MARYLAND FIRST
First responders Interoperable Radio System Team

DATE: April 15, 2020

TIME: 1:00 – 3:00pm

LOCATION: Virtual Meeting

Maryland Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board
Quarterly Public Meeting

- **Voting Members in Attendance**
  - Mike Leahy (DoIT)
  - Col Jones (MSP)
  - Clay Stamp (Talbot County)
  - Bud Frank (SWIC)
  - Ted Delbridge (MIEMSS)
  - Chris Holland (Designee MDOT)
  - Walter "Pete" Landon (GOHS)
  - Wayne Darrell (Kent Co.)
  - Charles Summers (WAGIN)
  - Mayor Craig Moe (Prince George's County)

- **Board Support Staff**
  - Norman Farley
  - Curt Andrich
  - Cindy Cole
  - Justin Ellingwood
  - Brandon Renehan
  - Jennifer Benedictis
  - Pat King

- **Members Not Present**
  - Tony Rose (Charles County)

Call to Order – Norman Farley 1:02 pm

Review Minutes from 12/11/2019 – Norman Farley

Proposed Motion: The Radio Control Board approves the minutes from the December 11, 2019 meeting.

Moved – Clay Stamp
Second - Wayne Darrell

The vote was taken and the minutes were approved.

Yea – 8

Nay – 0

Abstain – 2 (Craig Moe, Charles Summers)

New Business – Norman Farley

Proposed New Interop Users:

Montgomery County – Montgomery County requested to become an Interop User. They have approximately 500 interoperable subscriber radios. They want to do mutual aid, all radios are TDMA capable and they will limit this to just public safety operations. We have Mike Baltrotsky a representative from Montgomery County.

Mike Baltrotsky: We are requesting to be an Interop partner, we have generally been interop users for many years. We have not completed the correct paper work, and want to get this done in an official capacity. We have many partners throughout the jurisdiction and throughout the state that we provide support to and they provide support to us.

Proposed Motion: The Radio Control Board approves the application of Montgomery County to become a Communications Interoperability User to Maryland FiRST and authorizes the Chairman to conclude the appropriate MOU with Montgomery County.

Moved – Bud Frank

Second – Charles Summers

The vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Yea – 10

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Coverage Improvement Program

Norm Farley presented a brief on the Coverage Improvement Program.

The goals for the program are:
- o Fill in the "Gaps" for On-Street Portable Coverage
  - ▪ For several years we have been evaluating the coverage gaps, and are now formalizing a plan to correct coverage problems.
- o Provide In-Building coverage for schools & malls
  - ▪ The original goal was to achieve 95% on street coverage throughout the state. At the time, financial constraints prevented pursuing the desired goal of state-wide in-building coverage.
  - ▪ In light of recent events we want to expand in-building coverage for schools and malls.
  - ▪ Priority is for Primary User Counties
  - ▪ Coverage to be provided by RF Sites or BDAs

Per DBM's request, creating a "Facilities" Program
- o Supports a long-term funding stream
- o Drafting required documentation – due in September 2020.
- o Capital Budget request of ~$25M over next 5 FYs has been developed.
- o COVID-19 Pandemic might affect available funding.

Plan on Leveraging:
- o Partnerships with Counties & State Agencies
- o Sites with pre-existing infrastructure to reduce costs and the amount of time to complete a site.
- o Private Towers with RSAs
  - ▪ Commercial partnerships with like-kind-exchanges
  - ▪ Bottom line is the state would not have to pay rent to be on these commercial towers

Past Successes/Current Efforts include:
- o Assateague – Worcester – Completed – partnership with DNR

- o   Cecilton – Cecil – Completed – partnership with Cecil County
- o   Cherrytown Chicken – Carroll – In Progress – partnership with Carroll County
- o   Crisfield – Somerset – In Progress – partnership with Sommerset County
- o   Tower Road – Frederick – In Progress – partnership with Frederick County
- o   TV Hill/Falls Road – Baltimore Co. – In Progress – partnership with MTA

Potential Sites Under Consideration for Next Two Fiscal Years:
- o   Taylorsville -- Carroll
- o   LaVale (MSP Barrack) – Allegany
- o   Route 50/301 Split -- Queen Anne's
- o   Sykesville – Carroll

Currently Doing Due Diligence on 17 Potential Sites
- o   Also analyzing school in-building coverage using computer models
    - ▪   Will create list of schools that computer models predict that they may have poor in-building coverage.
    - ▪   Will contact school boards/county officials to request permission to do actual in-building testing.
    - ▪   Goal is to work with the counties to determine the best way to handle any coverage issues that are discovered.
    - ▪   Initial look are schools in the counties that are MD FiRST primary Users.

