

MABAS Special Communications Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. at Lisle-Woodridge Fire Station 1. Present were committee members Dave Dato, Wauconda; Paul Maplethorpe, Round Lake; Steve Rauter, Lisle-Woodridge; John Lozar, Ducomm; Dave Riddle, Channahon; Bill Bouma, Mount Pleasant; Bob Mierop, Bollingbrook; and Billy Carter, Chicago.

A/C Rauter reported that the committee's website was recently updated and additional links to related websites were added. (www.mabasradio.org)

Mr. Carter, APCO's northern Illinois frequency coordinator, advised the committee that the FCC published its order on July 17th that establishes various deadlines regarding the conversion to narrow-band operation. The FCC will not process any "major" license changes for wide band frequencies after January 17, 2004. Due to lead time for frequency coordination, Mr. Carter encourages any party requiring license modifications to file them ASAP. He feels that modifications to existing licenses and frequencies that do not involve additional antenna height, transmit power or new frequencies may be approved.

Implications of the FCC's action were discussed concerning our goal to license IFERN and the three wide-band fireground frequencies state-wide. Mr. Carter reported that to obtain a statewide license, MABAS might have to partner with the Office of the State Fire Marshal or the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association. Mr. Carter suggested that licenses be obtained for each county using a centerpoint for a base station to protect the frequencies.

The Illinois Terrorism Task Force funding programs were discussed. Chief Dato distributed copies of the ITTF Communications Committee's *Statewide Communications Strategy and Budget*.

Discussion ensued regarding Division 15's use of 154.295 MHz for primary dispatch. Chief Maplethorpe and John Lozar visited WESCOM's dispatch center, Channahon and Minooka on July 2nd to perform an initial evaluation. There are several issues that go beyond our committee's charge of assisting Division 15 with a new channel. The area that WESCOM is covering with that frequency on a simplex system is problematic. It is recommended that WESCOM employ a consultant to resolve some technical and operational issues.

Several possible frequencies were discussed. Mr. Carter researched the frequency database and provided several recommendations. Several departments are currently licensed on 154.310 MHz which continues to be a strong contender for Division 15's ultimate relocation. Chief Maplethorpe and Mr. Lozar will continue to work with Chief Riddle to affect a change.

Chief Maplethorpe discussed the use of IFERN by LaPorte, Indiana as a repeater output. They had promised to end their use in June. It was recommended that the MABAS Executive Board consider a formal complaint to LaPorte City or the FCC.

A letter e-mailed to committee members from Carl Guse, Wisconsin's APCO coordinator, was discussed. The letter outlined a few issues with the expansion of the MABAS radio plan throughout Wisconsin. Overall the committee did not see any major challenges. The biggest concern is the use of 154.265 (IFERN) as a dispatch channel. Wisconsin uses that frequency as part of their statewide WISTACH mutual aid network. Several committee members commented that they rarely hear any radio traffic on IFERN while traveling in Wisconsin.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m. **DUE TO SCHEDULING CONFLICTS, the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 11, 2003 at 1000 hours at Lisle-Woodridge Station 1.** Please mark your calendars.