



MABAS Communications Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2005

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. at the DuComm Communications Center. Present were committee members Paul Maplethorpe, Round Lake; Dave Dato, Wauconda; Bill Bouma, Mt. Pleasant; David Riddle; Channahon; Steve Rauter, Lisle-Woodridge; Bob Mierop, Bolingbrook; Andy Sneed and Mitch Viren, Winnebago County Sheriff.

II. Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

B/C Mierop reported that Chief Bouma was responsible for the sample box alarm cards.

D/C Rauter moved to approve the January 17, 2005 meeting minutes as corrected. Second by Chief Bouma. All AYES; motion carried.

III. Box Alarm Card Sub-Committee

Chief Bouma presented the current draft of Recommended Practice #3-MABAS Card Design. He reported that the landscape style card with the Change of Quarters section on the same line seems to be preferred by more dispatchers than the portrait style card with Change of Quarters on a separate line.

The Committee members present reviewed the document in its entirety and made several minor language and/or terminology changes.

It was suggested that consideration be given at the MABAS Executive Board meeting to the possibility of changing the title for the 1st level of alarm to **1st Alarm** instead of **Box Alarm**. This has been a point of confusion with dispatchers.

Chief Maplethorpe reported that the topic of Box Alarm Cards has been placed on the Executive Board agenda for February 28th in Peoria. The consensus of the committee members present was to forward the Recommended Practice #3 document to all Divisions for discussion and consideration at the upcoming meeting.

IV. Rock Island County

No report.

V. New Lenox-Southwest Central Dispatch (154.280)

D/C Rauter moved to send the letter to Southwest Central Dispatch, previously distributed for review to committee members, concerning their use of 154.280 MHz for station alerting. Second by Chief Riddle. All AYES; motion carried.

Chief Maplethorpe will mail the letter ASAP.

VI. Gibson Area Ambulance (154.295)

Chief Maplethorpe reported that he has had conversations with Joe Higgins at Gibson Area Ambulance as well as Richard Kinsman at IMSA about relocating the ambulance service off of 154.295 MHz. Mr. Higgins agreed to allow Chief Maplethorpe to open an FCC application with IMSA to begin a frequency search for a new repeater output.

Chief Maplethorpe further reported that Mr. Higgins inquired about funding to cover costs associated with the frequency change.

VII. ITTF/MABAS Conference

D/C Rauter reported that information about the conference as well as registration information has been posted on the website. He also reported that information concerning registration information required scrubbing to make it more accurate.

Chiefs Dato and Maplethorpe will be participating in a program about STARCOM21 at the conference.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. MERCI Base Station Project

Chief Dato reported that Greg Scott from IDPH is surveying hospitals statewide to determine their current licensing status.

Chief Dato continues to work with John Meyers at IEMA concerning the base station configuration, especially as it relates to the statewide CTCSS tone. There appears to be an issue with ODP funds being distributed to private organizations, like hospitals, or the Illinois Hospital Association.

D/C Rauter requested that the IDPH four digit hospital identifier be used for tracking and data purposes regarding this project. He related that this would also help with the CTCSS tone data base that he maintains for IDPH.

B. IREACH Base Station Project

Chief Dato reported that MTR2000 base station equipment will be purchased for the IREACH stations. These radios will be distributed to 20 counties. Wauconda Fire Department will be the grantee and will sub-grant the equipment to the affected counties.

Chief Dato also reported that several counties have failed to submit required information to TJ Ward at ISP to facilitate licensing the new base radios.

C. STARCOM21

The implementation date for STARCOM21 is still unknown. Additional information should be forthcoming at the ITTF-MABAS Conference.

D. SEIC-AIR BOSS

Chief Dato reported that during a recent ITTF Communications Committee meeting that the concept of developing a "Signal Corps" or "Air Boss" was proposed. The purpose of these individuals will be to coordinate frequency usage at a major incident. They will also be responsible for developing the communications plan for the incident, following the US&R model, as described in NIMS. The "Air Boss" would respond with IEMA authority.

Chief Dato reported that the ITECS trailers will be deployed with "techy" individuals that understand how to deploy the hardware.

E. MABAS Websites

A brief discussion was held concerning updates to the MABAS websites. D/C Rauter reported that the problem downloading PowerPoint presentations is being overcome. As information is forwarded to him, he posts it ASAP.

IX. New Business

CART Website

D/C Rauter reported that Lisle-Woodridge is now hosting the CART website. www.CARTRESCUE.com

Multi-Band Portable Radio

D/C Rauter reported that THALES, Inc. is working on a multi-band software defined portable radio that may work on the VHF, UHF and 700/800 MHz bands.

Local Health Departments

Sheriff Sneed questioned a letter that his local Health Department received concerning selection of a VHF mobile or portable radio. Chief Dato explained that this is part of the VHF Interoperability project and that local health departments were included to facilitate communications at major incidents.

Announcements over IFERN

Sheriff Sneed questioned the practice of using the IFERN frequency and MABAS tones to announce hospital by-pass situations. This is a common practice in Division 8. It was also pointed out that Division 8 dispatches severe weather messages over IFERN as well.

A discussion ensued about past practice and understandings regarding dispatches over IFERN. There was considerable concern that this practice could be troublesome in the Chicago area.

Chief Maplethorpe reported that Chief Grady from Frankfort contacted him recently concerning an on-going problem in his area where an adjacent Division will re-tone and dispatch box alarms. Chief Grady explained that this causes considerable interference on the IFERN frequency during the initial stages of a Box Alarm.

D/C Rauter suggested that an Advocacy Statement be prepared that addresses this issue. Discussion suggested that severe weather announcements, hospital diversions, AMBER alerts and re-toning of adjacent division's alarms be addressed in the statement.

Chief Maplethorpe suggested that this type of dispatching may be appropriate for IFERN2. A Division that desires to make wide-area announcements could obtain FCC authorizations on the frequency and build the appropriate network.

B/C Mierop also suggested that IFERN2 could be used for Change of Quarters companies during box alarm incidents. It was agreed that this could be a possibility as departments obtain more narrow-band capable equipment.

I-WARN

A brief discussion was held concerning a private individual or group that is attempting to build out a statewide search & rescue and/or weather spotting network in Illinois and Missouri. www.I-WARN.org or .com

X. Adjournment

B/C Mierop moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by D/C Rauter. All AYES; the meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

The next meeting for the MABAS Communications Committee is scheduled for Monday, March 21, 2005 at 1000 hours. **The location of the meeting will be at the DuComm Communications Center in Glendale Heights.** Please mark your calendars.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Maplethorpe

Paul Maplethorpe
Co-Chair