

INTEROPRABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 17, 2011

ATTENDANCE:

James D. Smith, RIEMA
Brian Glancy, RISP
Tim Cullinan, EP Fire
Ralph Nahigian, NP Fire
Ron Provost, Motorola Solutions
Andrew Zarlenga, NEA
Mark Hatten, Mutual Link
Charles Hatten, Mutual Link
David J. Schnell, Jr.
Paul Budzenski
Gina Caruolo
Mike Walsh
Marian Juskin
Michael Maiorano
Jim Taylor
Karen Pinch
Sam Adams
Dawn Lewis
James Vierra

Called To Order:

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chairman, J. David Smith at approximately 9:00 a.m. at RIEMA Headquarters, Pontiac Avenue, Cranston, RI.

Introductions:

Chairman Walsh introduced Mark and Charles Hatten of Mutual Link who were recognized nationally as leaders in the defense industry; they gave a presentation as to how they may play a part in ICC industry.

Review of Minutes:

There were no minutes from the previous meeting of February 1st due to a snow storm that day that prevented most members from attending. A lack of quorum resulted. However, there was an informal discussion of issues.

D-Block:

Chairman represented the national EMA last week (Monday) in Washington, DC and met with large number of House and Senate members to discuss not only funding, but also the D-Block auction. The Public Safety Alliance, APCO and other groups are advocating that D-Block be protected for public safety and not be auctioned off. The FCC, as required by federal code and as part of their responsibility, is required to auction off this spectrum and supports doing so. However, ICC has an interest in protecting D-Block

from auction because of the 10 megahertz of spectrum already on the 700 frequency which is in use and available for public safety. There is an adjacent 10 megahertz for which there is much value in its being adjacent to D-Block (and also due to hardware, coordination and configuration), as compared with being given 10 megahertz from someplace further out in the spectrum, and where the frequencies don't match.

The FCC's issue with protecting D-Block from auction seems to be the cost. The FCC projects that the auction would bring in between \$2 – 6 billion. Commercial enterprises are very interested in gaining this spectrum. There's a competitive commercial advantage right now in that two of the primary carriers have 4G LT networks, and two do not. Those who do not are in favor of the auction, and those who already have 4G networks are aligning with public safety because they don't want to see it auctioned off.

Many of EMA's UHF and VHF legacy system channels are now back with the FCC and are available for relicensing. There could be some recouped value from that. Congresswoman Yvette Clark of New York was identified as a congressional member in full support of providing this frequency spectrum for public safety. Congresswoman Clark was a city councilwoman at the time of 9/11 and is a strong supporter of public safety, police, fire, EMS.

FREQUENCY ALLOCATION:

Ben Cox, of Bing Consulting, had questions about the radio systems and LTE systems being built out in D-Block. He was talking about replacing the 800 systems with a Verizon or AT&T system and wondered if RIEMA would be interested in that. Because of our redundancy, the UPS backup generators, and the cost of putting modems in all police, fire and rescue vehicles at a cost of \$40 each, and because RIEMA is looking to build out their network in partnership with OSHEAN, Chief Cullinan told Mr. Cox that EMA would not be interested in switching systems. Among issues with switching systems are: coverage and dependability, as well as commercial enterprise protocol when calling for emergency service.

NOTE:

The next Region 19 meeting will be at the Connecticut Fire Academy on the backside of Bradley Airport. Anyone who can attend is encouraged to do so.

Discussion: Issues still to be resolved concerning frequency allocation.

- Providence still needs to install two 700 repeaters and receivers and set the location as the stand-by to the trunking system.
- There is a problem with batteries not holding a charge after having been idle for the last six months. The biggest need is for statewide 700 analog channels.
- North Providence has to go off the 800 system if they go anywhere other than Providence. If responding in Pawtucket, Smithfield, Johnston (three major cities for response) we have to go back to the analog system. Having to link with the intercity on Channel 3 takes up resources.

