



**DATE:** June 26, 2024

**TIME:** 1:00 – 2:50 pm

**LOCATION:** 100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032

## Maryland Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board

### Quarterly Public Meeting

#### ▪ Voting Members in Attendance

- Norman Farley (DoIT)
- Chris Holland (MDOT)
- Dr Ted Delbridge (MIEMSS)
- Travis Nelson (GoHS)
- Scott Haas (Eastern Shore)
- Clay Stamp (MACo)
- Tony Rose (Southern MD)
- Lt. Col. Scott Keyer (MSP)
- Charles Summers (WAGIN)

#### ▪ Board Support Staff

- Jennifer Zambito
- Brandon Renehan
- Cindy Cole
- Justin Ellingwood
- Pat King
- Curt Andrich
- Charles Bryson

#### Not attended

- Secretary Savage (Represented by Norm Farley)
- Colonel Roland Butler Jr (MSP represented by Scott Keyser)
- Mayor Craig Moe (NCR)

### Call to Order – 1:00 pm

#### Review Minutes from March/20/2023– Norman Farley

**Proposed Motion: The Radio Control Board approves the minutes from the March 20, 2024, meeting.**

Moved – Clay Stamp

Second – Travis Nelson

The vote was taken, and the minutes were approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Before continuing with new business Norman Farley, as the acting chair, made the following opening statement:

Before continuing with our agenda, I would like to say that everyday MD FiRST successfully fulfills its life-saving mission. During the Key Bridge collapse, the MD FiRST system was utilized by MDTA dispatch to stop traffic on the bridge, saving many lives, and within minutes of the collapse, marine units and helicopters were engaged on the system supporting rescue efforts. Four MD TAC talkgroups were used to support rescue and recovery efforts. 70 MD FiRST cache radios were loaned to the U.S. Coast Guard within hours to assist with search and rescue activities.

Just recently, there was a rescue of an injured hiker in Swallow Falls State Park by first responders using MD FiRST. This was an area that had no coverage until we went live with a new Coverage Improvement RF Site in January 2024. The real heroes are the first responders that we serve, but I would like to thank the Governor, the General Assembly and this Board for supporting MD FiRST and enabling our success.

### **New Business – Brandon Renehan**

#### **Proposed New Interoperable Users:**

Pennsylvania State Police – Represented by Holly Caudill/PA SWIC

They provide interoperability for eleven State Police stations in southern PA, along the Maryland border. They have ~1000 TDMA radios and would like to have interop agreements with MSP and possibly other Maryland agencies and counties.

*Expected capacity impact: Minimal due to Interop only usage.*

**Proposed Motion: The Radio Control Board approves Pennsylvania State Police application to become an Interoperability User on MD FiRST and authorizes the Chairwoman to conclude the appropriate MOU with Pennsylvania State Police.**

Moved – Charlie Summers

Second – Tony Rose

The vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain - 0

Eastern Shore of Virginia 911 Commission – Represented by Greg Lewis

This request consists of two counties bordering Maryland, Accomack and Northampton Counties. They have ~1000 TDMA radios and are requesting Interop for LE and EMS and would like agreements with MSP, NRP, Worcester and Somerset Counties. They are currently building a 700 MHz P25 (Phase 2 TDMA) system and expect to cutover in February 2025.

*Expected capacity impact: Minimal due to Interop only usage.*

**Proposed Motion: The Radio Control Board approves the Eastern Shore of Virginia 911 Commission's application to become an Interoperability User on MD FiRST and authorizes the Chairwoman to conclude the appropriate MOU with Eastern Shore of Virginia 911 Commission.**

Moved – Clay Stamp

Second – Ted Delbridge

The vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain - 0

**Proposed New Limited Primary User:**

MedSTAR Transport – represented by Krista Wall, Rick Dressler, Seth Pritchett.

