

DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY
Communication Interoperability Working Group

September 19, 2006 Minutes
Brainard Field, 269 maxim Road, Hartford, CT

WELCOME, PUBLIC COMMENT AND REVIEW OF MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 1310 hours by the Co-Chair, Mike Varney. The following individuals were in attendance: Jon Barbagallo (COE), Stephan Brown (DOT), George Carbonell (ConnDOT), Robert DiBella (DEMHS), John Gustafson (CMED-NH), Bill Hackett (DEMHS), Paul Jakobson (CPCA), Jeff Merwin (SW-CMED), Tyler Millix (Tolland County), Bernie O'Donnell (DOIT), Jeff Otto (QVEC), George Pohorilak (OSET), Gordon Shand (DPH), Mike Stemmler (DPS), Matt Valteau (CAP/DPS), Michael Varney (DOIT/CFCA), Keith Victor (CREPC), Tom Walsh (DEMHS), Jerry Zarwanski (OSET) and Lee Toffey (secretary).

Also attending were: Jim Monson (CTNG), Brandi Walter (CTNG), John Masciadrelli (OSET), Alberto Battelli (Sprint/Nextel), Andrew Celli (Motorola), Libby Graham (DEMHS), Ken Rigney (DEMHS), and Doug Glowacki (DEMHS).

Minutes of the August 15, 2006 meeting reviewed; motion to accept by John Gustafson, second by Paul Jakobson, 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. 1) STOCS Guidance update: First order of business is to rename the channel assignments from using the GP_ nomenclature to STOC's since that is the name everyone is using. Re-writes include re-emphasis of the power restriction, all five channels to be programmed into radio, and keep power at 5 watts or under. Discussion – then a motion by Paul Jakobson to approve with the changes and limitations discussed, second by George Carbonell, unanimous approval. 2) Vcall and Ucall and possible sites. The possibility exists to use Icall on a different PL tone. Discussion to continue on issue. 3) STOC's box spec at DOIT, procurement is finishing the package this week. Some wording changes may be made and the Tech. committee will have the opportunity to review specs before going out to bid to be sure no technical changes have inadvertently been made. 4) Tech. committee is looking for feedback on tying Icall, Ucall and Vcall bands together while personnel are responding to an incident. Options were discussed for the Vcall/Ucall system.
- B. Governance Committee: Per Mike Varney, letters have gone out regarding voting membership on the committee with a reply date of October 1, 2006.
- C. Training & Exercise Workgroup: 1) Gordon Shand spoke regarding the Danbury, Waterbury, Torrington exercise. They attempted to use the system beyond its capacity but were able to make it work for most instances. According to a party at Danbury FD the FBI and Coast guard asked to be made part of the exercise and be brought online. There were three distinct emergency situations going on at the same time. Bill Hackett stated that Roy Piper attended and said they really had no big problems with communication and that the press may have exaggerated the issues.

REPORT OF INTEROPERABILITY USAGE AND INCIDENTS:

- A. See above: Training & Exercise Workgroup.
- B. Keith Victor spoke of the Bradley drill. The STOC's frequencies used group 2 & 3 with no problems. Both were put on the same talk group (the only problem) and used on direct.
- C. Bob DiBella advised that he attended the FCC meeting last week. Some discussion ensued (at our meeting) regarding adjacent states and their use of Icall/Itac and how it affects CT.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Portable Radio Inventory & Training Programs: Per Michael Varney discussion continues with regions on scheduled training.
- B. ITAC/ICALL Test & Training Issues: None.
- C. Homeland Security Grant Program: Reported on by Bill Hackett. There is a total set aside of 2.1 million part of which is for the STOC's project and the FY06 grant may have dollars to fund the establishment of command resource management in the state. The question was raised as to why Towns have not received their radio equipment yet. Ken Rigney of the Grant Unit advised that it takes 3-4 months to get the equipment and then how ever long the vendor needs for programming before the items are in use.
- D. Tactical Interoperable Communication Plan: Michael Varney reported that several training sessions were held to review the regional plans. Also the Communication Unit Leader Program class will be held next week at the Fairfield Fire training school. The Full scale exercise is October 28. For more info please contact Rich Fournier who is the DEMHS Region 1 Coordinator.
- E. Prime Mover radios and Licensing: Mike Stemmler advised that the issue is now at the Legal department of DPS.
- H. Jakubson Proposal: Paul Jakubson advised that the proposal has made it through this Interoperability Committee and is being acted upon. ODP has approved the \$650,000 in funding through DEMHS and CPCA will make up the other \$450,000. The system design is done. Mike Varney will forward additional information to Lee who will send it to the group. C-SPERN = CT Statewide Police Emergency Radio Network. Bill Hackett made the offer for DEMHS to help forward guidance if the committee wished. Discussion on how the system worked continued – 800 analog CTCSS.
- I. NPSTC Questionnaire – no questions or comments.
- J. Other:
 - 1) Gordon Shand requested a meeting to discuss the Itac/Icall radios that were not distributed to EMS. Per Mike Varney, DPS and the Interoperability Committee will compile a list to see who still needs radios and how much inventory remains.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. High Band Radio Directive – presented by Doug Glowacki of the DEMHS Grant Unit. To address the lack of emergency communication capabilities between the EOC, the Regions, and the local Emergency Management Directors, towns who do not have one, would be required to purchase a base station first, before any other purchases are made with their FY06 Homeland Security Grant allocation. This has been an advisory since 1975, but would now become a funded mandate. There

would be two phases: one being the purchase and programming of the unit, the other being mandatory quarterly tests of the system (tentatively scheduled at 11am and 6pm to accommodate different EMD schedules). If the base station is unable to communicate with the regional office, additional equipment will be bought by DEMHS, from a set aside fund, to make the system work. Minimum specs will be provided – one portable, one mobile, and one base, 35 watts or less. An Acceptance of Conditions letter would need to be signed by both the Chief Elected Official and the Emergency Management Director. Discussion on directive, licenses, etc. ensued. Mike Varney suggested that a special meeting be held to work out the issues. John Gustafson made a point of order that the plan needed to go through the Interoperability Committee first before action could be taken. Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 26th at 10:30 am, at the DOT central lab in Rocky Hill.

- B. George Pohorilak advised that Terra Star has a two-satellite system that covers the entire U.S. and is offering “free” usage to all public safety departments. Does committee wish to see a presentation of the system? No decision was reached.
- C. Matt Valleau advised that CAP wished to submit a new grant application for continued upgrades to their system. He will send the information to Lee who will distribute to all.

CORRESPONDENCE/GRANT REVIEWS:

- A. Correspondence – none.
- B. SHSGP grant reviews:
 - Capital Region Medical Reserve Corps – Approved
 - Eastford – Approved
 - Greenwich – Approved
 - Madison FD – Approved
 - Old Saybrook – Approved
 - Sharon - Approved

NEXT MEETING:

Special Meeting regarding High band Directive to be held on **September 26, 2006 at 10:30 am**, DOT Central Lab, Rocky Hill.

Next regular meeting will be **October 17, 2006, at 1300 hours**, DOT Central Lab, Rocky Hill.

Meetings open to the public.

Motion to adjourn by Matt Valleau; second by Paul Jakobson; approved.

Meeting adjourned at 1455 hours.