Maryland Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board

Quarterly Public Meeting
June 21, 2017
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
100 Community Place
First Floor Conference Room
Crownsville, MD 21032

<u>Minutes</u>

Present: Curt Andrich, David Balthis, Jennifer Benedicts, Gary Davis, Norman Farley, Bud Frank, Patrick Frank, Ken Hasenei, Diane Jennings, Pete Landon, Michael Leahy, Christina Lessels, Brandon Renehan, Tony Rose, Kristen Skogsberg, Charles Summer, Robert Swan

A. Call to Order / Introductions – Norm Farley

Norm welcomed everyone. There was no quorum initially, so Gary Davis represented Major Hasenei until he arrived a little later. The meeting was then called to order.

B. Review of Minutes from March 22, 2017 – Norm Farley

There was a motion to approve the minutes by Bud Frank, which was seconded by Charles Summers. The minutes were unanimously approved as distributed.

C. System Performance Report – Brandon Renehan

<u>Maintenance Case Overview</u> – Although there were a lot more cases, they were not due to problems on the system. Motorola changed internal software in all systems. They are working to trim those numbers down.

<u>System Statistics</u> – For the very first time, they "cracked" 2 million PTTs in a month. For the quarter, the number of PTTs was almost 6 million with over 36,000 subscribers on the system.

The busies were not included in the presentation, so Brandon reported that they were seeing a few more than usual, particularly in the Eastern Shore Counties. This was mainly due to Delaware users coming in. May was the worst month with 6 busies reported. Motorola was contacted and plans were made to shift around some of dynamic dual mode licenses to different channels in the near future. Additionally, they worked with Region 20 and requested some reserved frequencies for Eastern Shore counties and they will also work with Delaware.

<u>System Call Volume Trend</u> – Statistics show they are getting busier and busier.

<u>Interoperability PTT Trend</u> – Expected to keep trending up.

<u>Grade of Service</u> – No major surprises there. The standard is less than 1% of all calls during busy hours with a less than 3 second delay. Baltimore and Anne Arundel Counties still very busy. Talbot County busiest on Eastern Shore.

If anyone would like to see any other reports, they should let Brandon know.

D. Project Status Update – Jennifer Benedicts

In Ken Hasenei's absence, Jennifer reported on the progress of the 700 MHz Project. Phase 3 is complete and they are working on Phases 4 and 5 between Western and Southern Maryland. They have completed coverage testing in Washington County and are in the process of relocating DSR out to Hagerstown. They should go live first part of August. They are also working in Allegany and Garrett Counties to get those counties up. Allegany is expected to go live by end of year or first quarter of next year – Garrett by spring 2018.

Phase 5, LMR design phase and equipment staging completed.   With regard to backhaul design, CDR in May – waiting for pricing from Motorola.   A slide will be added to presentation for next RCB to include Washington County now that coverage testing has been completed.

Phase 4 is one of the more challenging regions. All fiber is aerial within Phase 4 and after Skyline makes one more adjustment, 100% fiber install will be completed.   This should be done within the next week or so.

Phase 5 includes 5 southern counties (correctly stated Phase 5 includes the NCR region and southern counties). Although there is no exact date, it is expected that PG, Calvert and Charles will be the first 3 turned on with Montgomery possibly being the last (probably within Fiscal Year 2019/Calendar Year 2020).

It was suggested that Phase 5 be labeled differently since PG and Montgomery County are included. Jennifer advised that the correct title is, in fact, Southern Maryland and the NCR Region. Future slides will be updated to reflect this title.

E. Operations Status Update – Brandon Renehan

A radio management server and 10,000 licenses were purchased which will significantly reduce the time to push incremental co-plug updates out in the field. This will be a huge savings of time and money, which everyone seems excited about.

Norman reported on the Motorola O&M Price Proposal. He had some concerns with pricing duplication in the OPS budget and asked Motorola to look at it. Their new proposal lowered the cost over a 3-year period by over $5million. He is waiting for Motorola to convert their costs from a contract year to a fiscal year period. The State's costs should be reduced by $1million for Fiscal Year 2019.   When he gets more details, he will report to the Board.

Washington County – coverage test completed week of May 8th. Results were as expected. Overwhelming bulk of the County coverage is very good. There are some problems with portables in southern and western areas. Although the site has been tested, it will not be available for operational traffic yet. Waiting for DSR move to happen.

DSR Relocation – targeted date – August 2017. DSR will be shut down. There will be a lot of work over a two-week period, making the system vulnerable. It will be closely watched and Motorola will be assisting. A question was raised whether there would be a disaster recovery plan during the relocation. It was noted that Motorola will put failure testing in place to ensure everything functions properly.

Justin was asked to update everyone on the two-way radio contract. The current contract is due to expire January 2018. He's doing a follow-on and it will be renamed Radio Communications Contract. Adding functional area - microwave - in addition to emergency signaling equipment. Other agencies will then be able to outfit their vehicles utilizing one contract. Cameras and camera systems had to be excluded due to the prohibitive costs. He received feedback from vendors and agencies and is making changes to the RFP. Goal is July 1st to solicit in time for next BPW meeting. Effective date would be January 2018 for five years.

