

DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY
Communication Interoperability Working Group

May 15, 2007 Minutes
DOT Central Lab, 280 West Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067

WELCOME, PUBLIC COMMENT AND REVIEW OF MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 1308 hours by the Co-Chair, Michael Varney. The following individuals were in attendance: George Carbonell (ConnDOT), Robert Cross (Military), Anthony Diaz (Hamden PD), Bob DiBella (DEMHS), Mike Dion (Military), Libby Graham (DEMHS), John Gustafson (CMED-NH), Bill Hackett (DEMHS), Dennis Harrell (Judicial), Jeff Merwin (Region 1), Bernie O'Donnell (DOIT), Jeff Otto (Region 4), George Pohorilak (OSET), Jerry Sakalowski (DOC), Gordon Shand (DPH), Mike Stemmler (DPS), Lee Toffey (DEMHS), Matt Valleau (CAP/DPS), Tom Vannini (Region 5), Michael Varney (DOIT/CFCA), Keith Victor (Region 3), Tom Walsh (DEMHS), and Ed Wilds (DEP).

Minutes of the April 17, 2007 meeting reviewed; motion to accept by John Gustafson, second by Keith Victor, unanimous/moved and will be posted on the DEMHS website.

There were no public comments.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Technical Committee: Presented by George Carbonell/Michael Varney. The STOC's bid was awarded to Marcus Communications and the first 100 plus supplemental equipment have been ordered. All units will need to be checked and tested upon arrival. The draft distribution protocol has been written and a training protocol will be done prior to distribution. Grant process will be competitive and based on need. Some discussion ensued on why there was no vacant spot left in the STOC's box for a low band radio. Final outcome - The equipment which has been ordered is technically capable of having another radio added to it, but they have not been physically set-up to receive another radio and antenna during this initial distribution. If a need is identified in the future an additional radio can easily be accommodated within the unit.
- B. Training & Exercise Workgroup: Mike Varney reported that the full scale functional exercise of the TICP and Metro-North went well.

REPORT OF INTEROPERABILITY USAGE AND INCIDENTS:

- A. Bob DiBella stated that two weeks ago he was listening to an exercise on ITAC 4 and that the Incident Commander did an excellent job following protocol.
- B. Gordon Shand advised that the system was used for UCONN's Spring Weekend with no problem.
- C. Jeff Merwin reported that it was used for the Metro-North drill and worked very well. Used both from the tower and a trailer on scene. The whitewash will be on May 21st. Mike Varney advised that communications went very well for those who prepared and made improvements brought out on the scorecard, those who made no changes had the same results. Great on-scene coordination by all.
- D. Keith Victor stated that when they attempted to use it in Avon at an incident they had some trouble getting through to the message center. It was noted that this incident fell at

the same time as the UCONN Spring Weekend and the TICP/metro-North drill. They called in on a landline and the problem was resolved.

- E. Robert Cross of the Bradley Air Guard reported getting feedback from STOC's 1 to the inter-city. The Newington trailer was on-site. Also STOC's 2 had no communication when they attempted to talk direct at approximately 250 yards. They changed to STOC's 3. There were also penetration problems – VHF not as good as UHF out/into the barracks. He could receive on VHF but not transmit out and the rescuers inside the building could not hear one another. He asked for some help in resolving these problems. Much discussion on the subject, seems to be a programming problem. John Gustafson suggested that a programming protocol should be put together on how to correctly program the STOC's frequencies into the radios. It was decided that this would be the next project for the Technical Committee and it would be included with the STOC's training.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Portable Radio Inventory & Training Program: Mike Varney reported that the USAR radios are back in inventory. Varney, Stemmler and Shand will get together to see who still needs radios.
- B. CSPERN – The installation at the prime site will be completed in 1-2 days, the remotes are already done. Within a week the timing can be adjusted on the simulcast. 99% of the installation is complete.
- C. ITAC/ICALL Monthly Testing & Training Issues: No change.
- D. Homeland Security Grant Program: Libby graham reported that she met with the co-chairs and they revised the budget to meet current needs and maintenance costs. The biggest change was the allocation of funds to hire contractors for the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) grant. Press to spend FY04 dollars promptly.
- E. Prime Mover Radios & Licensing: Libby advised that we need to nail down definitive costs. Bob DiBella to help with this.
- F. Transit Security Grant: Libby reported there was nothing new with this grant.
- G. Public Safety Interoperable Communications - PSIC Grant – Michael Varney reported that working group met and put together a rough time line with the help of Bernie O'Donnell from DOIT. Several contractors to collect information and assist with the writing. Bernie advised that the draft plan is due September 29th and they are ready to bring contractors on board. Varney reported a coordinated effort will be made between the regional representatives and the Regional Coordinators to determine the highest priorities. The Regional Coordinators will help to reach each community and get detailed information back so a workable plan can be made. Also state agencies will be contacted. Discussion.

UPDATES FROM THE DEMHS REGIONS:

REGION 1 – Jeff Merwin – no change.

REGION 2 – John Gustafson – a) The UASI project will be on the air by the end of summer. b) Hoping to hold a symposium in June to bring together all the regional stakeholders.

REGION 3 – Keith Victor – no change.

REGION 4 – Jeff Otto – no update.

REGION 5 - Tom Vannini – a) Torrington is working on a new communications system. b) Their Interoperable Communications team is still meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Update of DEMHS VHF system upgrade and status – Bob DiBella discussed color map handout. John Gustafson asked about linkages. Per Tom Walsh all towers have linked microwave backbone. Discussion and questions. DEMHS is adding towers and upgrades so each region can talk to all their towns and Hartford will be able to talk to any Region if need be.

CORRESPONDENCE/GRANT REVIEWS:

- A. Letter from the Statewide Fire Service Honor Guard requesting access to the ITAC/ICALL system for the pre-staged events they have to handle – typically funerals, use in direct mode. Discussion on subject. Final decision – the Incident Commander who runs the event can request to borrow radios from the cache for their use at the event. No radios will be issued from the inventory.
- B. SHSGP grant reviews – Bill Hackett reported the following project reviews:
 - Cheshire
 - Norwalk
 - Sherman

NEXT MEETING:

Next regular meeting will be **June 19, 2007, at 1300 hours**, DOT Central Lab, Rocky Hill.

Meetings open to the public.

Motion to adjourn by Jeff Merwin; second by Jeff Otto; approved.
Meeting adjourned at 1412 hours.