

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, September 18, 2018 12:30pm  
Hatfield Fire Department  
3 School Street, Hatfield, MA 01330

**In attendance:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Bob Hassett (Spfld. CMED), Nick DaDalt (EOPSS), Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Dispatch), Tom Grady (BCSO), Jeremy DeMar (Spfld. Comm), Dennis Nazzaro (Huntington/Northampton FD), Jason Breault (BCSO), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst FD), Peter Cowles (WEMA), Walter Tibbets (FCECS), Matt Barstow (MSP), Melissa Nazzaro (EOPSS), Ricardo Viruet (Spfld. PD), Vincent Balboni (Spfld. PD), Bob Dean (FRCOG).

This meeting was audio recorded.

Bob Hassett called the meeting to order at 12:36pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the July 17, 2018 meeting.

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| <p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2018 meeting as presented. Matt Barstow seconded. Voted unanimously in favor.</p> |
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A round of introductions followed.

### **Updates from the Chair**

*SIEC Update* – Melissa Nazzaro reported that the first SIEC meeting after the summer break was held earlier this month. Nothing from the western region on that agenda. Meetings will be held on the first Wednesday each month. Jason Breault is currently the secondary rep from WMRIC. She needs an e-mail telling her who is the primary and secondary reps.

*SWIC Update* – Melissa Nazzaro talked about the communications work during the Merrimack Valley gas explosions event and about the AAR that is in process. EOPSS will be using information gained during this incident to improve communications protocol. The MIFOG gives information on available channels and when out-of-town law enforcement and fire responders check in at the scene they are told about the communication plan. Not every responder had the correct tactical channels programmed into their radios. More education is needed. Working on the tactical channel plan, MIFOG update and COMU.

### **Project Updates**

*WMLEC Gap Solutions* –The Hampden piece of the project is on-going. The Berkshire piece is all set. The Hampshire pod is done. Radios in the Franklin County field com units are done. WMLEC trailer was used during MGM Casino opening and some problems were identified. Those problems should be resolved when the new equipment is received and installed.

*CMED Hovey Hill* – National Grid has decided to knock down their Hovey Hill tower and build a new one. Timeline is likely to be 18 to 24 months to completion of the new tower. Their original plan did not allocate space on the tower for an additional dish for CMED to link to

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Roosevelt tower in Springfield and they can't make any major changes to the existing tower. National Grid has offered to work with CMED to find room on the new tower for the new dish. In the interim, they offered the use of a T-1 line to an Eversource site at Cadwell for the needed CMED connection. This will work, but it brings a 3rd tower into the CMED plan. CMED would like a meeting with Wilbraham and Monson to talk about the need for a single point of contact with National Grid at Hovey Hill so that everyone's interests are being considered going forward. Discussion about what needs to be done now. Do we need a new environmental assessment for the Cadwell site? EHP will only need to include anything being done with federal funds. We will need a system diagram and photographs for Hovey Hill / Cadwell / Roosevelt Ave. If all goes well with the EHP process, we could possibly see construction starting, at the earliest, in November. When construction is completed, then users will see improvement in the system. Some of the reported problems with CMED have turned out to be operator error or local equipment issues.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

*Berkshire County* – Tom Grady said they are still working on this year's State 911 Development Grant, getting everything completed. They are still waiting on approval of the next round of the State 911 Development Grant. He has a meeting with State 911 Department staff on Friday, hoping to get a status update.

*Franklin County* – Walter Tibbets said FCECS is generally status quo at the moment. Equipment at Poet's Seat sustained lightning damage which affects Greenfield and Montague, requiring work-arounds to be developed. Currently using back-up regional channels. Still sorting out the extent of the equipment damage and whose insurance will cover the damage. Also considering long-term fix for coverage. Still talking with the state about a possible transition to the 800 MHz system. Trying to get questions answered so that towns can make a decision about transition to the state system or rebuilding the 450 MHz system. Building a 450MHz replacement system is likely cost-prohibitive as the towns would have to pay for the entire cost. Short-term concern is how to keep the FCECS up and running until that transition can take place.