Mike Leahy: Norm will you talk about the discussions your having with folks in DC about their tower that could impact coverage.

Norm Farley: We have entered into preliminary discussions with DC to establish a site on Hughes tower, in the northern tip of the city. A site there would give us some coverage into Montgomery County. We would allow DC to use the site as a back-up in case their radio system fails. The site would be funded by a grant that DC is attempting to obtain. Once we have more details, I will present a plan to the board for your consideration.

Charlie Summers: Washington County is still a 450 MHz system, when you refer to Primary use Counties, I don't want to see local barracks MSP Troopers that respond to schools and the law not have the additional coverage they need for an in-building situation because Washington County is not a Primary Use county.

Norm Farley: Our intent is that the Primary Use counties are the priority, but not to the exclusion of all others. Mainly because they don't have their own county system, so we want to give the schools that don't have any coverage from any other system the first priority.

Brandon Renehan: Because Washington County is UHF and MSP radios are predominately APX 7000's that are not doing UHF, in the event there was an in-building event in Washington County MSP would not be able to switch over to UHF.

Norm Farley: We are looking at all of the schools. For the counties that only have MD FiRST, there is no fall back and that is where we want to start with in-building coverage, however we won't overlook Washington County's situation. We are in a better situation than we thought because we don't have an exorbitant amount of schools that don't have good in-building coverage.

Charlies Summers: When we did our in-building coverage tests, we walked all 46 of the schools in Washington County and we found out that local school boards ran a lot of unshielded coax cable throughout their schools which now causes destructive interference on our UHS signal. Sometimes the modeling isn't the same as the real in-building coverage testing.

Norm Farley: We did the modeling first to identify the obvious problems. Now we need to get the permission we need after identifying the obvious problems areas to walk these schools. It may turn out to be a bigger list. We need the data to go to the Legislature for budget requests to move forward, which is what DBM has asked us to do. We are trying to provide the required information to support our funding requests.

Craig Moe: I appreciate the overview, we are still requesting money from the Legislature and we are in a crises now. What analysis have you done regarding what happens if you don't get the funding, what does that do to what you just showed us?

Norm Farley: We won't be able to do much, this is why our initial focus is on locations that already have some amount of infrastructure available, which reduces the cost to fill the gaps complete these sites. When we have a site that already has a tower and shelter available like Tower Road the cost is greatly reduced. We will do what we can with what little funding we may receive. The partnerships we are pursuing become even more important now. This (the Pandemic) is all new, and

happening after our initial plans were developed. This is a 5 year program and the financial impact may last the first couple of years, we don't know what that will be yet.

Clay Stamp: We are talking about making the system better. If we have to pause on some of these items, it won't affect the core ability of the system to function, am I correct?

Norm Farley: Absolutely, this won't affect what we already have, this is to improve the weaknesses and gaps we have.

System Performance Reports – Brandon Renehan

Brandon Renehan provided a System Performance Report. Currently there are 25,159 primary users on the system and another 42,724 interoperable users. There were well over 2 million PTTs every month. There was only one busy, it occurred in February on the Cecilton RF site. The busy lasted for 5.4 seconds. March traffic may be less because of COVID-19 with road traffic being greatly reduced due to the stay-at home orders. Some traffic will increase because of department of Health, MIEMMS, etc. Interoperability trend is increasing because of more counties and agencies using the system which is what we expect. Maintenance Case Reviews: We had the system upgrade. We did have some wind events. No major trends or changes.

Project Status Update – Curt Andrich

Phase 4 BPW approved Table Rock in Jan 2019, work began in March and is scheduled to be completed by fall 2020.

Phase 5 Ethernet backhaul is on schedule. The layer 3 ring which is the main Ethernet ring for all of phase 5 is scheduled to be ready July 2002, at this time the county rings can come onto to the layer 3 ring. While the layer 3 ring is being worked on we are installing microwave and fiber equipment at all of the different sites in the counties. At this time we have no issues related to COVID-19 with contractors or sub-contractors. Calvert, St Mary's and Charles counties are scheduled to be on-line by the end of 2020. Montgomery and Prince Georges counties are scheduled to come on-line in early 2021.

Nice Bridge tower was complete in Dec. 2019, we are waiting for backhaul to be completed, the cell will be ready in late fall 2020.

New shelters are complete in Persimmon Tree Lane, Montgomery County and Rockefeller Court. In Charles County we are waiting for equipment to be installed and the Ethernet ring to be complete so the backhauls can be configured.

Georgia Ave ICC tower and shelter are ready to be delivered as soon as permits are received from MDE. We plan to start construction as soon as the permits are issued.

ASRs:
Cherry town Chicken – north central Carrol County, the shelter is to be delivered in June 2020. Construction of site will start in early May. We are partnering with Carroll County who is handling the microwave backhaul to the site. This site should be complete fall 2020.

Operations Status Update – Brandon Renehan, Curt Andrich

7.18 System Upgrade: This is complete, we have a couple of punch list items left that Motorola is working on. Some console sites and dispatch sites have been locked down because of COVID-19 so our techs can't get into the area to work. As a result we have shifted to working on RF site PM's.

CEN Upgrade: We are planning on getting it started at the end of summer. This might get pushed out, but it is a secondary upgrade and will not affect the MD FiRST system.

Conversion of T1 to Ethernet: We are working on the final contractual design review. This is being paid for over multiple fiscal years. Legislature approved $8.1M for FY2020, approved $8M for FY 2021, $2.6 M in both FY2022 and FY 2023. We don't know what is going to happen with the finances or impact to our budget due to COVID-19. We do hope this won't be impacted because we need to get this conversion done.

Ocean City Tower: We have scheduled to move this antenna after some testing to see how much coverage improvement we will get in this area. MIEMMS has been working with us on improving the coverage at this site.

Garrett County – We are getting them up to speed, getting their consoles set up, they are scheduled to be up and running in mid-June 2020.

TV Hill, Baltimore: We have some coverage issues along Falls Rd due to the terrain. The Tower Structural Analysis is failing at 127.8% at Rev H. MTA is reviewing options.

Tower Rd: This location gives us coverage into the Camp David area. Work in the shelter is done and equipment has been installed. The antenna shipping has been slowed due to shipping issues with COVID-19. We are expecting antennas to arrive and be up by the end of May 2020.

Crisfield, Somerset County: MD FiRST is putting a shelter in, to be delivered by the end of June. We are working with Network MD who has fiber across the street. It should be complete and on the air by mid fall 2020.

Operations Committee Status Update - Gary Davis

Meet in March and covered two main topics:
1. Creating a standard Interop zone for the regions radios. The MD SWIC has been working on this and getting neighboring SWICS to become interoperable as well. This zone will be for law, fire, EMS, aircraft and marine.
2. Interoperable connectivity that connects to the MD FiRST infrastructure like ISSI, mission critical, etc. We need direction from the board members on how they would like to handle this. Once we get some type of direction from the board members we can go ahead and set up some type of process or protocol.

Mike Leahy: Does this merit having a subcommittee propose the methodology and the governance for this or is this something we discuss with the board and proceed from there?

Gary Davis: My recommendation would be a discussion with the Board members first, maybe some type of workshop discussion because there are so many different entities or configurations of interoperability like that. To help board members understand from a technical side. I think some type of workshop discussion should occur first because there are so many variables out there.

Mike Leahy: How long do you think it would take to set something like this up? Is this something we want to put into motion before our next board meeting?

Gary Davis: I would recommend possibly something before the next board meeting. Probably looking at a 30-45 min presentation and then some time for discussion.

Mike Leahy: Norm lets starting polling folks after Gary gets the information together on when we can have an internal workshop.

Old Business - Norm Farley

Nothing listed

Closing

Mike Leahy – Thank you all for making time and adjusting to our virtual circumstance. If any of you have any suggestions or additional ideas please forward them to me or Norm and we will distribute them to all of the members.

Proposed Motion - I move that we adjourn and reconvene on June 17, 2020.

Moved – Pete Landon

Second – Charlie Summers

The vote was taken, passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourn at 1:56pm.

Yea – 10

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Director of Board APPROVAL:
(Signature & Date) _____Norman J Farley____ 6/17/2020_____

Chairmen of Board APPROVAL:
(Signature & Date)

DocuSigned by:

Michael Leahy

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06/29/2020