

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2016
WMEMS, 168 Industrial Drive, Northampton, Ma.

In attendance: Raine Brown (FRCOG), Steve Kozloski (WMLEC), Walter Tibbets (FCECS), Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Dennis Nazzaro (NFD), Butch Garriety (MSP), Jason Breault (BCSO), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst Fire, HCFA) Peter Cowles (WEMA), Bernard Forgea (Cumington FD/EMD), Ann Dunne (FRCOG)

Steve Kozloski called the meeting to order at 12:30pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the July 19, 2016 meeting.

<p>Motion: Jason Breault moved to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2016 meeting as presented. Peter Cowles seconded. Motion passed unanimously.</p>

A round of introductions followed.

Updates from the Chair

SIEC Update- No Report

Project Updates

WMLEC Tactical Command Trailer

Steve Kozloski reported the delay of completion and delivery is due to staffing changes at the company. Construction of the trailer is placed on the vendor's priority list. The anticipated delivery date is in a few weeks. The question was raised, if we want to stick with the single axle trailer, or to consider a dual axle instead. After discussion it was decided to choose the dual axle and Steve will contact the vendor.

Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update

Berkshire County – Jason Breault reported that Berkshire is waiting on a grant from State 911 Commission to purchase radio consoles. Berkshire County dispatch has absorbed the Adams' 911 dispatching agency, this was a good learning process, with Sheffield, Tolland, and Otis soon to follow, once funding is secured.

Franklin County – Walter Tibbets reported that FCECS has made some improvements with the main part of system working better. It sounds great in many areas but still has some problems in others. They put the maintenance grant out to bid again, and received two responses. After a long discussion FCECS decided to award the contract to Beltronics as the new maintenance company. They will continue to work on problems at the New Salem Tower, as Shutesbury and Wendell have bad coverage.

Hampshire County – No report

WMLEC – Steve expressed concerns about the microwave alignment at the Butternut site. Motorola has corrected the problem by using the Northeast Tower and the link should now be up

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and running. Blandford are pushing back about their continuing participation in WMLEC. They are paying for a system they are not using, and are looking to cut costs. Steve offered to meet with the Fire/Police Chiefs' Association if necessary if it continues to be an issue.

CMED – No report

MSP – No report

Budget Review

Raine Brown reported there are several FFY15 projects the subcommittee decided not to move forward on. We have for FFY15, over \$200,000.00 to be spent before July 31, 2017. We could allocate the funds towards completion of the Hampshire Hill Project. Several of the departments in the project are fully complete, some need one or two more radios, and at least three need complete setup. The current estimate for the remaining equipment requests is \$231,600.00. Raine will get an update on the cost estimate if we decide to move forward to complete this project. And reminded the subcommittee we should make a decision by Nov/Dec. The radios will all be multi-band radios.

FY16 is contracted with \$200,000.00 in funds for non-specific projects, to be spent by July 2018.

The deadline to submit our investment plans to EOPSS for the next round of grants has moved from July 2017 to Jan/Feb 2017. Raine believes it will be level funded, and is not sure if some of grants will be 100 % competitive.

Requests

No new requests

Old Business

FCECS Northwest Corridor

Raine updated the Council on Gary Cromack's research on cost estimates including the cost involved to move some equipment currently on the Royalston tower, as Royalston is no longer part of the FCECS system. The proposal is to move the equipment elsewhere, and Raine confirmed with EOPSS that this is okay, as the project was completed with Federal funds. FCECS is also looking to sell the tower to Royalston. FCECS agrees with the Northwest project as proposed by Gary, and Walter received approval to reinstall this equipment on the Bear Swamp Tower. He is hoping Yankee Rowe will agree to pay to build a new tower or pay for the equipment, as no coverage exists at the Yankee Rowe site except for limited coverage from the guard shack. The Bear Swamp tower will provide coverage to a section of the Deerfield River, and also provides the ability to use repeaters to cover areas not currently covered. The proposed design creates sub-channels to the existing SIM-1/SIM-2 radio system. This approach greatly simplifies the scope of the proposed design.

