

Maryland Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board

Quarterly Public Meeting
June 22, 2016
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Harry Hughes Conference Room
MDOT Headquarters
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Minutes

Attending:

Board members: Wayne Darrell, Bud Frank, Pete Landon, Tony Rose, Clay Stamp, Greg Urban, Chuck Rollman

Staff to the Board: Norm Farley and Betsy Jackson

Others: Kristen Skogsberg, Curt Andrich, Christina Sides, Brandon Renehan, Justin Ellingwood, Dave Christner, Earl Lewis, Shawnta Privetle, Patrick Frank, Randy Fertig, Charlie Bryson, Terry Herron, Mark Schaefer, Julie Sweeney, Robin Clark

A. Call to Order and Introductions – Norm Farley

1. Norm welcomed the group and around-the-room introductions were made.

B. Review of Minutes from March 23, 2016 Meeting – Norm

1. Motion was made by Norm to approve the minutes from March 23, 2016, without further review, and seconded by Wayne Darrell. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

C. System Performance Report – Brandon Renehan

1. Call volume
 - Continues to go up. We're now at just under 30,000 users.
 - Had just 2 system busys in the last month.
2. Level 6 Interoperability
 - Had a UMDES system failure. Queen Anne's, Talbot, and Caroline counties came over to MD FiRST. Worked really well.

D. Project Status Update – Ken Hasenei (Given by Curt Andrich)

1. Phase 3 (Central Maryland)
 - Anne Arundel County and Howard County should be online by end of the summer.
 - MSP has moved over to MD FiRST for all counties except Frederick.
 - At the conclusion of Phase 3, 77+ radio sites will be on air and 83% of State's population will be covered.
2. Phase 4 (Western Maryland)
 - Design complete, implementation in progress.

- Washington County will be ready first, then Alleghany and Garrett together.
3. Phase 5 (Southern Maryland)
 - Notice to Proceed was approved by Board of Public Works.
 - Design phase activities underway.
 4. Also working with MTA police to get MD FiRST in subway tunnels.

Q: Does the State have dedicated cable for MTA tunnels?
A: Yes

Q: Have we demonstrated linkage with ISSSI?

A: We do have a link up with PG County. A State unit can roam into PG County seamlessly. Anything in P25 standard works. Next step, we will do an operational test once MD FiRST is in PG County. Then we can see how it really works.

E. New Business

1. Change/Addition to MOU Template
 - Added an Acceptable Use Policy (hard copies were available)
 - If a new user is going to add talk groups they must submit descriptions of groups to the Radio Control Board.
 - Any objections to incorporating into MOU? No objections. Will move forward.
2. New Users
 - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Baltimore Field Office
 - ICE retracted dedicated talk groups;
 - Decreased number of radios to 25, with 10 radios on the system at a time;
 - Potential impact, with that few users accessing occasionally, is hard to determine. But it's thought to be minimal. ICE is not asking for extra channels, and 10 additional radios will not impact the system.

Board voted unanimously to approve ICE as a user of MD FiRST.
 - Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)
 - Very large user. About 2700 subscribers, approximately 50 talk groups, and about 1 million PTTs per month;
 - MTA is required by law to vacate current T-band freqs by Feb 2021. Have to build their own system, or come on MD FiRST;
 - MTA made a presentation (Randy Fertig and Mark Schaefer)
 - MTA would expand MD FiRST capacity. If they join they would add 16 talk paths to Baltimore cell.
 - MTA would invest \$28M to expand MD FiRST network, and provide consoles to subscriber units.

Board voted unanimously to approve MTA as a user of MD FiRST.
3. Limiting the Use on Non-Standard Antennas on Subscriber Units
 - Do we need a policy similar to Delaware's? Discussion:
 - MSP: We monitor what is altered on radios. We have one group that's allowed to use a stubby.

- Kent County: In Kent Co., first responders are using stubbies though advised not to.
- MD FiRST doesn't require a certain radio to be used, just must meet requirements for testing.
- MD FiRST doesn't manage equipment. We manage the system, not equipment. To have a policy is overly prescriptive.
- With our waiver, we send the message that we're not responsible for sub-par equipment.
- What we really want to do is just make sure users are aware of the limitations of stubby antennas. What about attaching something to the user agreement, stating that the system was designed around certain specifications, and will work best if those specifications are met.
- A draft addendum will be created for Board review.

4. Annual Cost Estimate (Out-Year O&M Budget Estimate)

- Mailed letter to Governor April 14th.
- Q: Are there any concerns regarding overall budget from the most recent session?
A: Can't answer because we don't know the status of the rainy day fund. Could potentially affect the schedule. FY18 will be the critical budget.
- Q: What happens if we have a weather event and it takes down a tower?
A: If damage exceeds the amount in the budget, would need to ask for more money. Have asked that any left over money become non-lapsing. Would also hope there's some over-lapping coverage so there's not a black hole of coverage.

F. Continuing Business

1. Acceptable Use Policy – Norm

- Has been revised and was sent back out for your review.
- There were no objections to the revised policy.

2. Wind Farm Issue

- When Major Hasenei is available, will discuss this issue again, including any possible legislation.
- Q: Do we have any reference materials regarding wind farms?
A: Yes.
- Other points:
 - This is not just a W. Maryland issue. Some wind farms are planned for Kent Co. and the Eastern Shore.
 - Governor Hogan has pledged 20% increase in renewable energy by 2022. Renewable energy is a good thing; we just want to have reliable public safety communications too.
 - Maybe the Board should encourage local governments to have zoning against wind farms.
 - Wind farms are controversial among environmental groups too. Concerns about bird populations, noise, and viewsheds.

G. Open Floor

1. We need to clarify Ken Hasenei and Norm Farley's titles. They both have Interoperability Director in their titles. It's confusing to our stakeholders.
2. Bud Frank announced that MDOT and MTA are working closely together with the marine law enforcement community. They are close to developing a Marine Tactical Channel to be used by local officers and Coast Guard. Clay agreed that marine radios need to be addressed. Brandon commented that they're working on it – following example of Maryland TAG. Tony gave an FYI that Charles Co. has two talks groups currently for marine law enforcement.
3. Norm recognized Brandon for his excellent work responding to the public safety communication outages in Queen Anne's, Caroline and Talbot counties.

H. Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting is September 28, 2016, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm