

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2016, 12:30 pm
WMEMS, 168 Industrial Drive, Northampton, Ma.

In attendance: Raine Brown (FRCOG), Bob Dean (FRCOG), Gary Cromack (SAIC), Melissa Nazzaro (Spfld Comm), Paul Stansan (PVTA), Jason Breault (BCSO), Bernard Forgea (CFD/CPD), Thomas Grady (BCSO), Matt Barstow (MSP), Peter Cowles (WEMA), Peter Rosamilia (SAIC/Inter Ops Coms), Walter Tibbets (FCECS), Dennis Nazzaro (NFD), Lindsay Stromgren (HCFCA/Amherst FD), Jeff Coe (Dalton), Butch Garrity (MSP), Pablo Madera (Ludlow PD)

The meeting was brought to order by the Chair, Melissa Nazzaro at 12:40 pm.

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

<p>Motion: Tom Grady moved to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2016 meeting as presented. Peter Cowles seconded. Motion passed unanimously.</p>
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A round of introductions followed.

Updates from the Chair

SIEC Update

Melissa Nazzaro reported on the SIEC meeting. The MA tactical communication plan update is completed and will be voted by SIEC in June. There will be COML and COMT classes held at DFS in Stow, MA. COML will be September 20-22 and COMT will be October 3-7. EOPSS is following the same mechanism as in the past to get students into the class. Council will entertain requests from interested parties to push forward for final consideration at the state level.

On May 31st, from 10:00 to 11:30am, there will be an aviation communications meeting at MEMA for helicopter operators to discuss communications issues.

Project Updates

WMLEC Tactical Command Trailer

The WMLEC trailer project was awarded to the lowest bidder. Price was less than the projected budget and some money is coming back to the Council. The trailer should be ready by the end of July. Steve Kozloski will make arrangements to have it available for viewing at a future meeting.

Interoperability Consultant Report

Gary Cromack talked about the two tasks he has been working on over the past month.

First, he has been working with FCECS regarding coverage gaps in the northwest region of the system. He met with the FCECS Oversight Committee to discuss his research. He is awaiting feedback from the Oversight Committee to direct further investigation.

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Second, he has been updating the existing systems report. A draft report was submitted to the Committee. The final report will be submitted before the contract ends. He is looking for feedback to make sure they have captured everything and/or if edits are needed. A general discussion about the extent of the report ensued. Should it cover only WRHSAC covered project or should other investments be included. Raine noted that it should include all WRHSAC funded projects, but if those systems have been enhanced by other funds, such as Berkshire, then the report should note the entire capacity/capability of the system. Feedback should be submitted over the next two weeks.

Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update

Berkshire County – Tom Grady provided an update on the Town of Adams PSAP transition to the Sheriff’s Office. Tom noted he was also contacted by DCR regarding amateur radio operator’s access to DCR sites. DCR wants the Sherriff’s Office to assist with monitoring amateur radio operator’s access to the sites.

Franklin County – Walter Tibbets stated in general things are working well. No trouble tickets received recently. Erving continues to have an issue and is still receive only. The Oversight Committee had a lengthy discussion with Gary Cromack about the results of his coverage research. The Committee did not have a chance to discuss the consultant’s recommendations for the future sustainability of the FCECS.

Hampshire County – No issues were reported.

WMLEC – No issues were reported.

CMED – No CMED representative is currently appointed to WMRIC. Walter Tibbetts talked about issues with Franklin County CMED connection to Springfield. Melissa Nazzaro said a meeting is scheduled this week to investigate reported issues on Mt. Tom.

MSP – No issues were reported.

Budget Review

Raine stated that the communication trailer project came in under budget and returned money back to the Council. FFY15 budget has \$103,268.90 unallocated to spend before the end of July, 2017. She recommends the committee decide what to fund by November 2016. We will know about the FFY16 plan by then.

A question was raised about the distribution of PPE hazmat masks several years ago and whether more could be purchased. It is a CBRNE issue and every agency should have received some masks at that time. This issue is outside the scope of this subcommittee. Any requests for funding the purchase of masks should go to the full Council.

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Requests

No requests were discussed.

Old Business

BCSO Satellite Internet

Jason Breault talked about his research on the subject as requested by WMRIC at the April meeting. He talked about possible providers and costs as outlined in the written request for \$31,537 to come from FFY15 unallocated funds.

Motion: Butch Garrity moved to approve the BCSO satellite internet request at \$31,537 from unallocated FFY15 funds. Walter Tibbetts seconded.

Discussion on the motion: Concern expressed by some on the committee that now is not the time to vote on this request, given that other projects may need funding.

Motion was withdrawn without prejudice.

Motion: Peter Cowles moved to table the BCSO satellite internet project for a future vote. Lindsay Stromgren seconded. Motion passed with two abstentions.

Helicopter Communications

Melissa said that on May 31st, from 10:00 to 11:30am, there will be an aviation communications meeting @ MEMA for helicopter operators to discuss communications issues.

FFY16 Investment Planning: WMLEC VHF

Raine gave an overview of the proposed budget allocation. \$150,000 for WMLEC continued gap solutions and \$75,000 for interops consultant.

A competitive grant application for the Hampshire Hills project was approved at the full Council meeting earlier this morning.

WMLEC VHF funding is rolled into the WMLEC continued gap solutions project for now. The costs need to be fleshed out to better define the program needs.

New Business

FFY15 Interoperability Consultant

Discussion about consulting needs for FFY15. How do we see the consultants involved with upcoming projects? How does that compare with past projects? Council has budgeted \$100,000 each year to date. Generally there has been a task list that has used the full amount of funding budgeted.

We are wrapping up the big design projects now and seem to be moving toward a condition of maintenance of what has been built. May be at a point where we do not need an engineer on retainer, though it is nice to have a consultant ready to go when needed. The WMLEC gap

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solutions project will need engineering analysis. We could increase the project amount to include money for engineering. The consensus of the committee is to let the SAIC contract end. Once the FCECS Northwest Corridor report is received from SAIC, a determination as to the need for a consultant for FFY15 will be decided.

<p>Motion: Tom Grady moved to increase the FFY16 WMLEC gap solutions project to \$200,000, and to release the consultant line item. Butch Garrity seconded. Motion passed unanimously.</p>

Business Unforeseen by the Chair

BCSO Repeater Base Request

Jason Breault outlined a request for funding for the purchase and installation of a UHF repeater/base station radio in the BCSO's mobile command center. General discussion about the request ensued. Will this be all that will be asked for to fit out the mobile command center? Jason will review and revise the request to make sure that this is a full request for all that is needed. He will bring the request back to the next meeting.

Jason raised a discussion about the Vislink receiver in Berkshire County. Jason Breault used it recently at an event and it locked up and then crashed. Do we spend the money to get it fixed? Can existing communication equipment do the same job? Yes. Current consensus is to not to fix the receiver as that specific unit is hardly used.

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 moved to adjourn. Butch Garrity seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 2:12 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by
Bob Dean
Franklin Regional Council of Governments