They are requesting Limited-Primary status with their own statewide talkgroups on MD FiRST. MedSTAR Transport is a private, not-for-profit entity that conducts more than 2,000 patient flights per year in Maryland. They operate a dispatch center in Lanham, MD with 3 aviation bases at Fort Meade, St Mary's, and Indian Head. They have one (1) dispatch radio and four (4) helicopter radios (currently being upgraded to TDMA). Med STAR is requesting 2 talkgroups for dispatch and MedControl with discussions of adding 3 more talkgroups, one for each base. MedSTAR is also requesting access to MIEMSS' SYSCOM channel and MD FiRST Interop resources. MedSTAR plans to dispatch, perform flight-following, and access Medical Control across the state with the MD FiRST Limited Primary access. They have offered to share access to their dispatch talkgroup with all HEMS providers, including MSP.

*Expected Capacity Impact: Potential for interference to MD FiRST and surrounding jurisdictions due to frequency reuse and signal propagation at altitude.*

MedSTAR's representative Rick Dressler presented their request to the Board.

Brandon, as the Chairman of the System Managers Committee, explained the Committee's rationale for unanimously voting against recommending approval of this request.

The Board had discussions concerning potential interference and potential capacity issues with MD FiRST, and concerns about MedSTAR usage of MD FiRST as their dispatch system. There was some additional discussion regarding what MedSTAR is currently and has been using and what other HEMS (Helicopter Emergency Services) in Maryland use. The acting Chair questioned the legality of NGOs becoming primary users on MD FiRST citing the Maryland Radio Control Board law of 2014 subsection D definition of a MD FiRST user. The law states: "(D) 'User' means a state, federal, county or municipal agency that has established interoperability with the system and operates on the system as its primary means of daily radio communications."

At the end of the discussion, the acting Chair asked if any Board member wanted to make a motion to approve MedSTAR's request to become a limited-Primary User. The Board was silent and no motions were made. By default, MedSTAR's request was not approved. Subsequently, a discussion ensued concerning the creation of a working group to examine communications issues involved with all HEMS flights in Maryland. As a result of those discussions the below motion was made:

**Proposed Motion: The chair is to establish a workgroup to consider the nature of communications for all air medical services in the state of MD and MD FiRST's role in facilitating this communication.**

Moved – Ted Delbridge

Second – Charles Summers

The vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain - 0

#### **Review of Annual Cost Estimation (FY25 Budget) – Norm Farley**

In accordance with the RCB law to review the annual cost estimation, Norm Farley presented the approved O&M budget for FY25 and the O&M budget estimates for FY26 to FY30.

#### **FY25 and FY26 Capital Budget Update - Norm Farley**

The approved FY25 Capitol budget was presented, along with the proposed FY26 Capital Budget submission and the out-year Capital Budget estimates for FY26 to FY30.

#### **System Performance Report – Brandon Renehan**

Brandon presented an update on System Performance.

#### **Project Status Update – Jennifer Zambito**

Jen presented an update on the Project Status.

#### **Operations Status Update – Brandon Renehan**

Brandon presented an update on the Operations Status.

#### **System Managers Committee Status and System Users Committee Updates – Brandon Renehan**

Brandon presented an update on the System Managers/Users Committees.

#### **Old Business/Open Discussion - Norman Farley**

On June 18, 2024, Governor Moore signed an updated Interoperability Executive Order, the SWIC position will be moved from MSP to MDEM. Secretary Strickland becomes the Chair of the Interoperability Executive Committee, the new SWIC will be the Vice Chair.

DoIT/MD FiRST will draft and present two new proposed SOPs:

- (1) A SOP dealing with the Air-to-Ground circuits.
- (2) A SOP clarifying who is eligible to join MD FiRST. (Post-meeting Note: This will be a modification to SOP 5 New Users Process to Join MD FiRST)

#### **Proposed Motion - I move that we adjourn and reconvene on September 18, 2024.**

Moved – Travis Nelson

Second – Clay Stamp

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain - 0

The vote was taken, passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

**Director of Board APPROVAL:**

(Signature & Date)

*Norman Farley* 9/26/2024

---