

DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY
Communication Interoperability Working Group

April 18, 2006
Minutes

WELCOME, PUBLIC COMMENT AND REVIEW OF MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 1307 hours by the Chair, Mike Varney. The following individuals were in attendance: Chuck Beck (DOT), George Carbonell (ConnDOT), Robert DiBella (DEMHS), Libby Graham (DEMHS), John Gustafson (CMED-NH), Paul Jakubson (CPCA), Phil Mikan (DEMHS), Jeff Otto (Quinebaug Valley), Roy Piper (DEMHS), George Pohorilak (OSET), Mike Stemmler (DPS), James Thomas (DEMHS), Michael Varney (DOIT/CFCA), Keith Victor (CREPC), and Lee Toffey (secretary).

Minutes of the March 21, 2006 meeting reviewed; motion to accept by John Gustafson, second by Keith Victor, unanimous/moved and will be posted on the DEMHS website.

There were no public comments.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Technical Committee: Presented by George Carbonell. Two STOCs boxes have been received and a presentation has been done on both. Committee is looking at one design in particular and vendor is working to rectify a glitch found with the system. The vendor for the second box is also working to adapt his product to meet the needs. One more test needs to be completed and will be done in early May. The problem found in both boxes is issues with the Kenwood high-band radios. Once test is completed the specs can be finalized and put out to bid. Discussion ensued regarding the timeline and lowest vs. best bid.
- B. Governance Committee: Per Mike Varney there is no report for this subcommittee at this time. George Pohorilak advised that the committee needs to be formalized as this has been an issue for some time. Commissioner Thomas stated that Interoperability was the first subcommittee adopted by the Coordinating Council. It is important to formalize all the committees and DEMHS will support this effort.
- C. Update from Commissioner Thomas: 1) Commissioner commented that Mike Varney will be working primarily on the GIS project. To help alleviate Mike's schedule, a new hire at DEMHS, Bill Hackett, will become co-chair with Mike Varney on this committee. He is well acquainted with communications and fire service and will be a valuable addition to the committee. 2) Training and Exercise – planning specialist have been hired for each of the Regional offices and trainer will be hired in the near future. Training and exercise will be a large part of plans in the future. 3) The Interoperable Communications sub-committee is critical as communications seem to be what breaks down first in an emergency. The committee will always have 100% support from DEMHS. 4) Grants is currently putting a push on towns to order and get training.
- D. Training & Exercise Workgroup: Mike Varney has scheduled a tentative meeting for April 27th at 2pm at DOIT. Met with the Fire Commission and control and will update training and do ITAC/ICALL battery swap at the same time, using their instructors. Training slated to be held the end of May to the beginning of June.

REPORT OF INTEROPERABILITY USAGE AND INCIDENTS: None.

John Gustafson advised that total communications were lost at one of the hospitals. The key to success was that the people adapted readily to the situation and used what was available, i.e. Nextel.

Mike Stemmler advised that there was an incident in Winsted where ITAC/ICALL was used. Each time the helicopter keyed up it brought up a repeater in another town. Also, Waterbury PD, Stamford OEM, and New Haven OEM still do not have their mobile stations installed as of yet.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Portable Radio Inventory & Training Programs: Per Mike Varney, need to finish battery swap.
- B. ITAC/ICALL Test & Training Issues: None. George Carbonell advised that a testing schedule is needed as people do not test on their own volition. Commissioner Thomas suggested that this may be something the Regional Coordinators can take on for their area. Libby Graham suggested that perhaps we can link testing to funding. John Gustafson advised that tests should be carried out at night as opposed to during the busy daytime hours.
- C. UASI: No report.
- D. Homeland Security Grant Program: Libby Graham reported that there is some urgency surrounding FY04 funds as the unit has been tasked with a goal of 100% obligation by June 1, 2006. Ms. Graham commended the committee on their commitment with reviewing the Town's projects; and advised that any towns needing help spending their remaining funds should call the Grant Unit for help.
- E. Tactical Interoperable Communication Plan: Mike Varney reported that the initial planning conference was held last week. The plan is basically complete and ready to be submitted. It is currently undergoing a third part review and will be submitted by the May 1st deadline. There will be two tabletop exercises and a full scale exercise within the next six months. Updated guidance sent from the Feds wanted the plans tested by the end of September. A letter has been sent requesting an extension since the full scale exercise is scheduled for October on the original timeline.
- F. Bid for Master Catalog: Per Mike Varney the review is complete and the contract should be online by the end of the week, to include approx. 12 vendors from in and out of state.
- G. Request from CT-IMT4: nothing new.
- H. Prime Mover radios and Licensing: Mike Varney advised that he is still waiting for an answer from DPS.
- I. ICALL/ITAC Proposal: Chief Jakubson discussed the use of the radios for a Law Enforcement Statewide Interoperable Channel. Meetings have taken place with Commissioner Thomas and also DPS (Comm. Boyle, Col. Lynch, Lt. Col. Malloy, and Mike Stemmler). A new idea is to make it a steerable system – the system picks whichever receiver will work best. CPCA has a portion of FY04 funds and they endorse utilizing the funds for this project. It will make the system usable statewide and for all disciplines, and enhances the existing infrastructure already in place. Discussion and questions ensued. Proposal will eventually come before the committee for approval.
- J. Other: None

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

CORRESPONDENCE/GRANT REVIEWS:

- A. Correspondence – none.
- B. SHSGP grant reviews: Approved – Cheshire, Seymour, NW Hills (Goshen application used as a blanket for all 19 RPO towns, and will also be including the towns of Cornwall, Canaan, Roxbury, Hartland, Norfolk, Salisbury, and Warren), WCSU, Naugatuck, CT DMV, Wallingford, CCSU, and Newington. Out for review are Mansfield and four applications from Lebanon.

NEXT MEETING:

Next meeting will be **May 16, 2006, at 1300 hours**, DOT Central Lab, Rocky Hill.

Meetings open to the public.

Motion to adjourn by Roy Piper; second by Phil Mikan; approved.

Meeting adjourned at 1436 hours.