

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, January 19, 2021, 12:30pm**

**Subcommittee members present:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Nina Barszcz (Westfield Dispatch), Jason Breault (Pittsfield PD), Bernie Forgea (Cummington FD), Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Control/MSP), Thomas Grady (BCSO/BCECS), Robert Hassett (Springfield EMD/CMED), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC), Dennis Nazzaro (Northampton FD), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst FD)

**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Erin Hastings (WestComm Regional Dispatch), Khristy Lord (WestComm Regional Dispatch), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Patricia McGuirk (EOPSS), Melissa Nazzaro (EOPSS), Barry Ross (Hampden County Sheriff's Office), Cameron Spanfelner (Air Methods)

**Subcommittee members absent:** Peter Cowles (Westfield), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham Dispatch), Walter Tibbetts (NWMIMT/FCECS)

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Bob Hassett called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the December 15, 2020 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Steve Kozloski moved to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2020 meeting as submitted. Nina Barszcz seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bernie Forgea, Bob Hassett, Tom Grady, Jason Breault, Lindsay Stromgren, Nina Barszcz, Steve Kozloski, Bob Garriepy, and Matt Barstow voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – None.

***SIEC and SWIC Update*** – Melissa Nazzaro reported that SIEC has updated the ICEP form with special conditions. It is now available on the OGR website. The statewide radio system RFR is still out. The date for submissions is March 15 for eligible applicants. One thing that has come up in conversations is about system requirements. Before you buy anything from a radio vendor, have someone associated with CoMIRS take a look at it. The P25 network will be in Phase 2. It requires TDMA, which a lot of equipment already has. ACOMT class had to be rescheduled over a year ago, then was postponed again due to COVID. They are now finally putting it together virtually, limited to a class of 15, the same people who originally signed up.

**Project Updates**

***Video Downlink Repairs & Upgrades*** – Coordination of the training has been difficult, but it will probably be in the next week. Raine will ask Vislink to propose a few times and will run those by people. They were wondering if anyone has the ability to do a video downlink during

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the training? Bob Hassett replied that they do not, though maybe they could reach out to MSP Air Wing. Matt said they might be able to accommodate that if they have the specific times. Raine will be in touch with Matt.

**Hilltown IMC** – This project was finally put under contract last month. Mike Perkins provided an update that they have worked out a timeline. The administrative training for current IMC agencies will be held later this week and in February, followed by the training for new IMC agencies. The tentative “go live” dates for new agencies will be in May.

**Command Pod Multikey** – Raine reported that the contract has been issued.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

**Berkshire County** – Tom Grady had no updates to report.

**Franklin County** – Butch Garrity reported that the new CoMIRS frequencies are now in the radios and they have been experimenting. They had four consoles but found out that one of them could no longer be used for paging. Operationally, they are still figuring things out.

**Hampshire County** – Lindsay Stromgren had no updates to report.

**WMLEC** – Steve Kozloski had no updates to report, but he asked Butch if radios that are being rolled out have the WMLEC talk groups in them so they would still have connectivity with Hampshire. Butch replied that that was the plan. Melissa added that it is part of the interops set, so it will be in there anyway even if not placed in with main groups.

**CMED** – Bob Hassett reported that in anticipation of Med-9 coming to its end of service life, they ordered a new one. The timing was good because the old one broke down shortly thereafter. The technician finished the new installation and they will probably go live later this week.

**MSP** – Matt Barstow reported that things have generally been quiet, though the CoMIRS project team has been busy. Grant applications are now being accepted. They are spending a lot of time working with the Franklin County group and working in the Saugus area.

**911/Dispatch** – Nina Barszcz reported that the State 911 department had put out an advisement about the FCC regulating unwanted robocalls. Carriers will be blocking anything coming in as a private or unknown number, so PSAPs and agencies need to make sure they are using valid caller ID and reverse 911 systems to ensure that calls are not blocked. Matt added that they have seen this first hand when the Commonwealth moved State Police administrative phones to a VOIP system, including the Mass barracks. Windstream, one of the main carriers for them, has aggressive spam blocking procedures in place. When local PSAPs get a call for State Police and transfer it to the barracks, if it is a non-initialized phone Windstream flags it as spam, so it is ignored. They are working with Windstream and EOTSS to fix this. They are also working on an internal memo to send to the barracks about answering calls even if it looks like spam. Matt also reported on the SolarWinds breach by overseas agents. The State 911 vendor, CommTech, uses

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SolarWinds and was affected. They have been proactive and do not believe there was any data breach, but it revealed a vulnerability that has since been rectified.

**Air Methods** – Cameron Spanfelner reported that they have some exciting projects coming in the next year, including getting further resources in feeder facilities for Baystate Franklin and Berkshire facilities. They will be getting information out about out-of-pocket costs. People are often reluctant to call helicopters out of fear of high costs, but the average out-of-pocket cost for transport nationwide is \$160.

**Other** – Bob asked Melissa to talk about what happened to FirstNet in Nashville, which was discussed at the SIEC meeting. Melissa did not have the information handy and was only able to give a brief overview. When the explosion happened, the impact to the AT&T infrastructure originally was impacted by the power outage, but there were redundant paths that were not in place, and some FirstNet and non-FirstNet customers were affected. Bob added that the initial explosion took out the infrastructure. The back-up generators were on the first floor and got flooded, so everything was down for about nine hours. They are taking steps all over country to resolve that. Melissa added that they have monthly update meetings with their Broadband providers and they discussed it this month.

**Budget Review**

Raine reported. This subcommittee has spent all the funds in FFY18 and FFY19. The FFY2020 grant is on board, including up to \$200,000 allocated for this group.

**Requests** –

**Motorola System Key for Kenwood System:** Raine explained that at last month's meeting a discussion began regarding the system key needed for WestComm's Kenwood radios. Raine initiated conversations with Dennis and Khristy and put this on the agenda because she was expecting a request from Khristy, but she did not get it yet. Dennis clarified that the system key in question is a Motorola system key to access the Kenwood system. Steve reported that he did some research, and the cost would be \$100.25 per system key USB dongle and i-button, depending on how many they would need. Melissa asked about the licensing issues and who would be responsible for that. Matt believed it would be the system owner. He also noted that EF Johnson and Kenwood keys may be different, so you need to make sure you get the right one. Melissa noted that if there is a Tait or Icon user they will have to buy those system keys, too. Dennis explained that the goal was to get the system keys for the Motorola radios in the region that are cache radios, mobile communication assets, or COML radios.

Steve suggested that the subcommittee table this issue until the next meeting. He will have another discussion with them about the number of licenses and other issues. He is also going to propose to WestComm that the operations group meet before the next meeting and come up with a formalized plan regarding who is granted access and to check on the licenses. Erin explained that they were looking to see if the Council would be able to pay for the Motorola Keys. It would have to go through John Ruggiero. They are required to license every radio that gets the frequency with FCC. Steve clarified that Kenwood or EFJohnson might give them a block of

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subscribers, so that might be different and might require looping Verizon in to make sure they are not exceeding the number of subscribers.

**Old Business –**

*Berkshire County Spectrum Analyzer Repair:* Jason Breault reported that the spectrum analyzer is back and functioning, and Comtronics has agreed to absorb the \$50 handy fee.

**New Business:**

Bob Hassett reported that they are working on plans for potential protests for tomorrow. There are no expected problems in Western Mass, but there may be in the eastern part of the state.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair**

Raine asked if Barry and Melissa have been in touch regarding communications equipment. Melissa confirmed that they have and that they are still working on some of the finer details.

Jason Breault reported that he has several ideas for WMRIC projects: 1) purchasing portable tactical repeaters, suitcase-style repeaters; 2) getting 12 single band 800 MHz radios for Berkshire County; 3) assisting Lanesboro FD in installing a repeater system; and 4) purchasing portable satellite phones for COMLs for when there is no cell coverage, and/or vehicle mounted cell phones for the WMLEC trailer, Dennis's trailer, and the command center for places where there is no coverage. Jason will write up proposals for those projects.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, 2021, at 12:30 pm, as a virtual meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to adjourn. Steve Kozloski seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bernie Forgea, Bob Hassett, Tom Grady, Jason Breault, Lindsay Stromgren, Nina Barszcz, Butch Garrity, Steve Kozloski, Matt Barstow, Bob Garriepy, and Dennis Nazzaro voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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The meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for January 19, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from December 15, 2020 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY18 Budget Report through 1/15/21
- WMRIC FFY19 Budget Report through 1/15/21

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason, WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

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**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Patricia McGuirk (EOPSS), Melissa Nazzaro (EOPSS), Alan Roy (Palmer FD/WMFCA)

**Subcommittee members absent:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Jason Breault (Pittsfield PD), Bernie Forgea (Cummington FD)

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Bob Hassett called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the January 19, 2021 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Dennis Nazzaro moved to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021 meeting as submitted. Steve Kozloski seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Tom Grady, Dennis Nazzaro, Nina Barszcz, Lindsay Stromgren, Peter Cowles, Steve Kozloski, Bob Garriepy, and Anthony Gentile voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – None.

**SIEC and SWIC Update** – Melissa Nazzaro reported. SIEC has been meeting regularly. Across state have be using TAC2s for interoperable channels for vaccine sites for people who need simplex communications. The e-FOG has been finalized and should be released shortly to be downloaded. Melissa will inform the subcommittee when that happens. Years ago, due to issues with air-to-ground communications, the state put out memo to use Tac217 to not to override local control. A few months ago, New England Air Association (NEAA) reached out to Melissa to discuss implementing changes so that all air-to-ground communications for medical helicopters is happening on Tac217. It has become increasingly difficult to maintain radio programming. A letter will be going out within the next few weeks with a start date 30 days after that. The set of frequencies will stay the same. This is mostly for landing zone communications.

