



Mutual Aid Box Alarm System Communications Committee

Meeting Minutes December 18, 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; Bob Mierop, Bolingbrook; Larry Matkaitis, OSFM; Dave Riddle, Channahon; and Bill Bouma, Mt. Pleasant. Also present was Chief Jay Reardon from Northbrook. (MABAS President)

II. Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

Mr. Riddle moved to approve the November 2006 minutes with two spelling corrections (Bolingbrook & Choutka). Second by B/C Mierop. All AYES; motion carried.

III. Chief Reardon

Chief Reardon addressed the Committee to discuss the transition that MABAS administration is undergoing. A President's Council of state MABAS groups will meet in January. Chief Reardon anticipates that each state will function independently with the goal to maintain interoperability across state lines.

Chief Reardon complimented the Communications Committee for its productivity. He also expressed concern that the Committee is stepping outside of its mission, specifically addressing the "Coloring Book". He indicated that the new Plans Officer will be responsible for updating the statewide response plans.

Mr. Riddle explained the purpose for COMMs involvement in the "Coloring Book" due to the recognized need for updating. Chief Reardon related that many lessons have been learned based on actual incidents; however, lack of MABAS staff has limited the ability to make updates.

Chief Maplethorpe defended the Committee by relating that the Communications Committee was asked by former VP Jerry Tonne to assist, and effectively become, the Procedures Committee. He also related that issues raised by COMMs have been passed along to the MABAS Executive Board for approval.

Mr. Matkaitis asked about the timeline for the MABAS administrative transition. Chief Reardon related that he expects to be on board as the Executive Director by February 1, 2007. Transition for the other positions will most likely be staggered.

Chief Reardon reported that MABAS plans to implement a new computer server system and updated interactive websites. He told the Communications Committee that it will be involved in the development and operation of the MABAS websites.

Chief Reardon further asked the Communications Committee to be patient while MABAS is evolving.

Mr. Riddle asked about the 2007 MABAS and Dispatch conference. Chief Reardon related that the conference agenda was nearly complete. Chief Maplethorpe requested that the Communications Committee be allowed to make presentations on the operation of STARCOM21, EMnet and the VHF interoperability radios. Chief Reardon related that the MABAS Communications Committee could hold its own Communications Conference to deal specifically with communications related issues.

Mr. Riddle also requested that time be allotted during the MABAS Dispatch Conference for a combined APCO/NENA chapter meeting.

Chief Bouma inquired about a potential rewrite of the MABAS contract. Chief Reardon reported that several issues brought up by attorney Karl Ottosen are being considered, however any potential discussions have been postponed until after January 1st. Discussions have also been held to permit each state to have a slightly different contract that is tied back to the contracts in other MABAS states.

IV. MABAS Radio Test Schedule

Chief Bouma reported that the revised division testing schedule is nearly complete. He will forward the proposed schedule to Chief Maplethorpe for distribution to the entire committee for final review.

Coordination of new divisions was discussed. As new divisions become active, testing days and times will be established by the Communications Committee. Mr. Riddle related that days and times could be duplicated for divisions that are separated by considerable geographic distances.

Chief Bouma was thanked for his hard work on this project.

V. Meeting Location

Chief Maplethorpe reported that Communications Committee member Steve Rauter has retired from Lisle-Woodridge and is now the Executive Director of the WESCOM communications center in Plainfield. Mr. Rauter will remain a member of the MABAS Communications Committee and expressed that Lisle-Woodridge is willing to continue to host our monthly meetings.

Consensus of the Committee was to continue holding meetings on the third Monday of each month at Lisle-Woodridge beginning at 10:00 a.m.

VI. Old Business

A. MERCI Base Station Project

Mr. Riddle reported that a hospital in his area recently purchased new MERCI equipment and has stored the ITTF supplied equipment. It was suggested that this equipment be returned to Chief Dato for reissue.

B/C Mierop related that hospitals along North Avenue are still awaiting additional equipment to permit monitoring of both MERCI 340 and 400.

B. VHF Interoperability Radios

No report.

C. Rock Island County

No report.

D. Southwest Central Dispatch

No report.

E. EMnet

Chief Bouma reported that Wisconsin has adopted ESPONDER as their internet based emergency management communications program.

F. MABAS Dispatch Yahoo Group

Mr. Riddle reported that the Dispatch Yahoo group has been fairly active.

G. Statewide Radio License

No report.

H. Carbondale Area

No report.

I. Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee

No report.

J. STARCOM21

Chief Maplethorpe reported that Motorola is gearing up for a January 1st deployment with the Illinois State Police. Discussions have been held with Motorola concerning use of the network and certain levels of free or reduced rate service.

K. Blue Fireground Interference

No report.

L. Evacuation Tones

Chief Riddle reported that his radio technician is having difficulty programming the emergency alert/evacuation tone in some Motorola radios. Chief Maplethorpe offered to help talk his technician through the process.

VII. New Business

MABAS Testing During Active Incidents

Chief Bouma questioned the policy on conducting monthly MABAS tests during active incidents. Consensus of the Committee was that during an active incident, monthly tests and radio drills should be withheld. Chief Bouma will add that information to the revised radio testing schedule.

Automatic Morse Code Identifiers

Chief Bouma mentioned this topic on behalf of Carl Guse. Concerns over the interference that automatic Morse Code station identifiers on IFERN have been raised. It was agreed that a memo from the Committee would be forwarded through the MABAS e-mail network addressing testing, drills and identifiers on IFERN.

VIII. Information for the Good of the Committee

Chief Bouma reported that progress is being made between Waukesha and Milwaukee counties over the sharing of 800 MHz fireground frequencies.

Mr. Matkaitis reported that Illinois' Department of Central Management Services is close to presenting a state purchasing contract for thermal imaging cameras. Multiple vendors may be possible for the cameras.

IX. Adjournment

Chief Riddle moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Chief Bouma. All AYES; the meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

The next meeting for the MABAS Communications Committee is scheduled for **Monday, January 15, 2007** 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