- Console training will be available the week of February 21st. Also there will be training for dispatchers in East Providence and E911. There will be a separate session for administrators.
- North Providence police and fire need an ITAK channel. Four ITAK channels are thought not to be enough. North Providence relies heavily on Smithfield site that if you lose that site, you lose 80% portable coverage throughout Smithfield.
- Members were asked to identify available frequencies. RIEMA is looking at as many as 700 frequencies they can possibly get.
- Assuming (hypothetically) D-Block is auctioned off, who does RIEMA guarantee continuation of the advancement of LTE in the state on RIEMA's own independent broadband. There needs to be enough 700 spectrum to accomplish that.
- Bryan Swan was asked to prepare a report that interprets the data on anomalies in the data and if any anomalies pose a concern. When the report is received, it will be distributed.
- Looking to identify two more sites, north and south, in the event there is ever a need to go to go 12 on all three zones. We want to be sure resources are available for that.

MARS

This program is advancing. Ron Provost visited four sites in East Providence to Middletown. There is interest in us utilizing the site, but there's some confusion over sharing the building with T-Mobile and how to allocate the space. DPW has to approve the plans. It was suggested that all parties meet to discuss the logistics and costs.

T-Mobile is going to contact RIEMA to schedule a meeting.

There is some thought to adding a new tower with greater capability that the town can utilize if the project goes forward. The building is well constructed and the tower planned for that site is the same as the tower in Cumberland. There is some question about the tower's proximity to the Middletown airport. A sign-off has to take place with the FAA.

The Washington Camp Grounds site, on Route 44 in Gloucester, was not available for inspection because of the snow. The existing site and tower there belong to Global but the state has the authority to put whatever they want on that tower without issue.

FREQUENCY ALLOCATION (CONTINUED)

The final map shows moving the Buck Hill site to the Harrisville water tank, just south and east of Buck Hill, which ties in well to Smithfield/Glocester. The DEM site in western Gloucester fills in the whole side of Burrillville, Gloucester and Foster. The next site after that would be somewhere east, towards Smithfield, behind the Harmony Fire Station.

Radar for Regan

The antenna should arrive on Friday, and the microwave link should be up and running at Regan the following week. The WPCS will have to turn the site around to the north. The 6-to-10 site is filtering in and half the radios are installed. The rest have been shipped.

A roof-top antenna needs to be installed at Zambarano because the signal is blocked (the building was once an atrium). The actual radio room had no coverage. Sprint is to do a survey of the site.

TRAINING

There is no delivery date for the modular training product, but it is coming. If there is specific training that would benefit a certain skill set, there is money available for that kind of specific training if there is a need.

RIPTA indicated that they wanted to wait for the release of Windows 7.11 because their software and consoles will run on that. We were going to skip Windows 7.9 and go directly to Windows 7.11 as soon as it's released, with an anticipated release date at the end of 2011.

OLD BUSINESS

Reintroduced Mark and Charlie Hatten who gave a presentation about Mutual Link (attached separately).

General Discussion

Providence has been inundated with calls from people wanting to use their old frequencies. There is a great desire from other cities and towns to use the existing Providence frequencies. There is very little understanding by some of the agencies how the process works. Providence does not own their frequencies. They can't give them away, they're owned by the FCC. The FCC can reassign them and relicense them. A vendor from Attleboro wanted to use one of the Providence frequencies. It was made very clear to the vendor that just because Providence isn't using a frequency anymore doesn't necessarily mean it's not available. It is available. Some of the Providence frequencies were give-backs as part of getting the 800 frequencies. There were frequency give-backs in order to get the 800 megahertz frequencies. The agencies in Narragansett and North Providence actually had to turn back their existing frequencies to the FCC for reassignment. Because of that process, Providence or North Providence is not in a position to give them to anybody because they don't own them anymore. Not all of the North Providence frequencies were give-backs. Not all the Providence frequencies were give-backs. The Parks Department and Water Supply Board are UHF. Those were not give-backs. Those frequencies are not on the table. The only frequencies that are available are the ones that were originally in the give-backs and, again, Providence still owns them until the license actually expires. They're government frequencies, so they're locked into governmental agencies. Bristol County Massachusetts is entirely UHF. Providence has a lot of UHF frequencies. The FCC sets distances between licenses.

It was suggested that at the next ICC meeting include a discussion around the development of SOP to deal with frequency use and agencies attempting an end run around the procedures. (This was posed as a motion, but there being no quorum present, the issue was then offered as a suggestion for the next meeting.)

Motion to adjourn; seconded and unanimously approved.
Meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.