting.

Communication Drill at Six Flag – Raine reminded the committee that the drill will take place on April 27 and as a reminder, participant registration is mandatory. At SIEC meeting, Melissa told people that this is an opportunity to participate in Western MA exercises with trailers and our regional equipment. Melissa is hopeful that we might see one or two COML's or COMT's come out and do the exercise. Raine will be connecting with people who have not registered as of yet but whom she expects to see at the drill. Raine suggested inviting Lindsay Stromgren to participate since he just completed the COML training in New Hampshire. The committee agreed this would be a good idea.

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New Business

Melissa reported to the Committee that the FFY16 funding guidance was reviewed by EOPPS at the full Council meeting. The written guidance is expected later this week. For FFY16, all the Councils will be funded down 20% which will be placed in a pool of competitive funds for the Councils to apply for. EOPPS has identified 11 areas that they feel are priorities for the funds. Based on the timeline of the FFY16 funding, WMRIC needs to have a meaningful discussion today about what items to suggest to the full Council for both the competitive and known allocation grant. Tom stated that the total dollars coming in will be approximately the same as was funded this year, less 20%. Interops was funded roughly \$400,000. If the Committee pushed Tech Rescue to the competitive process then Tech Rescue wouldn't need to come out of the known allocated, therefore allowing the rest of the committees to operate at level funding from fFY15. The competitive pool of funds is approximately \$750,000. Tom and Melissa stated we should consider the projects we are currently funding and not yet completed before we focus on new projects. Tom would like the Committee to be looking at what we can finish and take off the table. Focus on projects that require larger amounts and get them done.

General discussion ensued. There was agreement to keep the Interops Consultant as a project and to complete the Hampshire Hills 800 project. It was suggested that a project related to WMLEC regional repeaters be considered.

Raine asked the Committee what training needs they feel they have. An issue regularly seen is user ability to effectively operate a radio. Trainings should be considered. Tom stated that maybe we need to step back and teach people how to use the equipment. Melissa was asked by Springfield to meet with officers and train them on how to use the equipment and communication with other equipment. This was the first time this had happened in her memory. A Train-the-Trainer series was suggested. Tom suggests reaching out the EMS, Police and fire to see what their training needs are. Raine will add communication training as a possible project to the list.

Business Unforeseen by the Chair

Tom reported that Franklin County SRT contacted him to use 12 UHF portable radios from the Berkshire cache for the team. He asked if their opinion of Berkshire supporting the request. The Committee agreed to the use.

Next Steps/Future Meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2016 at 12:30 at WMEMS.

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

The meeting adjourned at 2:06 pm.

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Respectfully Submitted by
Brenda Codella
Administrative Services Assistant
Franklin Regional Council of Governments