**Project Updates**

**Video Downlink Repairs & Upgrades** – Raine Brown reported. She is still working with Linda from Vislink on coordinating a training.

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**Hilltown IMC** – Raine reported that this project is moving forward. The software has been installed and user trainings have been conducted. The “go-live” date is next month.

**Command Pod Multikey** – Dennis Nazzaro reported. This was delivered last week and installed two days ago by Mike Gerard.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

**Berkshire County** – Tom Grady reported. They are preparing for the next round of development grant money from State 911 for the next phase of the build-out.

**Franklin County** – Butch Garrity reported no updates. Walter Tibbetts joined later in the meeting; see update under “business unforeseen by chair.”

**Hampshire County** – Lindsay Stromgren reported no updates.

**WMLEC** – Steve Kozloski reported no updates on the technology side. They are monitoring how WMLEC will interface with Franklin in the migration to 800. They also met with the Berkshire chiefs and found some push back from law enforcement on annual service charges. There is concern that they might be pulling back in participation. Tom added that he had several chiefs reach out to him after that meeting. He feels comfortable that the 24 communities they dispatch for understand it and will support it. He will try to do as much as he can to convince the others of the value of the system.

**CMED** – Bob Hassett reported. The microwave link from Mt. Tom to Springfield will be reaching end-of-life capability within a year. This is a critical link. They have a fiber-optic running to AMR on Cottage St. but need to convince IT to hook them up. Hopefully will get it hooked up before the link reaches its end of life.

**MSP** – Butch Garrity reported no updates.

**911/Dispatch** – Nina Barszcz reported no updates.

**Air Methods** – No one was present to give an update.

**Other** – None.

**Budget Review**

Raine reported. We have \$200,000 for projects in FFY2020. We are anticipating the NOFO for FFY 2021 later this month. Depending on the turnaround time, we might need to meet before the next Council meeting to put forward project ideas for projects starting in calendar year 2022.

**Requests** –

**Motorola System Key for Kenwood System:** Raine has not received the request yet.

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**Old Business** – None.

**New Business** –

Alan Roy presented a request from Western Mass Fire Chiefs to upgrade radios in the UHF cache. This came about through discussion with John Dearborn, after they put in a request for batteries for existing UHF portable radios that are about 13 years old and not compliant with P25 standards. The sentiment was that they should not invest in non-compliant radios. Initially they were looking at just Hampshire and Hampden Counties, but with further discussion they decided it would be prudent to include all four counties. Alan spoke with chiefs from Franklin and Berkshire counties and they are interested. This would maintain interoperability among counties. The quote from Motorola is in today's packet.

Melissa raised a concern about the Franklin County cache. They are going to 800, but as things stand now they will continue to have access to WMLEC through a patch. If they leave the area, that same patch will carry them throughout the other counties. Those UHF radios are mostly being traded in but some might be kept on hand. This is a big investment for radios. Is it clear that Franklin County is on board with the need? Alan replied that he talked with Chief Strahan and he said they would be interested because of the 800. He also spoke with Chief Meranti from North Adams who also was interested for interoperability. WMFCA is requesting guidance from the subcommittee to maintain interoperability, as it did not sound like batteries would be approved for older, non-compliant radios. Dennis asked if these radios would strictly be for fire department use or if other agencies could request use. Alan replied that any agency in the WMLEC system could use it. They have been dispatched in the past to coordinate police, fire, and EMS at large events, and have been used at large brush and forest fire scenes. If under care of a police or fire chief, they are fine with it. Dennis also asked if there was any talk with fire mobilization, who may also be moving to 800. He wondered if it might make more sense to look at cache radios in 800 MHz range instead of UHF. Alan replied that they would be satisfied with whatever the committee feels is the best way to do this. Lindsay noted that given where we are now, it would be odd to be buying single band radios. It may be better bang for buck to get tri-band, so you get the most utility.

Alan reiterated that the original initial request was just batteries. These radios are not in everyday use. They can continue to use existing equipment, or figure out if 800 or tri-band would make sense. Dennis asked if the request for batteries had come before this committee. Alan had not previously been involved so he did not know, but he explained that the original request was for 64 batteries. Dennis noted that batteries are readily available and would be cheaper, even though the radios are 13 years old and not capable of P25. No one is using UHF P25, with the exception of the new WestComm system, so it may be better to keep the old radios now and buy new batteries, then get multi-band eventually when needed. Alan replied that they could be happy with batteries. Tom noted that we need to make sure we look at everything we currently have in use to see if there is something we have that could be substituted. We have UHF radios in the Homeland Security cache.

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Raine clarified that the battery request never made it to her or to the subcommittee, so she is not sure why they got the idea that it would not be approved. A letter of request for batteries would be the first step. They should also try to use the underutilized cache in Berkshire County. Alan agreed to rewrite the request for batteries for Hampshire and Hampden counties, as that would be sufficient to get the system operable.

Melissa informed everyone that there is an initiative to look at fire mobilization interoperability across the Commonwealth. Right now buying batteries buys time, and a year from now we should have a better sense of where a large investment needs to be.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair**

Walter Tibbetts reported that FCECS signed a contract with Goosetown for preventive maintenance and emergency repairs effective February 1<sup>st</sup>. There have been a few failures or problems including the microwave to Adams Hill, which helps parts of Greenfield and Montague. The new one is in and ready to be installed. A new antenna purchased for the Charlemont site will be done at the same time. Another failure at Toby was replaced with a spare. There was a generator failure at the Orange repeater site due to mice. They installed a spare one. Regarding the transition to 800, the official radio order form just went out to chiefs and is due back to FRCOG by March 5 so they can start making orders.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at 12:30 pm, as a virtual meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to adjourn. Walter Tibbetts seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Tom Grady, Dennis Nazzaro, Butch Garrity, Walter Tibbetts, Peter Cowles, Nina Barszcz, Anthony Gentile, and Bob Garriepy voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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The meeting adjourned at 1:13 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for February 16, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from January 19, 2021 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY19 Budget Report through 2/12/21
- WMRIC FFY20 Budget Report through 2/12/21
- WMFCA Letter of Request for radios, dated 2/12/21
- Motorola Solutions quote for WMFCA, dated 2/11/21

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason, WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

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**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Khristy Lord (WestComm Regional Dispatch), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Patricia McGuirk (EOPSS), Melissa Nazzaro (EOPSS), Michael Perkins (Cummington PD), John Taylor (Shelburne Fire),

**Subcommittee members absent:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Bernie Forgea (Cummington FD), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Control/MSP), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC)

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Bob Hassett called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the February 16, 2021 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Walter Tibbetts moved to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2021 meeting as submitted. Tom Grady seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Tom Grady, Walter Tibbetts, Dennis Nazzaro, Jason Breault, Lindsay Stromgren, Peter Cowles, Bob Garriepy, Nina Barszcz, and Anthony Gentile voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – Bob reported that the Massachusetts e-FOG is out. The app is available from the app store. The ten Hampden SRT radios were approved.

**SIEC and SWIC Update** – *Melissa Nazzaro joined later in the meeting; see “Other” (below).*

### **Project Updates**

**Video Downlink Repairs & Upgrades** – Raine Brown reported. She has tried to reconnect with Vislink about getting a training into the region but has had no communication from them. Jason Breault suggested asking John Ruggiero to do a training. He might also be able to coordinate a helicopter flyover. Bob noted that the last one with John a few years ago was productive. Jason will ask John and will be in touch with Raine.

**Hilltown IMC** – Mike Perkins reported. They have administered the training and are having success with the IMC technology. Non-IMC customers will have the records training in the middle of April. Central Square is not allowing travel, so they will do it via Microsoft teams. For current IMC customers, the go-live date is the beginning of May. They need to work with

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EOTSS to configure Citrix. The go-live date for non-IMC customers is the beginning of June, with the goal for everyone to be on by July 1. They are still getting accounts built and getting people access.

**Command Pod Multikey** – Raine reported that this was installed this past month. Dennis Nazzaro confirmed that everything is all set.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

**Berkshire County** – Tom Grady reported. Their systems are stable for now. They submitted a new development grant proposal to State 911 for upgrading equipment. They had a meeting yesterday with the town of Otis, which is considering putting up a tower and has encountered some resistance. They gave their support to the town of Otis, and it will come up at the town meeting next week. They have been looking for a site in Becket or Otis to pick up signals. They are also working with the town of Tolland, which expressed interest in an 800 system. They have not heard a lot from them in the past.

**Franklin County** – Walter Tibbetts reported. The FCECS is meeting on Thursday. Not much has been done with the Adams Hill microwave. A purchase order was issued for realignment of the microwave from Royalston back to Grace. The GPS clock at Toby failed because it wrote to a memory card when it lost power, but it filled up and did not start dumping, so it shut down. It was under warranty and is being fixed, and they are checking the other GPS clocks to make sure the programming is correct in those. There was a power supply issue on Borden which affected Charlemont; once they fixed that, it knocked the simulcast off in East County for a couple of days. They have a temporary fix for now.

**Hampshire County** – Lindsay Stromgren reported. Mt. Lincoln lost power in a windstorm, but the generators kicked in. They are in the early stages in Amherst of running fiber up to Mt. Lincoln. The IT director hopes that within a year or so they can get fiber up there, which would be a benefit to Amherst and other towns. They are currently dependent on microwaves, which are fine, and copper pairs, which are becoming problematic.

**WMLEC** – Dennis Nazzaro had nothing to report.

**CMED** – Bob Hassett reported. They are looking at a console upgrade in June with Motorola, and continuing to replace the Med-9 system, which is the main channel in Springfield.

**MSP** – No one was present to give an update.

**911/Dispatch** – Nina Barszcz reported. The three State 911 department grants are out for PSAPs.

**Air Methods** – No one was present to give an update. Tom mentioned that two reps showed up at the dispatch center a few days ago and spent some time with the dispatchers. They discussed the changes under the new FOG and found it beneficial.

