



MABAS Communications Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 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; Steve Rauter, Lisle-Woodridge; Bob Mierop, Bolingbrook; John Lozar, Ducomm; and Andy Sneed, Winnebago County Sheriff.

II. Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

D/C Rauter moved to approve the January 17, 2005 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by B/C Mierop. All AYES; motion carried.

III. Rock Island County

Chief Maplethorpe reported on the various activities surrounding the work to move the various fire departments in Rock Island County that use 154.265 MHz (IFERN) for routine dispatch to a new frequency. Preliminary research has indicated that Moline Fire Department's old VHF dispatch frequency of 154.310 MHz will be a good choice for the aforementioned departments. Moline's Acting Chief has agreed to provide a concurrence letter for the frequency.

Dennis Higgins, Livingston County, entered the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Chief Maplethorpe further reported that several departments have requested assistance submitting FCC applications with the frequency coordinator. This assistance will be granted in the name of the MABAS Communications Committee.

Gregg Riddle, IFCA, entered the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Copies of two quotations submitted by Rock Island County departments were reviewed. Concerns were raised over several items listed in Racomm's proposal that exceeded the basic intention of moving departments off of 154.265 (IFERN). Also raised were concerns that the quotes included moving several departments that currently use 154.190 MHz for their routine dispatch.

D/C Rauter moved to recommend to the Illinois Terrorism Taskforce that grant monies be appropriated to assistant Rock Island County fire departments to relocate primary dispatch from IFERN. Second by Director Riddle. All AYES; motion carried.

D/C Rauter questioned how many other areas in Illinois have similar conflicts with IFERN. Chief Maplethorpe reported that several departments in Randolph County use IFERN for dispatch. There is also a county in Indiana near Mt. Carmel, IL that is using IFERN for fire dispatch.

IV. New Lenox - Southwest Central (154.280 MHz)

Chief Maplethorpe distributed copies of the letter sent to Southwest Central Dispatch Concerning their use of 154.280 MHz (WHITE Fireground) for station dispatch data. A copy of the response was also distributed. Southwest Central will discuss our concerns at their meeting on March 22nd.

V. Gibson Area Ambulance (154.295 MHz)

Chief Maplethorpe reported that he is working with Joe Higgins at Gibson and IMSA to locate a new repeater output for their operations.

VI. Incident Frequency Managers

A discussion was held concerning the idea of developing Incident Frequency Managers for major incidents and disasters. The frequency managers will develop the communications portion of an Incident Action Plan. This position is intended to oversee all disciplines at the incident.

Concerns were raised over the authority these individuals would have and how they would integrate into an existing incident management structure. Mr. Lozar questioned how this position would fit into the Chicago regional interoperability plan developed by the Federal government.

Consensus of the group was that Incident Frequency Managers would be an asset at major incidents and disaster scenes and that the concept should be developed further.

VII. ITECS Technicians

Chief Dato forwarded information to Chief Maplethorpe concerning the need for technicians to maintain and operate the ITECS communications suite trailers that are being developed by the Illinois Terrorism Task Force. Discussion centered on the technical background required for these technicians, training programs that will be required in both the technical and mechanical arenas. It was also presented that NIMS, ICS, and Unified Command courses be prerequisites for ITECS technicians.

VIII. VHF Interoperability Radios

Information was presented that the order for the fire service portion of the VHF Interoperability Radio project will be released by the end of the current week. A proposal will be presented to the ITTF on March 22nd to include magnet mount antennas, cigarette lighter adapters and Pelican style cases for each radio.

IX. Old Business

A. MERCI Base Station Project

Chief Maplethorpe reported that he met with Gregg Scott from IDPH at the IMERT conference in Champaign on March 18th. Mr. Scott indicated that he was nearly completed with a survey to determine licensing status of hospitals statewide for the VHF MERCI frequencies. Chief Dato continues to work with John Meyers at IEMA concerning the specification for the radios.

B. IREACH Base Station Project

The purchase order for the twenty counties included in the IREACH base station project has been issued. Equipment should be shipped by early April.

C. STARCOM21

A short discussion updating Starcom21 was held.

D. Report from ITTF/MABAS Conference

Recommended Practice #3 - Box Alarm Cards was approved (unanimously) at the MABAS Executive Board Meeting in Peoria. The new format was well received with many positive comments expressed both privately and during general sessions. Director Riddle reported that Division 11 dispatch has converted to the new cards.

D/C Rauter reported that he met with officials from ILEAS and gleaned several ideas for improvements to the MABAS and MABASRADIO websites from them. ITTF grant money was used to develop the ILEAS website.

X. New Business

A. Fire Act Grant

Chief Maplethorpe reported that DHS/FEMA will require approval from the State's homeland security agency for Assistance to Firefighters Grant applications that request communications equipment. The purpose of this additional approval step is to insure that communications plans being approved will meet statewide interoperability programs. Chief Dato met with ITTF Director Chamness in Peoria and requested that the MABAS Communications Committee be the approving authority for the Fire Act applications.

B. Advocacy Statement #10

Chief Maplethorpe apologized for failing to place this item on the agenda. The first draft of Advocacy Statement #10 addressing the appropriate use of the IFERN frequency was distributed in late February. This matter will be placed on the March agenda for formal action.

XI. Adjournment

D/C Rauter moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Director Higgins. All AYES; the meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

The next meeting for the MABAS Communications Committee is scheduled for Monday, April 18, 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