



Mutual Aid Box Alarm System Communications Committee

Meeting Minutes November 20, 2006

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. at Lisle-Woodridge Station 1. Present were committee members Paul Maplethorpe, Round Lake; Gregg Riddle, IFCA; Dennis Higgins, Livingston County; Bob Mierop, Bolingbrook; Larry Matkaitis, OSFM; Dave Riddle, Channahon; Bill Bouma, Mt. Pleasant; and Carl Guse, WI Highway Patrol. Also present was Chief Brian Satula from Oak Creek, WI. (Division 107)

II. Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

Mr. Riddle moved to approve the September 2006 minutes as presented. Second by Chief Matkaitis. All AYES; motion carried.

III. Advocacy Statement – Interdivisional Responses

Chief Maplethorpe apologized for not presenting this Advocacy Statement to the MABAS Executive Board at the October meeting. It was an oversight. He related that the only comment received concerned the number of engines on a taskforce response. The MABAS Coloring Book only lists two engines whereas our Advocacy Statement listed three. A discussion followed.

Mr. Riddle expressed concern that filling a taskforce assignment will be difficult for smaller divisions. He requested that the number of engines remain at two. Consensus of the group was to change the number of engines for the taskforce assignment in the Advocacy Statement to two (2).

Chief Bouma questioned if the proposed Advocacy Statement was in conflict with other statements with regards to re-toning box alarms. A discussion ensued and it was determined that no conflict exists.

Mr. Riddle reported that data in the existing state response “Coloring Book” needs to be updated. A discussion ensued and it was agreed that the Communications Committee would undertake this project and forward an updated version to the Executive Board for their consideration. Mr. Riddle will chair this sub-committee.

Mr. Lozar entered the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

IV. MABAS Radio Test Schedule

Chief Bouma reported that he has developed the revised test schedule for all MABAS Divisions. Chief Maplethorpe provided a list of most Divisions, dispatch centers and contacts, that he received from RED Center. Chief Bouma related he would finish the schedule for Committee review prior to the February MABAS Executive Board meeting.

Mr. Lozar questioned if another "PL" compliance drill should be run. A discussion ensued. It was decided that Mr. Lozar would conduct tests with all metro-Chicago Divisions that were not compliant during the February test. Additional testing should also be conducted in other areas of both Illinois and Wisconsin.

V. CYREN Call Proposal

Mr. Riddle reported that APCO is supporting comments to the Federal Communications Commission concerning a proposal to set aside 30 MHz of radio spectrum in the 700 MHz band for public safety use. APCO is not, however, supporting CYREN Call's proposal to be granted the 30 MHz for development of a public/private nationwide network. The FCC has initiated a Notice of Proposed Rule Making and a formal comment period is open through November 29th. Mr. Riddle suggests that each member file a comment representing their department.

Mr. Guse related that the proposal may indicate a policy shift for the future. He discussed that if a national network is approved; grant funding available for local systems may shift to the proposed national network.

Chief Maplethorpe questioned if developing a true nationwide public safety voice and data network was even feasible. Concerns over costs for equipment and service may preclude smaller and rural departments from affording the system. Additional discussion ensued echoing those concerns.

Mr. Riddle and B/C Mierop both related that the 30 MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz band is needed in the metropolitan areas.

VI. Midwest Interoperability Summit

Mr. Guse reported on the Summit held in Rosemont, IL during October. The states of WI, IL, OH, TN, IN, NE, WY, MT, ND, SD, MN, and MO along with representatives from the Federal Government, the Federal Communications Commission and APCO were in attendance. Iowa and Michigan were not represented. Each state made presentations concerning interoperability plans in their state. D/C Rauter presented the MABAS plan while Mr. Jerry Bleck presented the IREACH and ISPERN plans.

Mr. Guse related that the summit allowed the participants to share existing successes. Connections were made across state lines to facilitate better planning and cooperation. Mr. Guse related that additional summits will be held in other regions of the country. Summit participants also discussed meeting annually to review their plans and progress.

VII. Old Business

A. MERCI Base Station Project

No report.

B. VHF Interoperability Radios

No report.

C. Rock Island County

Chief Maplethorpe reported that he recently heard Rock Island County dispatching a call on the IFERN frequency. He will follow-up.

D. Southwest Central Dispatch

No report.

E. EMnet

Chief Maplethorpe reported that a prioritized list of fire departments was forwarded to Mike Moos at OSFM regarding EMnet installation. This list will be used by the vendor. Installations should begin in December or January. Allan Choutka from DuPage OEM is coordinating installations.

Mr. Riddle questioned if any training was available for the EMnet system. A discussion ensued.

Chief Riddle left the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

D/C Rauter entered the meeting at 11:12 a.m.

Chief Maplethorpe related that training for EMnet, STARCOM21 and the VHF Interop radios have been put on hold awaiting the ITTF Interoperability Plan.

D/C Rauter related that DuPage County has a PowerPoint training program for EMnet. He agreed to forward the program to the committee.

Chief Satula reported that Wisconsin is developing a similar internet based emergency management program called ESPONDER.

It was suggested that EMnet, STARCOM21 and the VHF Interoperability radios/plan be topics for the 2007 MABAS & Dispatchers conference.

F. MABAS Dispatch Yahoo Group

Chief Maplethorpe reported that List Moderator Ed Milam has advised that seventy-five (75) members have been approved for the MABAS Dispatchers List Serve. He will begin advertising the List now that MABAS has approved the Advocacy Statement.

Mr. Riddle commented that the MABAS Dispatcher List Serve is the only follow-up item completed from the 2006 MABAS Dispatcher Conference.

Chief Satula questioned if a standard existed for the number of times the tones are activated, the dispatch and apparatus due messages are repeated for initial box alarms as well as upgraded alarms. A discussion ensued. Chief Maplethorpe reported that Division 4 has taken the MABAS Procedures Manual prepared by Division 107 and further revised it. He agreed to forward the manual to the committee for review.

G. Statewide Radio License

No report.

A brief discussion was held concerning licensing the NIPSPAC channels on 800 MHz. Mr. Guse related that MABAS should wait until after rebanding is completed before applying for these frequencies.

H. Carbondale Area

No report

I. Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee

Chief Maplethorpe reported that the new SIEC held its first meeting on November 1st. Chief Dato is representing MABAS on the SIEC. The Illinois State Police seem to be willing to cooperate with other state organizations.

J. STARCOM21

Chief Maplethorpe reported that Mike Chamness from ITTF related that a last purchase of STARCOM21 radios will be made in 2007 for any agency that failed to request/receive a unit during earlier distributions. Motorola may be reevaluating its position on the fee structure for incidental use of the STARCOM21 network in an attempt to encourage more agencies to purchase radios and use the network. Chief Maplethorpe reported that the majority of the STARCOM21 network is currently operational and Motorola expects to “clamp down” the system around January 1, 2007.

K. Blue Fireground Interference

Chief Satula related that interference heard on BLUE Fireground may be originating from a console patch in Milwaukee. The patch is used to coordinate expressway accidents around Milwaukee. He related that Milwaukee County fire departments are pushing hard to eliminate that patch.

Mr. Lozar reported that recent harmful interference on IFERN and one of Ducomm's fire frequencies was tracked down to a defective base radio in McHenry County.

VIII. New Business

800 MHz Fireground Frequencies

Mr. Guse described a situation in Waukesha and Milwaukee counties concerning the use of low-power simplex frequencies for fireground operation. He indicated that the need for additional frequencies set aside for this purpose exists in both Wisconsin and Illinois.

D.C Rauter related that 700 MHz analog frequencies should also be set aside for this purpose. Mr. Guse related that there are six simplex itinerant nationwide frequencies in the 700 MHz band. There are also four (4) fire service tactical channels.

Chief Maplethorpe questioned what the real issue was between Waukesha and Milwaukee counties. Low power simplex on 800 MHz should not propagate well, making interference almost non-existent. Mr. Guse also related that the frequencies in question are already licensed in Milwaukee, Ozaukee and Sheboygan counties. The issue appears more political than operational.

Chief Maplethorpe related that he feels the model of using UHF or 800 for fireground operations is flawed. Discussion around using VHF for fireground and 800 for dispatch ensued. Chief Maplethorpe agreed to develop the model further, in writing, and with system diagrams.

IX. Information for the Good of the Committee

Chief Matkaitis reported that a company called BAE has developed an interoperability device that was demonstrated at the ITTF Communications Committee meeting on November 1st. BAE has agreed to allow Illinois to be a beta test site for this new product.

Chief Matkaitis also reported the US Department of Commerce will be funding public safety interoperability solutions through grant programs that are not tied to DHS. OSFM is involved with the grant program through the national Fire Marshal's association.

Mr. Guse reported that many rural counties in Wisconsin are challenging the need for using IFERN for MABAS operations. Geographic issues and lack of communications infrastructure amplify the problem. D/C Rauter encouraged WI to follow the MABAS Comm Plan because IFERN will be important during large mutual aid operations.

X. Adjournment

B/C Mierop moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Chief Bouma. All AYES; the meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

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