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**Other** – Melissa Nazzaro gave the SWIC update. The New England Air Alliance letter went out, with an effective date of April 1. She is working on a FAQ document to make the transition period easier. The communications SharePoint site is up and running. They have run three tutorials on that. It is internally facing. If anyone would like access, reach out to Melissa. The most current tutorial was recorded so she can share the link. They are working on a “best practices” document through the SIEC Policy and Programs Committee, focused around 10 best practices. They are developing 1-page bulletins similar to the encryption bulletin put out last year. The Massachusetts e-FOG was released at the beginning of March; you can find it on the App store or Google Play store, or Melissa can provide links.

**Budget Review**

Raine reported. Active WMRIC funds are in FFY2020, with \$200,000 available for projects.

**Requests**

*WMLEC UHF Cache Backup Batteries* – Bob Hassett reminded the committee that Chief Roy was here last month. Based on the feedback from the committee, he sent a new request looking for replacements for 64 radio batteries, for a total of \$3,625.

**Motion:** Jason Breault moved to approve \$3,625 for radio batteries. Dennis Nazzaro seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Tom Grady, Walter Tibbetts, Dennis Nazzaro, Jason Breault, Lindsay Stromgren, Peter Cowles, Bob Garriepy, Nina Barszcz, and Anthony Gentile voted in favor. The motion was approved.

*NWMIMT CoMIRS Mobile and Portable Radio Request* – John Taylor presented a request on behalf of NWMIMT related to the CoMIRS project in Franklin County. They have a small cache of UHF and multiband radios, and they would like to add to that cache. The grant is written at base model level, but they are looking at upgrading and purchasing accessories not covered by the base grant, as outlined in the project proposal (see today’s handout). They want to be compatible within Franklin County and elsewhere. Walter noted that there is a reimbursement available for mobile installation, for up to \$300 per radio with proof of payment \$300. Raine is not sure how reimbursement would work with our grant.

**Motion:** Dennis Nazzaro moved to approve \$11,400 for the NWMIMT radios. Anthony Gentile seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Tom Grady, Walter Tibbetts, Dennis Nazzaro, Jason Breault, Lindsay Stromgren, Peter Cowles, Bob Garriepy, Nina Barszcz, and Anthony Gentile voted in favor. The motion was approved.

*WestComm System Key* – Khristy Lord presented a request for the Council to cover the cost of the master system key. This would allow Motorola radios to be programmed for interoperability. Any agency that has Motorola radios that wants to have interoperability would reach out to the WestComm radio technician and they could program it. Dennis added that it is a trunked UHF system, so any cache radios, Springfield Fire, and others would need the key for their system. The idea is that we would fund it but they would purchase it and hold on to it. Radios would have to be programmed ahead of time, not in an incident. Melissa noted that users also need to

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have purchased the trunking option in the Motorola radios, or upgrade to include trunking. Single band UHF radios do not come with trunking.

**Motion:** Anthony Gentile moved to approve \$500 for the WestComm System Key. Lindsay Stromgren seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Tom Grady, Walter Tibbetts, Dennis Nazzaro, Jason Breault, Lindsay Stromgren, Peter Cowles, Bob Garriepy, Nina Barszcz, and Anthony Gentile voted in favor. The motion was approved.

*Project Ideas from Berkshire* – Jason Breault presented several project ideas for the subcommittee. These include a VHF portable tactical repeater for Berkshire County; 12 single band 800 MHz APX 6000 portables for Berkshire County; money to install an existing Crossband repeater system; and portable satellite phones. See today’s handouts for more details about each. Jason is waiting for Motorola to get quotes for first three projects and is looking for a vendor for the satellite phones. He hopes to come up with pricing for next month.

**Old Business** – None.

**New Business** –

*FFY2021 SHSP Investment Plan* – Raine reported. Last week we received information from EOPSS that the FFY2021 award amount for WRHSAC has been set at \$1,190,568, which is close to level funding from this year. The grant will run from January 2022, through July 2023. We have some minimum criteria spending that is new this year; one is enhancing information and intelligence sharing. Many of this committee’s projects meet that criteria. At today’s Council meeting \$150,000 was allocated for this committee for projects yet to be identified. Bob explained that this is fairly representative of our spending.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair**

None.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, 2021, at 12:30 pm, as a virtual meeting.

**Motion:** Tom Grady moved to adjourn. Peter Cowles seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Tom Grady, Dennis Nazzaro, Lindsay Stromgren, Peter Cowles, Jason Breault, Bob Garriepy, Anthony Gentile, and Nina Barszcz voted in favor. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for March 16, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from February 16, 2021 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY19 Budget Report through 2/12/21

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 16, 2021, 12:30pm**

- WMRIC FFY20 Budget Report through 2/12/21
- WMLEC UHF Radio Battery Replacement Proposal from the WMFCA
- Motorola Solutions quote dated 2/22/21
- NWMIMT Project Proposal dated 3/4/21
- Westcomm Request for Master System Key
- Email from Jason Breault dated 3/11/21 re: Project Justification

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason, WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

DRAFT

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 12:30pm**

**Subcommittee members present:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Peter Cowles (Westfield), Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Control/MSP), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham Dispatch), Thomas Grady (BCSO/BCECS), Robert Hassett (Springfield EMD/CMED), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst FD), Walter Tibbetts (NWMIMT/FCECS)

**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Erin Hastings (Westcomm Regional Dispatch), Khristy Lord (Westcomm Regional Dispatch), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Patricia McGuirk (EOPSS), Michael Perkins (Cummington PD), Cameron Spanfelner (Air Methods)

**Subcommittee members absent:** Nina Barszcz (Westfield Dispatch), Jason Breault (Pittsfield PD/BCSO), Bernie Forgea (Cummington FD), Dennis Nazzaro (Northampton FD)

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Bob Hassett called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the March 16, 2021 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Lindsay Stromgren moved to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2021 meeting as submitted. Peter Cowles seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Peter Cowles, Butch Garrity, Tom Grady, Lindsay Stromgren, Walter Tibbetts, and Anthony Gentile voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – None.

*SIEC and SWIC Update* – None.

**Project Updates**

**Video Downlink Repairs & Upgrades** – Bob Hassett reported that they did the downlink training at Westover with John Ruggerio. The airwing flew several legs and everyone tested their equipment. Things work great but they discovered that the screens are small and viewing is difficult. Converters from SDI to HDMI would be helpful to allow projection to bigger screens. Chuck Balboni is getting a quote and they will bring a request to the next meeting.

**Hilltown IMC** – Raine reported that the training has been completed for all agencies. They are transitioning current agencies next week and the new agencies will be added in June. Michael Perkins joined later in the meeting and added that by July everyone will be up and running. Three police communications centers in Shelburne, Braintree, and Northampton will be looking to create uniform operations.

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***WMLEC WMFCA UHF Radio Cache Batteries*** – Bob Hassett reported that this request was approved by the full Council today. Raine will send it to EOPSS.

***WESTCOMM System Key*** – Bob Hassett reported that this request was approved today. Raine noted that it still has to go to EOPSS and SIEC, then she will be in touch with Westcomm regarding procurement.

***NWMIMT CoMIRS Radios*** – Bob Hassett reported that the radio upgrades were approved today, including the accessories. Raine clarified that when we approved it last month, John Taylor had asked for installation to be included. However, in speaking with FRCOG colleagues about how the CoMIRS grant will be managed, she learned that the grant covers installation even if the radios are upgraded. Therefore the amount that was presented to the Council and approved today did not include installation cost.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

***Berkshire County*** – Tom Grady reported. They applied for a State 911 development grant. They have been having discussions with fire chiefs on enhancements for mutual aid responses. Blandford will be moving to Northampton for dispatch services as of July 1st.

***Franklin County*** – Walter Tibbetts reported. Goosetown checked the alignment of the Royalston to New Salem link, which was engineered and installed by Beltronics as a workaround but had problems. Goosetown found that the alignment was off at both the towers. At Royalston, they lost power while realigning and discovered that improper installation led to the radio being burned out. The link to get Simulcast 1 back is delayed. The 800 MHz project is moving along, with final orders now ready. The FY21 equipment safety grant was delayed, but was approved April 1 and is now moving. They hope to make purchases by the end of the month.

***Hampshire County*** – Lindsay Stromgren reported nothing new.

***WMLEC*** – Steve Kozloski reported that they are still tracking issues with Mt. Tom South and Mt. Tom North over to Hovey. It involves a legacy point-to-point that was not swapped out earlier. They are trying to get something prepared for WMRIC to look at.

***CMED*** –Walter reported that in checking radios in the system, they found that the Med-2, Med-4, and Med-8 radios in Greenfield need to be replaced. They were originally purchased through WRHSAC to cover the Franklin County area. Med-2 was supposed to be main frequency, with Med-8 being back up, and Med-4 was supposed to tie in to Springfield. It is unclear who owns or maintains them. It may not be worth putting money into the link to Springfield, as it is not generally used. However, Med-2 and Med-8 will need to be replaced. Even if the Council can buy it, the question remains about who will take care of it. FCECS is willing to do that for now, but might cease to exist following the switch to the 800 system. Can we get Western Mass EMS to take ownership of it? It gets used all the time by ambulances in Franklin County. Bob Hassett replied that he did some research and agrees that it was Western Mass EMS that put it there. He

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agrees that Med-4 is not needed as those coming to Springfield from Franklin County usually contact Baystate farther along on their way in. He talked with his technicians and Springfield CMED is willing to look at it and see what they can do to help out. They might have an old spare radio that could add life to the system. Bob is in touch with Kurt Seaman about this.

