

**DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY**  
**Communication Interoperability Working Group**

**July 17, 2007 Minutes**

**Legislative Office Building, Capitol Ave, Room 2B, Hartford, CT 06106**

**WELCOME, PUBLIC COMMENT AND REVIEW OF MINUTES:**

The meeting was called to order at 1309 hours by the Co-Chair, Bill Hackett. The following individuals were in attendance: Jon Barbagallo (COE), Dave Coyle (DPS), Bob DiBella (DEMHS), Mike Dion (Military), Jim Farkas (LCD), Eric Fine (Region 1), John Gustafson (CMED-NH), Bill Hackett (DEMHS), Dennis Harrell (Judicial), Jeff Merwin (Region 1), Bernie O'Donnell (DOIT), Jeff Otto (Region 4), George Pohorilak (OSET), John Ricci (US&R), Vito Savino (US&R), Gordon Shand (DPH), Dan Stebbins (USAO), Mike Stemmler (DPS), Lee Toffey (DEMHS), Gene VanBlaricom (DEP), Michael Varney (DOIT/CFCA), Keith Victor (Region 3), Tom Walsh (DEMHS), and Jerry Zarwanski (OSET). Also DOIT consultants Sheree Bruce, William Kramer, and Bill O'Connell.

Minutes of the June 19, 2007 meeting were unavailable and will be forwarded to the group upon completion.

There were no public comments.

**SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Technical Committee: Presented by Gordon Shand. STOC's boxes are expected to be delivered to Brainard Field on Thursday where they will be secured by US&R. The paperwork for the application and use is currently in process. John Gustafson advised that in regards to the UTAC/VTAC the group is working on goals.
- B. Training & Exercise Workgroup: Mike Varney reported that there has been no new activity.

**REPORT OF INTEROPERABILITY USAGE AND INCIDENTS:**

- A. Bill Hackett remarked that he had heard there was an ITAC/ICALL Control Station test done with spotty results and requested information. Mike Stemmler advised that a test was conducted without warning by the Message Center dispatchers. Only 56 of 142 PSAP's responded. Most of the rest were able to be contacted by phone. When CSP personnel have gone to individual PSAP's to make system upgrades, miss-use and non-use of the equipment was noted. Bill Hackett asked for volunteers for a sub-committee to address the issues, and will bring the situation to Commissioner Thomas' attention. Volunteers for the subcommittee include Bob DiBella, Jeff Otto, and possibly John Gustafson (who may instead become part of the Region 8 committee). Eric Fine reported that usage on Long Island is causing problems on our side of the Sound. He felt that some of the non-usage mentioned above, at least in Region 1, may be due to the extensive chatter coming from Long Island. Discussion ensued and George Pohorilak suggested that CT could use more people attending the Reg. 8 Committee meetings so CT's voice can be heard. Gordon Shand felt that infrequent use causes apathy and that frequent testing may help bring peoples attention to proper usage. Mike Stemmler advised that possibly some minor procedure changes could make the system more user friendly.

Continued discussion on other State's usage procedures and taping of the ITAC/ICALL channels.

- B. Mike Stemmler advised that 2 ITAC/ICALL channels were used for Sail Fest in New London.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. Portable Radio Inventory & Training Program: Mike Stemmler reported that they are still in the process of exchanging batteries. Mike Varney advised that there have been no training classes since June but that any municipality who desires training can request a class. Gordon Shand asked if it might be prudent to get portable chargers for the radios so they in the hands of command during an incident instead of on someone's desk or in a charger. Eric Fine suggested a executive level training for communications and incident command for the commander's and their subordinates.
- B. Homeland Security Grant Program: Bill Hackett advised that the allocations for the FY07 funding would be available very soon.
- C. Prime Mover Radios & Licensing: topic tabled by Bill Hackett until a conversation can be had with Commissioner Thomas.
- D. CSPERN: Mike Stemmler advised that this was an analog simulcast statewide system for Law Enforcement. Testing is being done and improvements are being made. Control stations have a wealth of ability and people should be educated as to its many uses for ITAC, CSPERN, etc.
- E. Transit Security Grant: Bill Hackett reported that New Jersey has offered to write the RFP and take the lead on setting up the grant but they are requesting technical help from CT.
- F. Public Safety Interoperable Communications - PSIC Grant – Michael Varney reported that the regional meetings are taking place and the information will be used to put together a strategic plan to include voice, video, and data. Several themes keep re-occurring: 1) they want strong guidance on what to do, 2) they want a single point of contact, 3) ensure that whatever is newly created is a regional/statewide system that builds on the existing capabilities. The DOIT consultants advised that they feel agencies and municipalities are looking for standard operating procedures on the incident command level and suggest a governing body push this. Bernie O'Donnell advised to use the governance, leadership, and communication coming out of this process to spring board ongoing communication and planning.

#### **UPDATES FROM THE DEMHS REGIONS:**

**REGION 1** – Eric Fine – the ESF 2 met today and they are re-establishing the regional committee to help get the information out and get more people involved. Next meeting will be the first week of August.

**REGION 2** – John Gustafson – the PSIC grant has brought the ESF 2 group together and they expect to attract more people as the meetings continue.

**REGION 3** – Keith Victor – The new repeater has been installed for the Intercity Capitol region..

**REGION 4** – Jeff Otto – the ESF 2 committee will meet after the regional meeting on August 6, where the bylaws expect to be passed.

**REGION 5** - Tom Vannini – was absent, no report.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Mike Varney received a request from Waterford who is upgrading and installing a new system. They are looking for information from anyone who has a LMR or P25 compliant system.

**CORRESPONDENCE/GRANT REVIEWS:**

- A. SHSGP grant reviews – Bill Hackett reported the following project review has been received:  
Southbury

**NEXT MEETING:**

Next regular meeting will be **August 21, 2007, at 1300 hours**, DOT Central Lab, Rocky Hill.

Meetings open to the public.

Motion to adjourn by John Gustafson; second by Keith Victor; approved.  
Meeting adjourned at 1410 hours.