*Hampshire County* – Lightning strike at Mt. Lincoln damaged some Verizon equipment.

*WMLEC* – None

*CMED*: Bob Hassett talked about some reported problems that were mainly caused by operator error. More operator training is warranted. As was reported earlier in the meeting, the technical limitations of the system will be fixed with the Hovey Hill project. He also updated the committee on the recent procedural changes to CMED's monthly billing system, changing to a January billing cycle. Decided to keep the rate at \$4 per call for everyone, which is the same rate charged since 1981, the difference now is billing will begin with the first call. The Northern Connecticut communities will now be charged for CMED calls when bringing patients to

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Springfield hospitals. Bob will be meeting with chiefs groups to address the human error issues that have been discovered.

*MSP* –Currently upgrading dispatch consoles statewide. A meeting by invitation of all stakeholders to address the core rollout is coming up in October.

*Other* – None

**Budget Review** –The remaining funds left over from the WMLEC Gap Solutions project is \$3,412.84. Funds need to be spent before the end of December.

For FFY17, the proposed changes to the CMED Hovey Hill project could impact the total cost of that project. The Regional COMU Team Go-Kits project can proceed anytime. Raine needs a little more information to write the project justification for approval. \$45,000 in Hampshire Hills Lincoln & Skinner project that could be reallocated to CMED Hovey Hill if needed.

**Requests – Holcomb Road Fire Tower**

Chief Garriepy explained the reasons for his request for funding to purchase and install coax cable and lightning protection equipment so that two repeaters can be moved from inside the DCR structure on the tower to a MSP shelter at the base of the tower. A quote from Green Mountain Communications for \$6,260 was presented as the cost of the project. Discussion about the request established that we will need an EHP for the change.

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| <p><b>Motion:</b> Butch Garrity moved to approve the project at a not-to-exceed cost of \$7,500 Jason Breault seconded. Voted in favor with no objections. Chief Garriepy and Dennis Nazzaro abstained.</p> |
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**Old Business**

Helicopter Communication –Air Ambulance

Bob Hassett said he tried to no avail to get representatives from Baystate Health’s air ambulance service to attend today’s WMRIC meeting. He wants to use the connection to Baystate Health as leverage to get the helicopter services to respond. Pilots are told by their dispatch to use a specific channel. Dispatch personnel need to be trained about the appropriate frequencies to use. Bob Hassett will continue to pursue this issue.

**New Business**

Butch Garrity reported that Verizon and Comcast will not come out if trees are on wires unless the wires are down on the ground. If not on the ground, trees are a local issue. Butch also said that in early December all PSAPs will be able to handle texts to 911.

Dennis Nazzaro gave a report about the Ride to Remember. Everything worked well.

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Walter Tibbetts asked for an update on the state 800MHz system build out. Melissa Nazzaro said that the 911 surcharge funding is approved. A challenge to that funding source was rejected. First step is to issue an RFP to produce an engineering plan. RFP is ready to issue now that the challenge has been rejected. Funding is expected to be \$25 million per year for five years. If all goes well, the engineering plan could be complete by the end of this calendar year / beginning of the new calendar year.

Question about First Net. Melissa Nazzaro said that a new ITT46 subcategory 3A was created for public safety broadband service. ITT 46 vendors only were allowed to respond to the RFP. Review of proposals and then interviews is in process.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair** – None

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2018, 12:30 pm at the Hatfield Fire Department, 3 School Street, Hatfield, MA.

There being no further business, Butch Garrity moved to adjourn. Walter Tibbetts seconded.

Voted unanimously in favor. The meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- Minutes from July 17, 2018 meeting
- WRHSAC FFY16 State Homeland Security Budget – 9/17/2018
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- Letter from Huntington PD, dated 9/10/18, RE: Project Funds Request Holcomb Rd. Fire Tower
- Green Mountain Communications proposal, dated 8/29/18, RE: Holcomb Rd. Fire Tower project

Respectfully Submitted by Bob Dean,  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments