



# Mutual Aid Box Alarm System Communications Committee Meeting Minutes March 20, 2006

## **I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. at Lisle-Woodridge Station 1. Present were committee members Paul Maplethorpe, Round Lake; Dave Dato, Wauconda; Gregg Riddle, IFCA; Bill Bouma, Mt. Pleasant; Dave Riddle, Channahon; and John Lozar, DuComm. Also attending the meeting was Chief Brian Leahy from Clarendon Hills.

## **II. Approve Prior Meeting Minutes**

Chief Maplethorpe reported that the minutes from the February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting have not been prepared.

## **III. MABAS Dispatcher Yahoo Group**

Mr. Riddle reported that during the recent MABAS Dispatcher Conference, it was recommended that a Yahoo internet list serve group be created for MABAS dispatchers. A MABAS Dispatchers list serve will allow MABAS dispatchers to network, exchange ideas, resolve problems, etc. This concept will be an especially useful tool for dispatchers in new divisions to communicate with experienced dispatchers from older divisions. This idea was well received in Peoria.

Mr. Riddle reported that Ed Milan, Communications Director for the Pleasantview Fire Protection District has already created a Yahoo MABAS Dispatcher list serve and is willing to serve as the Moderator. A discussion ensued about necessary controls and oversight to ensure the list serve remains positive and beneficial to the MABAS organization. Mr. Riddle related that APCO has guidelines for APCO related Yahoo list serves and that these guidelines could easily be modified for use by MABAS.

Chief Dato expressed his opinion that a MABAS Dispatchers Yahoo list serve would be very beneficial. The consensus of the Committee was to proceed with the MABAS Dispatchers Yahoo list serve as an extension of the MABAS website under. The APCO guidelines will be distributed as modified for the MABAS dispatch mission.

Mr. Riddle reported that developing mentor agencies for new division dispatch centers was also discussed in Peoria at the MABAS Dispatchers Conference. Committee members present felt that this was a good idea as well.

#### **IV. Interdivisional Request Procedures**

Mr. Riddle reported that another topic from the recent MABAS Dispatchers Conference was the need for procedures related to non-statewide deployment interdivisional requests. Questions were raised concerning the use of IFERN for these requests and subsequent dispatches. Current MABAS procedures lack guidance.

A discussion ensued. The issue of speed of response for interdivisional requests focused the thoughts to maintaining IFERN as the communication and dispatch conduit for interdivisional response requests. Statewide deployment request should continue via the established telephone procedures.

Consensus of the Committee was to prepare an Advocacy Statement addressing Interdivisional Response Requests and Dispatches.

#### **V. Statewide Radio License**

Chief Maplethorpe reported that the IREACH Governing Board granted concurrence to MABAS to license IREACH statewide for both mobiles and temporary base stations. The Board also granted permission for RED Center to obtain base station authorizations on IREACH. RED Center will be added to the existing MABAS authorization.

Mr. Lozar stated that he felt it was important for MABAS to “place a stake in the ground” for the 700 MHz interoperability frequencies. He felt this would be beneficial for the ITECS trailers as well. It was recognized that this portion of the initiative may require approval from Region 54.

#### **VI. Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee**

Chief Maplethorpe reported that a bill in the legislature to re-establish an SIEC was recently discovered. Fire service lobbyists overlooked the bill as its title and overview only related it to the Illinois State Police. There were no provisions for MABAS, ILEAS or IEMA to be represented on the SIEC.

Quick action by the Illinois Fire Chiefs and MABAS opened dialogue with Craig Allen from ISP. Chief Dato discussed the issues and Mr. Allen agreed to have both MABAS and ILEAS added to the make-up of the SIEC.

## **VII. MABAS Dispatch Test Schedule/Statewide Deployment Drills**

Mr. Riddle reported that discussions at the MABAS Dispatchers Conference indicated that conducting statewide deployment drills (similar to a radio drill) be conducted on a regular basis between RED/Orland Centers and MABAS division dispatch centers. Drills should involve all three shifts. The purpose is to maintain proficiency in the statewide deployment plan at the MABAS Division dispatch level. Consensus of the committee felt that this proposal would be very beneficial. Mr. Riddle agreed to coordinate this initiative.

## **VIII. Frequency Use Issues – Carbondale & Franklin County**

Chief Maplethorpe reported that Chief Don Swiatkowski from Williamson County Fire Protection District contacted him regarding frequency conflicts in Carbondale as well as an adjacent county, believed to be Franklin County. Chief Swiatkowski reported that Carbondale uses RED Fireground (153.830 MHz for a repeater dispatch input. Chief Maplethorpe confirmed this via Carbondale's FCC authorization. Chief Swiatkowski also related that Franklin County uses WHITE Fireground (154.280 MHz) for routine dispatch.

Follow-up on both of these issues will be necessary.

## **IX. Old Business**

### **A. MERCI Base Station Project**

Chief Dato reported that most of the hospital base station equipment has been delivered. Several multicouplers are still back-ordered. A contractor has developed an installation guide as well as a list of additional equipment required to complete the installations. Several Rf and interconnect cables were not included in the Motorola base station package.

### **B. VHF Interoperability Radios**

Chief Dato reported that all 1200 MABAS/ITTF VHF interoperability radios have been shipped. GRAY fireground was improperly programmed, as was the power levels for all fireground channels. (50 watts instead of 10). Talkback scan was also activated. Several other minor programming issues were also discovered.

Several hundred radios were reprogrammed at the MABAS Conference earlier in the month. Motorola will be required to develop a plan to reprogram the remainder of the radios.

### **C. Rock Island County**

Chief Maplethorpe reported that the FCC application for Rock Island County Sheriff's Office has been approved.

### **D. Gibson Area Ambulance**

Chief Maplethorpe reported that Gibson Area Ambulance has completed its frequency change. BLUE Fireground is now clear in the Champaign area.

### **E. Southwest Central Dispatch**

Chief Leahy from Clarendon Hills is the President of Southwest Central Dispatch. Chief Leahy explained that Southwest Central uses 154.280 MHz for one-way Moscad alerting. He reiterated that Southwest Central's Director and radio shop insist that their operations on 154.280 MHz (WHITE Fireground) are legal. A lengthy discussion ensued concerning the appropriate use of 154.280 MHz based on FCC rules, as well as MABAS Advocacy Statements. Firefighter safety issues were also discussed as it relates to Southwest Central transmitting their alerting system on a frequency designated for fireground tactical operations.

Chief Leahy was very understanding and desires to resolve the issue. He requested that written documentation to support the MABAS Communications Committee be forwarded to him. Chief Maplethorpe agreed to work on a formal opinion from the FCC.

### **F. LEADS/EMnet**

Chief Maplethorpe reported that beginning April 1, 2006, installation of EMnet at all primary 9-1-1 PSAP's will begin. He also reported that the ITTF has made providing an EMnet terminal to each fire department in Illinois a funding priority for FY2006-07.

### **G. IAFC/Top Priority**

No report.

### **H. MABAS Conference**

Chief Riddle suggested that too much time was spent on Katrina related issues in New Orleans. This was echoed by Chief Bouma. Chief Riddle suggested that more time should have been spent on lessons learned from the activation of the statewide response plan as well as reimbursement issues. Mr. Riddle expressed concern over the timing conflict with the ILEAS conference. Many positive comments were also expressed by those that attended.

**X. New Business**

**MAYDAY Policy and Emergency Traffic:** Mr. Riddle expressed the opinion that an updated MAYDAY and Emergency Traffic policy needs to be presented to MABAS for adoption.

**XI. Information for the Good of the Committee**

**IL TERT:** Mr. Riddle reported that development of the IL Telecommunications Emergency Response Taskforce is moving forward.

**XII. Adjournment**

**Chief Bouma moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Chief Riddle. All AYES; the meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.**

The next meeting for the MABAS Communications Committee is scheduled for **Monday, April 17, 2006** at 1000 hours. **The location of the meeting will be at Lisle-Woodridge Fire Station 1.** Please mark your calendars.

Respectfully submitted,

*Paul Maplethorpe*

Paul Maplethorpe  
Co-Chair