Concerns were raised about interference to the existing system at Mt. Grace and Shelburne, once the equipment is moved to Bear Swamp. Dennis Nazzaro said there should be no interference, as

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it is just the microwave link. The repeater will use different channel than the SIM-1/SIM 2. Radio system users will have to program their radio to the new channel. Questions were raised regarding pieces of the proposed system. They are not P25 compatible, and it is believed SIEC will not approve funds to be spent on non-P25 equipment. Raine will follow up on this.

Raine shared this information from the FRCOG, that FCECS Oversight Committee is considering the system to be outdated and they wish to upgrade to the MSP800 system. Should we go ahead with this project, as the FCECS oversight committee members are actively pursuing a conversation with the MSP regarding the study of the current system and want Franklin County to be one of the pilot areas of study? This is a gap we identified in our study, but Raine is concerned about the long term sustainability given Franklin County is not happy with the system. We need to commit soon, as this is FFY15 funds that runs out in July 2017.

Butch Garriety suggested we should focus on current projects in Franklin County as the 800 system is too far out. Bernie Forgea suggested we must have a plan in place, and seek more information regarding a timeframe. The gap needs to be filled. Raine will contact Manny at Motorola for an estimate on replacing two MTR 3000 and two SL 7500 with the GTR800 equivalent.. This is a WMRIC project, and Raine will provide the estimate on pricing at the November 15, 2016 meeting for consideration

Hampshire Hills 800

Raine reported we could complete the project or hold until next month. We have \$50,000.00 set aside, and we could use the remaining FFY15 funds to complete this project. It was decided to wait until the estimates are received for the FCECS project.

Dennis Nazzaro asked the subcommittee if we should reprioritize our projects and identify where we are going to allocate funds.

BCSO UHF/800 Repeater – Satellite Internet

Jason Breault: no updates.

Helicopter Communication – MIFOG

Walter reported a communication incident with a lifeline helicopter in Charlemont. Charlemont has switched to the UTAC radio channel as they had previously set as policy; the helicopter pilot was unaware of this change and couldn't find the channel on his radio. It seems to be more of a procedural issue. Dennis reported the Hampshire County Fire Chiefs' Association adopted the VHF policy and recommend all dispatch centers confirm with the air dispatchers the correct channel to use for the specified community. The committee will continue this discussion next month.

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New Business

Tech Rescue Team Communication

Raine reported the Team is initially dispatched by Northampton, but once dispatched the Team is doing their own communications which is proving to be a challenge, as it is not what they are trained to do. We should ask the WMFC Association to consider creating an official position. The WMFC have said no in the past to creating a position, but no solution was reached. Dennis has helped them out on a volunteer basis in the past. The WMFC need to take a leadership role in dispatching, as Northampton dispatchers do not communicate with the Tech Rescue Team once dispatched. Raine will report back to the Tech Rescue Team.

Jason asked about the status of the MSP new video downlink system. No one knew the current status. The subcommittee has previously decided not to spend further funds on this until more is known. Berkshire County has a video downlink that needs to be repaired. Springfield has two units, so Berkshire may be able to borrow one.

Business Unforeseen by the Chair

Raine reminded the subcommittee that we nominate members in November to serve on the executive committee. The election is every two years and will take place in December 2016. Raine will prepare and share a current list of executive committee members, with attendance records and a pool of people who may be nominated.

Next Steps/Future Meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2016 at 12:30 at WMEMS at 168 Industrial Drive, Northampton, MA.

There being no further business Butch Garriety moved to adjourn. Peter Cowles seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 pm.

List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting

- Minutes from the October 18, 2016 meeting
- Green Mountain Communications Cost Estimates
- Cromack Industries, Inc FCECS Expanded Coverage Options
- Cromack Industries, Inc : WMRIC Radio Coverage Expansion RFQ
- WRHSAC FFY15 State Homeland Security Budget Spreadsheet
- WRHSAC FFY16 State Homeland Security Investment Plan Budget

Respectfully Submitted by
Ann Dunne
Franklin Regional Council of Governments