F. Old Business

No old business to discuss.

G. New Business

Propose Creation of a "911 Center" or "PSAP" Talkgroup – Borrowing on an idea of the NCR, Tony Rose proposed the idea of creating a talkgroup for disaster recovery in the 911 Center. The PSAP folks in Maryland are kicking it around and decided to ask MDFirst to consider creating a talkgroup. Although he's not ready to share the use policy he drafted until he speaks with the PSAP folks, he feels it would be a significant help to the PSAP community in a disaster. After some discussion, he mentioned that he has a meeting tomorrow and if he receives positive feedback on the policy, he will share it with everyone to review.

Norman suggested that Tony work with Brandon on specific requirements and he can develop best technology solutions that meet requirements and are most efficient. It can then go to the OPS group for their concurrence. Tony can work on the operational SOP and then it can be filtered back up to the Board. Hopefully, it will be ready by the September Board meeting.

It was also questioned who was going to own the talkgroup. Norman suggested that when Tony develops his proposed SOP, he address the issue of who is going to be the collector, the coordinator, for adding people. Tony said his vision is that they would simply be guests.

Norman then questioned policy and procedure. Currently, each agency is creating their own talkgroups and putting them on the system without Board approval. Should these need Board approval? How do we manage/control this? What are the procedures for creating and approving talkgroups?

Proposed New Primary Users:

 - University of Maryland (College Park) – Brandon advised that this would be just for their police department. They have 270 subscriber units. They want primary and back-up console sites. The system they are using is aging and will no longer be supported by Motorola.

Motion - Charles Summers / Seconded - Dave Balthis / Vote - Unanimous

 - Frostburg State University – They work closely with Allegany County. They aren't looking at having a console site – just dispatching off base station – probably having 1 or 2 talkgroups with 17 radio units using the system.

Motion – Dave Balthis / Seconded – Pete Landon / Vote – Unanimous

Proposed New Comm Interop Users:

 - Calvert County would like interoperability with State users that are on the system. Interested in starting the process.

Capacity on the system was questioned with so many federal, State and county users coming onto the system. Brandon said there should be no problem with capacity. Zone 1 is the only constraint on capacity right now, which may require building out new cores. Zone 3 and 5 are of no concern.

Motion – Bud Frank / Seconded – Dave Balthis – Vote – Unanimous

 - Dorchester County – Norman mentioned that the process has begun and the ball is in their lawyer's court. They want to be able to talk to the State and county users.

Motion – Bud Frank / Seconded – Pete Landon / Vote – Unanimous

 - National Park Service, Assateague Island

They are interested in talking to NRP and MSP (Berlin Barracks). They have under 30 units that would have access to system.

Motion – Dave Balthis / Seconded – Bud Frank / Vote – Unanimous

 - Department of Emergency Service, York County, PA

They need to be able to switch over and talk to State Police when necessary. Phase II TDMA capable radios – no capacity concerns.

Motion – Bud Frank / Seconded – Tony Rose / Vote – Unanimous

Norman sent out two policies for Board approval:

System Key Control Policy SOP:

Approved by the Board several years ago but needs significant updating. It has been updated and vetted by OPS group which had no issues with it.

Motion – Tony Rose / Seconded – Gary Davis / Vote – Unanimous

MD Marine Call / MD Marine TAC SOP:

It is being used today in anticipation that it will be approved. It will solve a lot of issues with a lot of different agencies with communications on the water. Natural Resources Communications Center and Sandy Point will be listening and monitoring 24/7. DNR is responsible for developing internal controls and protection of the talkgroups.

Motion – Charles Summers / Seconded – Dave Balthis / Vote – Unanimous

Norman shared a conversation he had recently with a gentleman who raised an issue on how their county was in the process of procuring a LMR System. Norman suggested that he come talk to the Radio Control Board. Norman questioned the best way to approach counties to suggest they look at MDFirst. It was mentioned that the counties are definitely aware since there have been a number of presentations to them. Perhaps funding is the big issue. Counties must look at coverage vs. cost vs. sustainability.

Ken mentioned that on August 3rd the Governor is coming to the Annapolis Barrack at 10:00 for the first call for Central Maryland. Ken will send e-mails out to everyone. Hopefully, it's a positive press conference.

Ken also mentioned that one of the largest challenges we have which impact counties is funding. The Board had talked about funding strategies and he suggested that once project and O&M funding is known, the RCB send a letter to the leadership in Annapolis to back up the funding requirements for the radio system.

He also feels funding should be an item discussed at every RCB meeting so the Board will be better educated on O&M costs. He would like to see expenditures by quarter as well as projected expenditures so all will have a better understanding. Norman reported that most expenditures, other than salaries, are payments to Motorola – one in July and one in January, with occasional expenditures for repairs.

H. Closing

With no other business to be discussed, Norman announced the next meeting would be held on September 20, 2017.

There was a motion made to adjourn by Dave Balthis, which was seconded by Pete Landon. With all in favor, the meeting adjourned at 2:49 p.m.