**MSP** – Matt Barstow reported. The remaining piece of HCOG dissolution was the transfer of the Goshen tower to the town of Goshen. That document was executed, so Goshen now owns the tower and preserves MSP’s ability to use it. Bids for the modernization project were due last Wednesday. They received two bids, which are now under evaluation now. Lindsay asked for some clarifications on the Franklin County CMED radio issue. Walter clarified that the issue is on the receive side of the unit to Baystate Franklin. It needs legacy equipment (DOS) to tune it. Lindsay stressed that they need to be able to contact Baystate Franklin, as this is the only link in.

**911/Dispatch** – Anthony Gentile reported. At the State 911 Commission meeting, they reported that the development grant received 21 applications for double the amount of funds earmarked, so they will be going through the applications carefully.

**Air Methods** – Cameron Spanfelner reported. They have seen a big increase in transports as people get outside and weather is nicer. There has also been an uptick in drone activity, especially in construction sites. In one case this delayed takeoff of a med flight.

**Other** – Peter Cowles reported that they are getting a new EMD up to speed. They are also looking at an old tactical box and might be upgrading radios. This might be a resource for patching. They may come to the Council with a request for funds.

**Budget Review**

Raine reported. For FFY2020 we had \$200,000; after the three projects approved today we have about \$185,000 remaining to use through the end of July, 2022.

**Requests**

**Project Ideas from Berkshire** – See “project justification” letter and quotes from Jason Breault in today’s handouts for request details. Tom noted that these are wish list items to add resources in the Berkshires. He asked the committee to look at them and see if they make sense. We put money into the trailer, but we do not need to create redundant resources. APX radios are available from MEMA, but there can be a lag to get them to the Berkshires. However, this may not be a top priority for region as a whole.

**Old Business** – None.

**New Business** – None.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair** – None.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 12:30pm**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 18, 2021, at 12:30 pm, as a virtual meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to adjourn. Anthony Gentile seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Peter Cowles, Butch Garrity, Tom Grady, Walter Tibbetts, Bob Garriepy, Anthony Gentile, and Steve Kozloski voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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The meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for April 20, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from March 16, 2021 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY19 Budget Report through 4/16/21
- WMRIC FFY20 Budget Report through 2/12/21
- Project Justification from Jason Breault, dated 3/11/21
- Motorola Quotation for Berkshire portables, dated 4/15/21
- Motorola Quotation for Berkshire repeater, dated 4/15/21

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason, WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
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Tuesday, May 18, 2021, 12:30pm**

**Subcommittee members present:** Nina Barszcz (Westfield Dispatch), Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Control/MSP), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham Dispatch), Thomas Grady (BCSO/BCECS), Robert Hassett (Springfield EMD/CMED), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst FD), Walter Tibbetts (NWMIMT/FCECS)

**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Erin Hastings (Westcomm Regional Dispatch), Khristy Lord (Westcomm Regional Dispatch), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Patricia McGuirk (EOPSS), Barry Ross (Hampden County Sheriff's Office)

**Subcommittee members absent:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Jason Breault (Pittsfield PD/BCSO), Peter Cowles (Westfield), Bernie Forgea (Cummington FD), Dennis Nazzaro (Northampton FD)

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Bob Hassett called the meeting to order at 12:33 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the April 20, 2021 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Bob Garriepy moved to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2021 meeting as submitted. Tom Grady seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Lindsay Stromgren, Tom Grady, Butch Garrity, Steve Kozloski, Bob Garriepy, and Nina Barszcz voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – Bob Hassett reported. We currently do not have a SWIC, and he has not heard any explanation for why Melissa Nazzaro was let go or what is happening with that position. They did not have a real SIEC meeting this month; projects pending approval are on hold until the next meeting on June 2. Tricia McGuirk clarified that they have a new person for the SWIC role but they are going through a background check. Bob noted that we have worked hard in the Councils to build relationships that are important when bad things happen. We have nurtured those relationships, and it worries him to see them being eroded.

**SIEC and SWIC Update** – See above.

**Project Updates**

**Hilltown IMC** – Raine Brown reported that they expect to have everyone on board by next month.

**WMLEC WMFCA UHF Radio Cache Batteries** – Raine reported that this is in progress.

**WESTCOMM System Key** – Bob reported that this project is still waiting for approval.

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*NWMIMT CoMIRS Radios* – Bob reported that this project is still waiting for approval.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

*Berkshire County* – Tom Grady reported no updates on the systems front. They are currently fighting one of the largest wildfires in the Commonwealth in the Berkshires; this has involved a lot of communications, and that aspect has been going well.

*Franklin County* – Walter Tibbetts reported. They still do not have Sim-1 and Sim-2 up on the New Salem tower. Regarding the transition to 800, the first order of radios has arrived, four weeks ahead of schedule. They will start programming the radios next week and then get them out to the towns. Dan Nietzsche is going to be leaving FRCOG, but they will be working with others at FRCOG to keep the project going. Bob Hassett noted that they can now hear Med8 in Springfield when it used in Franklin County. Walter explained that it is a loaner from Goosetown. They got a quote for a new one, which he will forward to Raine.

*Hampshire County* – Lindsay Stromgren reported no updates.

*WMLEC* – Steve Kozloski reported no updates.

*CMED* – Bob Hassett reported that they are replacing the entire recording system and will be well placed for the future with these upgrades.

*MSP* – No one was present to give an update.

*911/Dispatch* – Nina Barszcz reported that FY22 State 911 grants are out for applications. The State 911 commission meeting is happening this Thursday at 1 pm. Anthony Gentile reported that Wilbraham started answering calls for town of Hampden today in Phase 1 of their merger.

*Air Methods* – No one was present to give an update.

*Other* – None.

**Budget Review**

Raine reported. After the projects that are pending approval, we have \$185,875 remaining for this subcommittee to consider for projects for FFY2020.

**Requests**

*Project Ideas from Berkshire* – See information from Jason Breault in today's meeting packet. Raine noted that we need more information from Jason and that he needed to be here to present the requests. She will take this off agenda until we get further info.

**Old Business** – None.

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**New Business** – None.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair** –

Walter reported that he received a quote for \$13,904 for two Med radios, but it came too late for him to put together a proposal for this meeting. He will prepare that for next month's meeting, including maintenance and ownership.

Raine noted that it is not yet clear whether the next meeting will be virtual or whether an in-person quorum might be necessary as the state of emergency is lifted. Keep an eye on your email for information about next month's meeting.

Tom shared that although he was not officially notified by EOPSS about Melissa's position, he received a personal phone call from her to tell him that her position was eliminated. She is working for Undersecretary Wood as contractor for CoMIRS, so she will still be involved somewhat, though not as a state employee. We would welcome her and her expertise back as part of this group again.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 15, 2021, at 12:30 pm. Location/format TBA.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to adjourn. Anthony Gentile seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Lindsay Stromgren, Tom Grady, Walter Tibbetts, Butch Garrity, Steve Kozloski, Bob Garriepy, and Nina Barszcz voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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The meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for May 18, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from April 20, 2021 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY19 Budget Report through 5/14/21
- WMRIC FFY20 Budget Report through 5/14/21
- Project Justification from Jason Breault, dated 3/11/21
- Motorola Quotation for Berkshire portables, dated 4/15/21
- Motorola Quotation for Berkshire repeater, dated 4/15/21

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason  
WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, June 15, 2021, 12:30pm**

**Subcommittee members present:** Nina Barszcz (Westfield Dispatch), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham Dispatch), Thomas Grady (BCSO/BCECS), Robert Hassett (Springfield EMD/CMED), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC), Dennis Nazzaro (Northampton FD), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst FD), Walter Tibbetts (NWMIMT/FCECS)

**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Rich Fiske (EOPSS), Erin Hastings (Westcomm Regional Dispatch), Jay Hastings (Westfield State PD), Tom Kettle (Westfield State EMD), Khristy Lord (Westcomm Regional Dispatch), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Patricia McGuirk (EOPSS), Michael Perkins (Cummington PD), Cameron Spanfelner (Air Methods), Xander Sylvain

**Subcommittee members absent:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Jason Breault (Pittsfield PD/BCSO), Peter Cowles (Westfield), Bernie Forgea (Cummington FD), Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Control/MSP),

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Bob Hassett called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the May 18, 2021 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2021 meeting as submitted. Walter Tibbetts seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Walter Tibbetts, Tom Grady, and Lindsay Stromgren voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – Bob Hassett reported. SIEC is going to meet on July 7, as they were not able to meet last month. Bob introduced Rich Fiske, the new SWIC for the Commonwealth. Rich informed the committee that he is trying to get up to speed on what the Councils are doing. He hopes to build communication with and between Councils, and he intends to do a lot of listening to learn about everyone's needs and how EOPSS can help accomplish goals. He understands that a lot of programs' funding and personnel levels are based on population, but when something happens you need support no matter where you are.

**SIEC and SWIC Update** – See above.

**Project Updates**

**Hilltown IMC** – Mike Perkins reported that the IMC project will be up and running officially as of July 1.

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***WMLEC WMFCA UHF Radio Cache Batteries*** – Raine Brown reported. The batteries were received last week and Alan Roy is distributing them. The project is now complete.

***WESTCOMM System Key*** – Bob Hassett reported that this project is still waiting for approval. He will bring it forward at the July 7th meeting.

***NWMIMT CoMIRS Radios*** – This project is also awaiting approval at the July 7 meeting.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

***Berkshire County*** – Tom Grady reported that systems are stable. They are working on a request from Lanesboro. The Berkshire Mall has been closed for a while. There is some interoperable equipment for the town that was at the mall that they are not maintaining. Berkshire offered space on the tower and they are in process of helping them get communications back up.

***Franklin County*** – Walter Tibbetts reported. Systems are holding steady with no new issues. They are still in communications with Beltronics about the New Salem Sim1 and 2 problems. The big push is to get the 800 radios programmed and out to towns as the orders are coming in. Some have already been used successfully.

***Hampshire County*** – Lindsay Stromgren reported. From a systems standpoint there is nothing new to report. From operational standpoint - during task force activation for the recycling plant fire they encountered some issues with interoperability communications among units assembling for the task force. Individual departments did not have correct frequencies in radios, and/or did not have sufficient training. Those issues are being addressed.

***WMLEC*** – Steve Kozloski reported no systems updates. They are working on getting a meeting with the Westcomm Fire Ops group to discuss how WMLEC can be used as a mutual aid option especially for agencies that do not have trunking capabilities. A vendor had approached Steve about decommissioning FCECS sites, but it was unclear if he was knowledgeable on what was being discussed. Steve requested that WMLEC be included if there are decommissioning talks because a lot is intertwined and it could have a direct impact on the level of service WMLEC can provide. Walter replied that there has been some discussion about decommissioning and that Butch Garrity had put together a plan that has not been voted on yet. However, he noted that there is miscommunication out there, as they are not planning to start decommissioning until they have a viable paging solution, and they will maintain simulcast 1 and 2 for as long as they can. Once that system starts failing, they will drop to UHF regional repeaters using part of the WMLEC system. When that fails, efforts will be made to keep 2-3 WMLEC sites in Franklin County up and running.

***CMED*** – Bob Hassett reported. They installed a new recorder system and upgraded to handle more channels and larger capacity. The microwave system off Mt. Tom into the city is nearing end-of-life. They decided to get a T1 line to replace the microwave system and give more reliability. It has now been built up to Cottage St. and they are waiting for AMR to do their part. It should be functional by the end of summer. Last week they lost the link with Mt. Tom because

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AMR had crews installing new consoles and someone accidentally bumped a switch. With the new T1 line that will not happen. They have console upgrades purchased last year from Motorola and will begin the upgrade work in July. We are looking at an aggressive hurricane season this year. Everyone should start doing system maintenance checks and make sure everything is tightened down and ready for any weather.

**MSP** – No one was present to give an update.

**911/Dispatch** – Nina Barszcz and Anthony Gentile had no updates to report.

**Air Methods** – Cameron Spanfelner reported. They contract with Storm Geo, who have predicted some major hurricanes this season. They are going to retire their EC135, replacing it with an EC145 which is IFR capable. This will allow approaches into hospitals in bad weather, also will allow some advanced services such as pediatric neonate isolette transports. Until now they have had to rely on Boston Med Flights for those patients. They expect to have the new aircraft online by early September.

Lindsay brought up an incident that he witnessed at Berkshire East last week. Dispatchers and air methods did what they were supposed to: the air methods dispatcher told Shelburne Control to go to UTAC-41D, and that dispatcher relayed that to LZ command, but then LZ command said they did not have UTAC-41D on their radios. Lindsay noted that it is inexcusable if they truly do not have it, or maybe they simply do not know they do, but either way it represents a failure at the operator end that needs to be addressed with training and information. He also asked whether the move to CoMIRS would mean that the official Franklin County channel for air methods was going to switch to UTAC-91D. Walter replied that they would switch to 8TAC-91D in accordance with the MIFOG once the majority are using the 800 system. There may be a time when some departments are on 800 and others on UHF, and they will not have the ability to patch those because they are TAC channels. Walter agreed to bring up the issue from Charlemont at their upcoming meeting. Every radio should have UTAC-41D, so this was more likely to be operator error. Lindsay noted that they did a great fall back using simulcast and phone-to-phone. Cameron offered that they could come out any day to make sure everyone is on the same page.

**Other** – Dennis Nazzaro reported that the City of Northampton is beginning the process of building out a radio system and will be switching to 800, but they will be keeping up the VHF main repeater in Northampton for Hampshire County partners. This will increase interoperability with Franklin County, and they also intend to tie into the core. The fire department will have multiband radios; police cruisers will have dual band; DPW and others will have single 800.

**Budget Review**

Raine reported. This subcommittee has \$185,875 in unallocated funds for FFY2020.

**Requests**

**Franklin County Med 2 and Med 8 Request** – Walter Tibbetts presented the request. As discussed in previous meetings, the Med 2 and Med 8 radios into Baystate Franklin have been

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extended past their life and need to be replaced. Goosetown put in loaner radios. There has long been confusion about who owns these, but FCECS has been maintaining them and is asking for help from WMRIC to purchase two base radios. FCECS/FRCOG would take ownership. The combiners and antennas are still in good shape and do not need to be replaced. Med 4, which was the radio into Springfield, is not being replaced because it is not generally used.

**Motion:** Steve Kozloski moved to allocate \$14,000 for the purchase of two base radios for Franklin County Med 2 and Med 8. Dennis Nazzaro seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Tom Grady, Lindsay Stromgren, Anthony Gentile, Dennis Nazzaro, Steve Kozloski, and Nina Barszcz voted in favor. Walter Tibbetts abstained. The motion was approved.

Walter also introduced Xander Sylvain, who is taking Dan Nietzsche's place on FCECS.

**Old Business** – None.

**New Business**

**WMRIC Chair Transition** – Bob Hassett will be retiring at the end of July. He will send in a letter of resignation after next month's meeting. Nina Barszcz will be taking his place here and hopefully also at the SIEC representing the Western Region.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair** –

Dennis reported that the Amtrak police reached out wanting to do interoperability while working on train tracks. He put them in touch with John Ruggerio to get on the state system. He also invited them to this meeting. We have no representative from trains on this committee, and it would be good to have greater interoperability with them.

Cameron noted that he learned from colleagues in New York that they have put a new policy in place to have helicopters on standby when serving warrants or conducting raids as there has been no way to quickly get people to the hospital if needed.

Raine reported that as of today the Massachusetts State of Emergency lifts and the exceptions to the Open Meeting Law are ending. An in-person quorum will be needed from now on unless the Governor's request for an extension goes through to allow us to continue to meet virtually. We can use the Hatfield Fire Department space again, and we will have the ability for hybrid meetings. Raine is making sure we will have the equipment we need.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 20, 2021, at 12:30 pm. Location/format TBA.

**Motion:** Tom Grady moved to adjourn. Walter Tibbetts seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Walter Tibbetts, Tom Grady, Lindsay Stromgren, Anthony Gentile, Dennis Nazzaro, Steve Kozloski, and Nina Barszcz voted in favor. The motion was approved.

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The meeting adjourned at 1:20 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for June 15, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from May 18, 2021 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY20 Budget Report through 6/10/21

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason  
WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

DRAFT

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, July 20, 2021, 12:30pm**

**Subcommittee members present:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Bernard Forgea (Cummington FD), Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham Dispatch), Thomas Grady (BCSO/BCECS), Robert Hassett (Springfield EMD/CMED), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC), Dennis Nazzaro (Northampton FD), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst FD), Walter Tibbetts (NWMIMT/FCECS)

**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Tyrone Denson (Springfield Fire), Rich Fiske (EOPSS), Tom Kettle (Westfield State EMD), Khristy Lord (Westcomm Regional Dispatch), Rachel Mason (FRCOG)

**Subcommittee members absent:** Nina Barszcz (Westfield Dispatch), Jason Breault (Pittsfield PD/BCSO), Peter Cowles (Westfield), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Control/MSP)

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Bob Hassett called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the June 15, 2021 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Anthony Gentile moved to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2021 meeting as submitted. Tom Grady seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Lindsay Stromgren, Bob Garriepy, Dennis Nazzaro, Anthony Gentile, Matt Barstow, Tom Grady, Steve Kozloski, and Walter Tibbetts voted in favor. Bernie Forgea abstained. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – Bob Hassett reported no updates.

**SIEC and SWIC Update** – Rich Fiske reported. SIEC met on 7/7 at MEMA. All of the WMRIC projects were approved. The next meeting will be September 21. An email went out regarding eFOG links for Apple and Android. They intend to send emails quarterly to emphasize the importance and need for the tactical channel plans and other eFOG content.

**Project Updates**

**Hilltown IMC** – Raine has not yet received the final invoice.

**WMLEC WMFCA UHF Radio Cache Batteries** – This project is complete.

**WESTCOMM System Key** – Bob reported that SIEC approved the purchase. Raine sent it to MAPC yesterday for procurement.

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***NWMIMT CoMIRS Radios*** – Raine reported that she is coordinating with the FRCOG CoMIRS representative on this project. The majority of radios have been ordered, but we might need to run separate procurement for a few accessory items.

***Franklin County CMED Med 2 and Med 8*** – Bob reported that this project was approved at this morning's Council meeting. Raine noted that it now has to go to EOPSS, and will be on hold for approval until the next SIEC meeting in September. Walter reassured that Goosetown is willing to leave the loaners in as long as necessary.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

***Berkshire County*** – Tom Grady reported. They just received an award from the State 911 Department under the development grant. They were asked to split the award over two fiscal years. In this portion of the project they will upgrade all of the base radios in all tower locations from Quantars to IP-based GTRs and add enhanced security to some locations.

***Franklin County*** – Walter Tibbetts reported. The main part of the UHF system is still fairly stable. They are still waiting to see if Beltronics will stand behind the work they did on the New Salem to Royalston link. There has been negative media around the lease situation with the property owner at the Royalston tower, but it is not based on fact. They still have a lease through the end of October. If that is not renewed, it will affect links to New Salem. Things are working well with the new 800 radios. People who have started using the radios have been very pleased with coverage and clarity, though there are still some holes. Raine relayed a message from Tracy Rogers that she spoke to Beltronics and they will cover it and will cover Goosetown to watch over them doing their work, and they will also check Mt. Grace. Tom suggested an offline meeting with Walter and Rich so he can help as the SWIC.

***Hampshire County*** – Bernie Forgea and Lindsay Stromgren had nothing to report.

***WMLEC*** – Steve Kozloski reported. The Rapid Comm trailer was deployed in East Longmeadow for a planned event, and they successfully bridged U-Tac and V-Tacs over to the new Westcomm P25 UHF trunk system. They also had a standalone system on 8-Tac for the Sheriff to run traffic, and it worked out well. With COVID restrictions being relaxed, the number of events will increase. WMLEC continues to be a resource with a trailer that can be deployed for events with national tacs and local channels.

***CMED*** – Bob Hassett reported. They got the City of Springfield to put in a T1 link to AMR, which will allow them to not have to replace the microwave system that was hitting end of life.

***MSP*** – Matt Barstow reported. There was a request from Cummington to support communications during their town fair, so they will be deploying resources for that. MSP is working with Central Mass EMS in Athol to get better coverage up there, and still making progress with getting the towns of Blandford and Chester on board with Northampton. They are trying to get SPA to get an antenna on Blandford tower.

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**911/Dispatch** – Anthony Gentile reported that State 911 grants have been awarded.

**Air Methods** – No one was present to give an update.

**Other** – Rich Fiske noted that they had a Marathon interop prep meeting at MEMA last week. It's scheduled for Columbus Day this year, and it is worth noting that U-Tac41 and some of the lower V-Tacs will be used for that 24-36 hour period. It should not affect the Western region, but there could be air-to-ground conflict. If there are other planned events for Columbus Day / Marathon Day, it will require good coordination.

**Budget Review**

Raine reported. We have \$171,875 remaining in FFY2020.

**Requests**

**Berkshire Equipment Installation** – Raine reported that she had asked Jason Breault to submit a formal letter of request for this but it has not come in.

**Old Business**

**WMRIC Chair Transition** – Bob Hassett will retire at the end of this month. He had asked Nina Barszcz to take the chair position, but she is unable to take that on. Anthony Gentile has agreed to replace Bob as chair of this committee and as the representative to SIEC, pending approval of the committee.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Walter Tibbetts moved to appoint Anthony Gentile as chair of WMRIC and to represent WMRIC at the SIEC. Bob Garriepy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Walter Tibbetts, Bernie Forgea, Dennis Nazzaro, Steve Kozloski, Bob Garriepy, and Lindsay Stromgren voted in favor. Anthony Gentile abstained. The motion was approved.</p>
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**New Business**

**Baystate Franklin Medical Center request** – Raine reported that she has not received a formal proposal and does not have specifics for this request. Dennis reported that he was contacted by Franklin Medical Center. They currently have some UHF radios, but with the switch to 800 they will lose their ability to monitor what is going on in the county. Baystate also wants to get more positions involved in the field in big disasters. They contacted Dennis to ask if there were any cache radios that they could use; Dennis suggested that going through WMRIC would be a better route. Dennis was not sure if they qualify for Franklin County pricing through Motorola or if have to get a quote from Motorola directly. They are looking for two multi-band radios and associated accessories.

Raine spoke to Tracy, who is fairly certain they would not qualify for the CoMIRS grant, but they can reach out to Tracy for more details. Whether or not they qualify for CoMIRS, they will need to submit full specifications and quotes in order to get approval from WMRIC for any funding. Matt Barstow noted that they would not be considered a primary user, so

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they would not be eligible for the CoMIRS grant pricing. Dennis will follow up with them. Walter added that they will need permission from EOTSS to use CoMIRS system and get assigned ID numbers; they will also need to ask FCECS as they did for UHF. Bob Hassett noted that other hospital systems buy their own radios, so they should not need to ask us. Steve asked if we have a history of buying equipment for private entities. Raine replied that there is some precedent, and hospitals are eligible under the Homeland Security grant because they are recognized as first responders.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair –**

Dennis noted that he has been communicating with both the Tech Rescue Team and the new South Hadley dive team. The Tech Rescue Team is planning a full scale exercise on September 7 in Southwick and will incorporate communications exercise with that. Anyone else interested for COML or COMT can contact Dennis. Dennis will send out more info when it is set. Raine added that the exercise is funded by WRHSAC.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 21, 2021, at 12:30 pm, as a virtual meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Lindsay Stromgren moved to adjourn. Tom Grady seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Bob Hassett, Walter Tibbetts, Bernie Forgea, Dennis Nazzaro, Anthony Gentile, Tom Grady, Steve Kozloski, Bob Garriepy, and Lindsay Stromgren voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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The meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for July 20, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from June 15, 2021 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY20 Budget Report through 7/16/21
- Motorola Quotation for Berkshire County Sheriff's Office, dated 6/10/21

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason  
WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

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**Subcommittee members present:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Nina Barszcz (Westfield Dispatch), Jason Breault (BCSO), Bernard Forgea (Cumington FD), Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham Dispatch), Thomas Grady (BCSO/BCECS), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst FD), Walter Tibbetts (NWMIMT/FCECS)

**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Rich Fiske (EOPSS), Erin Hastings (Westcomm Regional Dispatch), Jay Hastings (Westfield State PD), Tom Kettle (Westfield State EMD), Amy Marion (RapidSOS), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Patricia McGuirk (EOPSS), Ben Podsiadlo (EOPSS/OGR)

**Subcommittee members absent:** Peter Cowles (Westfield), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Control/MSP), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC), Dennis Nazzaro (Northampton FD)

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Anthony Gentile called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the July 20, 2021 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2021 meeting as submitted. Walter Tibbetts seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Tom Grady, Jason Breault, Anthony Gentile, Bernie Forgea, Walter Tibbetts, Lindsay Stromgren, Nina Barszcz, Matt Barstow, and Bob Garriepy voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – Anthony Gentile has replaced Bob Hassett as the WMRIC chair.

**SIEC and SWIC Update** – Rich Fiske announced that the last SIEC meeting was on September 1 and the next will be on October 6 at MEMA. EMPG grants and Coronavirus Cares Act funds have both started coming in. One item discussed at SIEC was the Assistance to Firefighter Grants. These are federal grants and not reviewed by SIEC or OGR, so there is concern because review for P25 compliance might not include Massachusetts guidance on encryption and CoMIRs compliance. Rich suggested that agencies send their grant applications to him so that he can review them for state compliance. This is not required but is a good practice for any purchase. They also restarted the Mass Technical Channel Plan working group, as the plan was last updated in 2016. The goal is have the update publishable by the end of the calendar year.

**Project Updates**

**Hilltown IMC** – Raine Brown reported that this project wrapped up last month. All participating departments are linked in, and the final invoice is in process for payment.

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**WESTCOMM System Key** – Erin Hastings reported that the purchase order went out and Motorola should be sending this shortly.

**NWMIMT CoMIRS Radios** – Raine reported that they have received the portables and the chargers. The mobile radios and rugged mics are on backorder, probably for a couple of months.

**Franklin County CMED Med 2 and Med 8** – Walter Tibbetts reported that Goosetown had lent FCECS radios and were going to charge them rent, but then they found three new Kenwood compatible radio bases and were willing to sell them to FCECS at a low price. FCECS decided to do that and return the awarded funds to WRMIC/WRHSAC to put towards other projects.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

**Berkshire County** – Tom Grady reported that they were awarded a development grant and are in the process of working with the vendor to get the order in. Jason Breault reported that there was a problem with dropout on the console such that when MBI went down, the simulcast was not available. They worked with John Ruggiero to solve the issue. It is configured properly now so that if one goes down the other picks up.

**Franklin County** – Walter Tibbetts reported. The UHF system is still holding up. Beltronics stood behind their work on the New Salem tower and replaced the damaged equipment. As departments are moving onto 800, things seem to be working well overall but they are identifying some dead spots. They are doing some investigation on some of those spots.

**Hampshire County** – Lindsay Stromgren and Bernie Forgea had nothing to report.

**WMLEC** – No one was present to give an update.

**CMED** – No one was present to give an update. Raine noted that Ty Denson will be taking Bob Hassett's place as CMED rep.

**MSP** – Matt Barstow reported. They are continuing the process with EOTSS and EOPSS with the successful bidder for the CoMIRS purchases. John Ruggiero and Ben Holms are overseeing the process. The Boston Marathon will be held October 11 and the Berkshire County Sheriff's Office will be lending cache radios to MSP. Brodie Mountain is not passable by vehicle; they are attempting to work with the landowner to get access back.

**911/Dispatch** – Nina Barszcz reported that at the State 911 Commission meeting data was shared showing a 17% uptick in 911 calls after CDC relaxed Covid mandates earlier this year. There have been a lot of medical calls lately. For this year's Development Grant they are trying to bring it up from \$22 million to \$25 million.

**Air Methods** – No one was present to give an update.

**Other** – None.

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**Budget Review**

Raine reported. With the FCECS project canceled, we have \$185,875 available for projects through July, 2022, though we are seeking an extension through the end of December, 2022.

**Requests** – None.

**Old Business** – Lindsay reported on the WMTRT quarterly drill in Southwick.

**New Business**

***RapidSOS Presentation - Massachusetts Regional Rep – Amy Marion***

Amy Marion shared a presentation on the RapidSOS Emergency Response Data Platform.

***WMRIC Members -***

Raine noted that the subcommittee has gotten out of sync with the established two year membership cycle. The WMRIC bylaws state that in every even year we need to re-vote members, but that did not happen in 2020. She asked subcommittee members if we should wait until 2022 or vote now. Anthony suggested waiting. Tom asked if any of the people in the meeting has become a systems owner or wants to be on committee. Raine suggested that we can revisit this topic next month and hold elections in 2022 if everyone agrees.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair** – None.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 19, 2021, at 12:30 pm, as a virtual meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to adjourn. Matt Barstow seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Lindsay Stromgren, Anthony Gentile, Walter Tibbetts, Bernie Forgea, Tom Grady, Jason Breault, Matt Barstow, Nina Barszcz, and Bob Garriepy voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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The meeting adjourned at 1:38 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for September 21, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from July 20, 2021 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY19 Budget Report through 9/17/21
- WMRIC FFY20 Budget Report through 9/17/21

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason, WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
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**Subcommittee members present:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Nina Barszcz (Westfield Dispatch), Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Control/MSP), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham Dispatch), Thomas Grady (BCSO/BCECS), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst FD), Walter Tibbetts (NWMIMT/FCECS)

**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Rich Fiske (EOPSS), Erin Hastings (Westcomm Regional Dispatch), Khristy Lord (Westcomm Regional Dispatch), Jay Hastings (Westfield State PD), Tom Kettle (Westfield State EMD), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Patricia McGuirk (EOPSS), Ben Podsiadlo (EOPSS/OGR)

**Subcommittee members absent:** Jason Breault (Pittsfield PD/BCSO), Peter Cowles (Westfield), Bernard Forgea (Cummington FD), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC), Dennis Nazzaro (Northampton FD)

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Anthony Gentile called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the September 21, 2021 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2021 meeting as submitted. Walter Tibbetts seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Anthony Gentile, Tom Grady, Lindsay Stromgren, Walter Tibbetts, Matt Barstow, Bob Garriepy, and Nina Barszcz voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – Anthony Gentile had no updates to report.

***SIEC and SWIC Update*** – Rich Fiske reported that a couple of projects were approved at the SIEC meeting from other Councils. The Boston Marathon went well overall, though they ran into a challenge with a 3G device not working in one area. The final shutoff for 3G technology is in 2022, but in areas it is already being replaced, so it is important to be aware of. The Mass Tactical Channel Plan Working Group is working on getting the plan updated to be circulated with the MIFOG. Rich also asked that agencies please loop him in whenever there is any exercise with an interoperable communications component, because it goes into a Homeland Security metric that impacts how we get funding.

**Project Updates**

***Hilltown IMC*** – This project is complete and will be removed from the agenda.

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**WESTCOMM System Key** – Erin Hastings reported that she has reached out to Motorola twice asking about the status, but the representative there has not gotten back to her. Matt Barstow will also try to get that moved forward.

**NWMIMT CoMIRS Radios** – Raine Brown reported that there has been no change since last month: the team has received the portable radios and some accessories, but the mobiles and rugged mics are delayed on the Motorola side.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

**Berkshire County** – Tom Grady reported that they have met with a vendor set a timeline for the project that will be funded by the development grant. They hope to place orders as soon as possible to finish by June 30, as there may be supply chain delays.

**Franklin County** – Walter Tibbetts reported that the old UHF system is stable. Beltronics fixed the Grace-Royalston-New Salem link. The CoMIRS system has been holding its own; there have been some glitches, but those are mostly just people getting used to the system. Next Tuesday the Franklin County fire chiefs will be voting on new CoMIRS policies and operations manuals.

**Hampshire County** – Lindsay Stromgren reported. The Mt. Lincoln site in Pelham had been experiencing problems and Goosetown found they need to replace antennas. The towers are very crowded; they conducted a complete inventory and have now color coded them and created a good schematic. They found a few that are abandoned, including one antenna pair that is a Franklin County asset. Walter noted that that site has been deaf for a long time. He will get official clearance on Thursday for them to be removed.

**WMLEC** – No one was present to give an update.

**CMED** – No one was present to give an update.

**MSP** – Matt Barstow reported. There were no significant issues at the Boston Marathon, but there was some TV media interference of Apex radios. MSP will be following up with them to avoid this in the future. Matt thanked Berkshire County for the use of the radios. The State Police now have a tower site coordinator in the radio section helping with projects that include changes to towers all over the state, and they also expect to fill a subscriber manager position soon.

**911/Dispatch** – Anthony reported. Development grant quarterly reports were due on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Air Methods** – No one was present to give an update.

**Other** – Tom reiterated and expanded Rich's request that people report back when they use assets that were purchased with Homeland Security funds, with or without an interoperable component. The Council Chairs had a meeting with Undersecretary Benincasa, who inquired about assets that could be used statewide. The Chairs directed her to the Councils' resource guides, and they also want to make sure that we are capturing data about asset use.

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**Budget Review**

Raine reported. This subcommittee has \$185,875 in FFY2020. A few requests are in the pipeline and will likely be presented at next month's meeting. We just received the extension we had requested for FFY2020, so the new deadline for those funds is the end of December, 2022.

**Requests** – None.

**Old Business** – None.

**New Business** – None.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair** – Butch Garrity asked if there was any procedure to transfer UHF radios purchased with Homeland Security funds from Franklin County, where they are being decommissioned, to Berkshire County. Raine replied that if they are going from one government entity to another, they can just send her an email.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 12:30 pm, as a virtual meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Matt Barstow moved to adjourn. Tom Grady seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Anthony Gentile, Tom Grady, Lindsay Stromgren, Walter Tibbetts, Butch Garrity, Matt Barstow, and Bob Garriepy voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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The meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for October 19, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from September 21, 2021 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY20 Budget Report through 10/15/21

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason  
WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, November 16, 2021, 12:30pm**

**Subcommittee members present:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Nina Barszcz (Westfield Dispatch), Jason Breault (Pittsfield PD/BCSO), Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Control/MSP), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham Dispatch), Thomas Grady (BCSO/BCECS), Tom Kettle (Westfield State EMD), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC), Dennis Nazzaro (Northampton FD), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst FD), Walter Tibbetts (NWMIMT/FCECS)

**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Tyrone Denson (Springfield Fire), Rich Fiske (EOPSS), Jay Hastings (Westfield State PD), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Susan Rathbun (Hinsdale PD)

**Subcommittee members absent:** Peter Cowles (Westfield), Bernard Forgea (Cummington FD)

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Anthony Gentile called the meeting to order at 12:33 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the October 19, 2021 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2021 meeting as submitted. Walter Tibbetts seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Butch Garrity, Tom Grady, Jason Breault, Walter Tibbetts, Anthony Gentile, Dennis Nazzaro, Nina Barszcz, Lindsay Stromgren, Matt Barstow, and Bob Garriepy voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – None.

***SIEC and SWIC Update*** – Rich Fiske reported. There was a regional Chairs meeting with the Undersecretary in which he brought up a reminder that they need a quorum to vote on projects. The working group is wrapping up the most recent update to the Mass Tactical Channel Plan.

**Project Updates**

***WESTCOMM System Key*** – Matt Barstow reported that he spoke with Erin Hastings this morning and she confirmed that they have spoken with Motorola. They should have the key by the end of this month.

***NWMIMT CoMIRS Radios*** – Raine reported that this project is nearly complete. The equipment has been delivered and installation is in process into the field comm unit.

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**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

**Berkshire County** – Tom Grady reported. They are continuing to move forward with this year's project. It was split into two fiscal years, so they are working on the first phase.

**Franklin County** – Walter Tibbetts reported that Goosetown replaced all three CMED radios on Shelburne Mountain. They are multi-band radios so they have backups. The Montague 1 Channel has failed and has been taken off the air. In New Salem they got the microwave working. They are still trying to get the Harris Interplex servers talking to each other. There is a new intermittent problem with transmissions clipping out. According to John Ruggerio it is because an errant transmitter kicks in occasionally.

**Hampshire County** – Lindsay Stromgren reported an update on the Mt Lincoln upgrades. They inventoried and cleared the tower of abandoned equipment, including removing Franklin County assets with permission, which they are storing for the future.

**WMLEC** – No one was present to give an update at this point in the meeting.

**CMED** – Tyrone Denson reported that he spoke to Chuck Balbone about maintenance issues that were more likely operator error. They upgraded a lot of equipment but there is still a lot of old wiring that needs to be removed.

**MSP** – Matt Barstow reported. The contract has been signed by the Commonwealth and Motorola for doing the upgrade to the statewide CoMIRS system. They have a kickoff meeting November 29 with all stakeholders. MSP is moving forward with a two site VHF fire simulcast at Blanford and Chester, and hoping to move Blanford dispatch services to Northampton control by January 1<sup>st</sup>. They are also helping the town of Granville at Westfield Water Works helping them get rid of an old telephone line connection at the fire station.

**911/Dispatch** – Nina Barszcz reported. The FY23 development grant will likely come out in December. State 911 is hosting a telecommunicator certification program free of charge for Massachusetts civilians interested in becoming dispatchers. Reach out to Nina for more info.

**Air Methods** – No one was present to give an update.

**Other** – Dennis Nazzaro reported that the City of Northampton just signed with Motorola for a 3 site 800 MHz trunk system. That will create some changes for neighboring towns. They just had a kick off meeting and will now be moving forward.

**Budget Review**

Raine reported. This subcommittee has \$185,875 in FFY2020. We just received an extension on those funds through the end of December, 2022.

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**Requests**

*Hinsdale Rehab Bus Radio* – Susan Rathbun presented a request on behalf of Ray Bolduc. The Hinsdale Fire Department Rehab Bus goes all over Berkshire county as requested. They are requesting an 800 MHz radio. Raine added that the quote provided is from the CoMIRS grant. She also received info from Chief Paciorek that Deerfield PD has extra APX 4500 radios for a lower cost that were overstocked, but this project might not move quickly enough to take advantage of that. The Hinsdale request was for APX 1500, so that would be a step up. Raine suggested that she could note the possibility of an upgrade in the project justification.

**Motion:** Tom Grady moved to approve up to \$4,000 for the Hinsdale Rehab Bus Radio. Jason Breault seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Butch Garrity, Tom Grady, Jason Breault, Walter Tibbetts, Nina Barszcz, Lindsay Stromgren, Anthony Gentile, Matt Barstow, Dennis Nazzaro, and Bob Garriepy voted in favor. Steve Kozloski abstained. The motion was approved.

**Old Business** – None.

**New Business** – Matt Barstow reported that two house bills recently were recently open for public comments: HB 2386 concerns the possible requirement for TCPR to become standard of care for telecommunicators in Massachusetts, which would be a lesser standard of care than the current requirement; HB2781 concerns reclassifying public safety telecommunicators as first responders. Nina noted that MCSA developed a small group to go down there for the public comments.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair** – Lindsay Stromgren noted that as everyone is upgrading to 5G, there has been some loss of coverage in Amherst and Hadley. Lindsay checked with Verizon, and they explained that people are going to experience poor service in next few months as they make transition. Matt Barstow added that Verizon sent letters to a lot of constituents, letting them know that they would be sunsetting the 3G technology. It was supposed to start in 2022 but they have already shut off 3G in certain areas without telling anyone. This will be problematic for many people, e.g. with older cell phones donated to domestic violence shelters; those will not even work for 911 once it is shut off. Verizon was able to restore some service during the Boston Marathon, so if you have a public safety event reach out and they can restore it temporarily. Rich Fiske noted that this is true not just for Verizon, but also AT&T and T-Mobile. EOPSS is developing a press release for public. Shutting off 3G will have many implications, not just public safety.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 12:30 pm, as a virtual meeting.

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**Motion:** Nina Barszcz moved to adjourn. Walter Tibbetts seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Butch Garrity, Walter Tibbetts, Lindsay Stromgren, Matt Barstow, Dennis Nazzaro, Tom Kettle, Anthony Gentile, Nina Barszcz, Bob Garriepy, and Steve Kozloski voted in favor. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for November 16, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from October 19, 2021 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY20 Budget Report through 11/15/21
- Letter of Request from Raymond Bolduc/Town of Hinsdale, dated 10/19/21

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason  
WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

**Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, December 21, 2021, 12:30pm**

**Subcommittee members present:** Robert Garriepy (Huntington PD), Anthony Gentile (Wilbraham Dispatch), Thomas Grady (BCSO/BCECS), Tom Kettle (Westfield State EMD), Steve Kozloski (Monson PD/WMLEC), Dennis Nazzaro (Northampton FD), Lindsay Stromgren (Amherst FD), Walter Tibbetts (NWMIMT/FCECS)

**Non-members present:** Raine Brown (FRCOG), Erin Hastings (WESTCOMM), Jay Hastings (Westfield State PD), Rachel Mason (FRCOG), Tricia McGuirk (EOPSS), Cameron Spanfelner (Air Methods), Daryl Springman (WMTRT)

**Subcommittee members absent:** Matt Barstow (MSP), Nina Barszcz (Westfield Dispatch), Jason Breault (Pittsfield PD/BCSO), Peter Cowles (Westfield), Bernard Forgea (Cummington FD), Butch Garrity (Shelburne Control/MSP)

*This meeting was conducted on Zoom. The meeting was recorded.*

Anthony Gentile called the meeting to order at 12:32 pm.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the November 16, 2021 meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Tom Grady moved to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2021 meeting as submitted. Walter Tibbetts seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Anthony Gentile, Walter Tibbetts, Lindsay Stromgren, Dennis Nazzaro, Bob Garriepy, and Tom Grady voted in favor. Steve Kozloski abstained. The motion was approved.</p>
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Introductions followed.

**Updates from the Chair** – None.

**SIEC & SWIC Update** – No one was present to give an update.

**Project Updates**

**WESTCOMM System Key** – Raine Brown reported that this has been delivered and installed.

**NWMIMT CoMIRS Radios** – Raine reported that the radios have been delivered and programmed, and installation is in progress by TriState and NWMIMT. The project is complete.

**Hinsdale Rehab Bus Radio** – Raine reported that this proposal was approved by the full Council this morning. It has now been submitted to EOPSS.

**Western Mass Interoperable Systems Update**

**Berkshire County** – Tom Grady reported. Dalton's PSAP had a Covid outbreak that took out most of the police and dispatch. The Sheriffs Department helped by rolling State 911 calls over and patching radio in to do dispatch for them. Tom expressed his gratitude to WMRIC and

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WRHSAC, as this was only possible because of infrastructure build out and support from the Council and State 911.

**Franklin County** – Walter Tibbetts reported. The UHF system has been stable. They are looking at plans for decommissioning three of the towers—New Salem, Royalston, and Orange—but there are challenges with each. At the Royalston tower there is also an equipment shelter that State Police are looking at moving to use for CoMIRS equipment. There is an issue with the patch between UHF and CoMIRS at dispatch that has caused problems several times, including at a fire in Orange that relied on mutual aid and a structure fire in Montague Center. If someone talks on UHF that gets priority and 800 drops out, so dispatch could not hear 800, but command was on 800. They are looking into how to resolve this; during a major incident they might have to break the patch and listen to both, though that may cause time delays or confusion, and field units would not hear each other. Motorola is rolling out new software, but for now it is up the air. There is a big push to get everyone to switch over to 800.

Steve Kozloski asked if there had been any further discussion about potential impacts to WMLEC assets in Franklin county. Walter replied that it has not been discussed recently but was before. They know that there are WMLEC assets that would have to be maintained, but they are not sure if FCECS would physically maintain them, especially because FCECS will cease to exist at some point. It will take coordination and cooperation to make sure that things are done correctly and that vendors do not unplug WMLEC equipment.

**Hampshire County** – Lindsay Stromgren reported. As a license holder for Hampshire County frequency 154.37, Amherst received a letter that Milford, NH, PD wants to go on that. There are about ten license holders for that. Northampton Control holds the license, but a Framingham address is also on there. Lindsay does not know if that is MEMA or State Police. Steve Kozloski suggested checking with Matt Barstow.

**WMLEC** – Steve Kozloski reported that there has been nothing consequential, but there were minor issues between Mt. Tom and Peru that turned out to be due to switches that needed to be replaced. At the last Western Mass Fire Chiefs meeting, Steve gave an update on WMLEC and available assets. There are new chiefs who might not know or support what previous chiefs had agreed to, though Western Mass Fire Chiefs' support is usually not an issue.

**CMED** – No one was present to give an update.

**MSP** – No one was present to give an update.

**911/Dispatch** – Anthony Gentile reported. FY23 development grant guidelines and applications are up. The shutdown of 3G networks is coming and can impact the ability for people with older devices to call 911. MCSA and NG 911 are hosting training sessions in January; info is on the MCSA website.

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**Air Methods** – Cameron Spanfelner reported. If anyone needs outreach, LZ classes, or frequency uploads, direct questions towards him. Walter Tibbetts asked if helicopters all have 8TAC91D in them, as there have been some questions at time. Cameron believes they do, but he asked that Walter send an email with that question and he will confirm.

**Other** – None.

**Budget Review**

Raine reported. WMRIC has \$181,875 available in FFY20 to use through December, 2022.

**Requests** – None.

**Old Business** – Tom Grady reported that they are targeting January 2 for the Blanford communication system to transfer to Northampton Control. Issues with towers and radio have been worked out, and Matt Barstow will be doing hard testing next week. They still need to figure out the mutual aid piece.

**New Business**

***WMTRT and COM-L COM-T activation***

Daryl Springman came before the subcommittee to seek advice on behalf of the Western Mass Tech Rescue Team. They are hoping to have a COM-L/COM-T assigned to the team and want to know if that is possible. They have mobile assets but usually when they have communications problems it is while on their way to a call or in the first 20-30 minutes before they can get support from mobile teams. WMTRT is a regional team and primarily uses the WMLEC 2 channel. They mostly have UHF radios, plus three tri-band portables and two 800s. Dennis Nazzaro has often been able to help unofficially, but they are looking for advice on finding a more permanent solution. They need a point person who can help with long term infrastructure as well as someone they can call while responding to an incident if they need help.

Anthony Gentile offered to help programming, but Daryl explained that this is not the problem. They need someone they can reliably call during an incident, but the question is how that person will be reimbursed/paid for their time. There was agreement that reaching out to the SWIC to have him push it out to all COMLs and COMTs might be a good way to go. Anthony suggested revisiting this next month to talk with Rich about it.

Daryl also reported that the State Tech Rescue Council is looking at providing P4H to tech rescue throughout State. They may approach the Homeland Security Councils for help with implementation. State hazmat teams are using it, but in Western Mass we do not have P4H software or computers to use on scene. They have 30 UHF radios on loan from BCSO; they have had them for ten years but the radios were not new then, so they will need to be updated sometime. Tom Grady asked if there has been any further movement at the State level for sustainability of tech rescue. Daryl replied that there has been, but there have been glitches. They are hoping to have some infrastructure/personnel in place by next year

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through the Department of Fire Services. Tom reiterated that any time teams seek seed money we always ask them to find sustainability money for it, as there is no guarantee for continued Homeland Security support. Daryl replied that this is brought up on a regular basis at the State level. They are moving forward, he is just not sure how fast.

Bob Garriepy asked if it would be feasible to put something together to start replacing the old radios with COMIRS radios. Dennis replied that we bought them the two APX and three multiband radios, and they might not really need more capable radios right now, especially since could get expensive. In the long term, getting more radios is a good idea, but the more urgent current need is to have someone officially available for when they get dispatched. Tom noted that this is a fire service based team and the fire chiefs have to agree to support it. Daryl agreed to bring that forward to the steering committee.

**Business Unforeseen by the Chair** – None.

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at 12:30 pm, as a virtual meeting.

<p><b>Motion:</b> Dennis Nazzaro moved to adjourn. Lindsay Stromgren seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Walter Tibbetts, Dennis Nazzaro, Lindsay Stromgren, Anthony Gentile, Bob Garriepy, and Tom Grady voted in favor. The motion was approved.</p>
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The meeting adjourned at 1:27 pm.

**List of Documents Reviewed at the Meeting**

- WMRIC Meeting Agenda for December 21, 2021
- WMRIC Meeting Minutes from November 16, 2021 (draft)
- WMRIC FFY20 Budget Report through 12/17/21

Respectfully submitted by:

Rachel Mason  
WRHSAC Program Assistant  
Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments