

Alaska Interoperable Communications Committee

AKICC

April 15, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Next Meeting: May 20, 2009

Location AST Headquarters
Anchorage

Anchorage Emergency Operations Center

Bryan Fisher, Co-Chair DHS&EM
Major Leveque, Co-Chair AST
Ted Smith, DHSS
Michael Pascall, Rural LEPC
Rusty Lassell, Rural LEPC
Peter Murphy, ALMR User's Council
Jim Kohler, DOA
Kathryn Pyne, DOF
Jeff Tucker, North Star VFD
Tom Smayda, Mat-Su Borough
John Dickens, ASEC
Jim Larsen, ARRL/ARES
Rich Courtney, ARRL/ARES

At Large Telephonic

Frank Wesser, DEC
Brad Johnson, Fairbanks PD

Call to Order: 0900

Roll Call and Introductions

Acceptance of Minutes from March 18, 2009

Motion made to approve minutes from March 18, 2009 and seconded.
Passed without objection.

AKICC Charter and By-Laws

AKICC minutes and bylaws submitted to SERC.

Tribal Representation

Tribal representation on the committee was discussed. John Dickens thought that ANTHC would be better tribal representation but Bryan Fisher added that the representatives from that agency who have participated with interoperability were not Alaska Natives. The governor has appointed John Moeller to a position with Tribal Affairs so that may be a person who could be contacted to appoint someone.

Radio Reallocation

DHS&EM received a request from Sitka to reallocate radios that are not ALMR compatible. The committee discussed logistics issues. DHS&EM can accept radios but currently there is not a way to reallocate them and determine which jurisdictions need them. It was determined to hold off on these projects until procedures can be established. Mike Paschall thought radio functionality would need to be determined and there would need to be someone who could determine if they worked. It was determined that there are two DMVA staff members who have the technical expertise to look at radios. Major Leveque said that AST radios are sent to Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) when radios are surplus. Staff then take the radios apart and then reallocate them. Mike Paschall added that it would be nice to know what we're getting for surplus, if the batteries work, etc. ARES radio reallocations were discussed. Bryan asked Jim Kohler about excess radios that ETS gets and if the committee could get radios from jurisdictions and send them to ETS. Jim Kohler thought that it might work but he had to qualify that he didn't want ETS to be the point of collection. He said it all depended on the current legislative session and the outcome of their budget allocation. He said that ETS may need to look at how they do business depending on how much funding was cut during the legislative session. If they lose funding they have to look at how equipment is allocated and he may not have the staff to dedicate to do those types of programs. There was discussion about replacing legacy systems given the FCC mandates and that legacy systems may not be sustainable because manufacturers weren't even making parts for legacy equipment anymore. Bryan asked what the current ETS disposal system and procedures were. Jim Kohler said that they're not surplus anything, but that sometimes parts are taken out for reuse. Bryan added that two staff members, Doug Schoenwald and Glenn Hanson could work on old equipment at DHS&EM. Bryan said that if ETS was not available they could go to contractors. Rusty Lasell wanted to know if there was a need in jurisdictions for radios, what the process would be. Bryan thought in the long run we may need to wait to

have the needs assessment done to determine what's out there now, especially what's being purchased with new grant money coming in. The committee has a request from Fairbanks and now from Sitka for radio reallocation. Frequency and channel licensing is another item that needs to be considered. Bryan stated that he didn't want the requests to go unaddressed. Bryan stated that DMVA can collect the radios and do the tracking. Frank Wesser wanted to know how the reallocation process might work and if the state couldn't inventory and track the radios.

PSIC Update

Kathy Day spoke about PSIC spending. A spreadsheet was distributed that listed the various projects and spending so far. There are a number of projects being held up due to NEPA regulations. Rusty Lasell spoke about problems Denali Borough is having with the environmental pieces that he had to meet for his project. It was decided that Jim King, DHS&EM's grants administrator would be asked to be a guest speaker at the next meeting. This is the first time DHS&EM has bought equipment working with NEPA. Mike Paschall wanted to know how we can get stats for the Homeland Security grants.

State Interoperable Communications Training and Exercise Plan (SICTEP)

Major Leveque stated that ALMR doesn't have a funded training component. As a result they will try and leverage funding sources. Del Smith is working with AST on ALMR resources for training. Frank Wesser stated that whatever training is developed for interoperable communications it should be consistent and professionally done. He thought a video based format might be appropriate for some subject matter. Major Leveque added that radio users don't know how to align radio configurations. Apparently every state agency is setting up radios differently which can cause problems. There was a discussion on providing very basic radio usage training since a majority of users don't know how to use all the radio functions. Bryan added that one of the other big pieces is how we use radio training on the TICPs and command zones as the TICPs are updated. This would be important for the COML course and when we have a COML unit leader position. Rusty Lasell mentioned the methane tanker incident and added that during that incident the Mat-Su Borough was able to talk to the Denali Borough. It was a small incident in the middle of nowhere but they were able to talk to each other without having to go through dispatch. Bryan Fisher stated that it was a perfect example of cross jurisdictional boundaries and need mutual aid agreements for boundary responses. Matt Leveque

stated that in dispatch centers the technology exists. It's just a matter of training and there also may be a comfort issues with using the equipment involved. Brad Johnson added that while updating the TICPs and developing CONOPS we need to address situations where we can talk operational issues which can happen through planning and training.

Mike Paschall stated the tendency in the field is not utilizing options that are there. At Arctic Man everyone was talking on various channels. Why aren't they using standardized protocols instead of going through 4 people in the field? Mike thought they need to know how to ask. Mike added that they share channels with Fairbanks and have tactical channels on a private talk group. Bryan stated that we all bought stuff and left training behind. With State managed training we'll open up seats to everyone. If MOA has training we can make it available and have funding to bring people in to Anchorage. KT Pyne thought we need to develop a hands-on component to training. . Frank Wesser stated that drills and exercises help, especially with tabletops and trainings that are scenario based. Bryan added that there is a pot of money out of PSIC not allocated yet. Training is a priority for FEMA grants.

Break 10:20-10:50

Strategic Technology Reserve Implementation Plan (STRIP)

Bryan addressed the STRIP which was funded for \$585,000.00 and the RFP process. The first phase includes an assessment/gap analysis of resources in Alaska to include radio caches and command vehicles. Jim Larsen of ARES wants to preposition caches and asked could they store their equipment at some locations. The second phase will entail development of CONOPS. Bryan stated that we will then get a purchasing plan to spend \$500,000 to fill in gaps in equipment. The plan will also identify logical places to preposition equipment. Bryan added we may need to store some equipment armory locations. Karl Edwards will be working on procurement aspect of the STRIP.

New IECGP Application

Bryan and Kathy discussed the 09 IECGP grant and the portion that is allocated for local equipment purchases. Bryan wanted ideas on how to advertise it so that word gets out to the more rural areas. It was brought up

that DEEC had community development/local government specialists for the various regions so it would be good to get the word out to them. Other avenues could be through Alaska Municipal League, USDA Rural Development, AVCP (Association of Village Council Presidents) and the ANTHC. It was noted that in order to receive grant funding NIMS compliance was required, but it was not required at the time of application. It was anticipated that the completed grant application would be due by Friday, April 17, 2009 and be ready for publication.

COML Training

Kathy and Bryan discussed COML training. The Office of Emergency Communications was providing the training at no cost for July 21, 22 and 23, 2009 in Anchorage. There are 30 spaces for students and there was a discussion about who should be allowed to take the class. It was determined that those jurisdictions who requested COML training as part of their PSIC application would be given first preference. There was additional discussion about when the position will be used. It was mentioned that FEMA was taking over ICS. When looking at rural Alaska, especially firefighters, some committee members thought it would be better sending people to a COM Tech class rather than COML. They felt in the smaller villages first responders know how to utilize communications equipment. If an emergency dictates more at a larger incident that's when COML comes in. However, there could be a large incident at local levels and it would be nice to have a COML in house. Bryan stated that since getting so much new equipment, we're missing the training and exercise plan, and the training and needs assessment needs to build in TYPE III ICS leaders throughout the state so we have a pool. Jim Kohler stated that if we have an overflow there needs to be discretion involved. Frank Wesser stated there's a need for tribal representatives, maybe someone from the hub communities. Five jurisdictions actually applied for COML training so locals will have first dibs for seats in the upcoming course. Other spaces will be filled through the application process. DHS&EM will get an application out through their training section. It was mentioned there needs to be better engagement from Southeast. Sitka will reach out to urban law enforcement.

Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) Conference

Kathy spoke about the upcoming SWIC conference in San Diego June 24-26, 2009. The Office of Emergency Communications through the National Governors Association will be providing invitational funding for the Alaska

SWIC and two other individuals to attend. They would prefer the other two slots go to someone on the AKICC and also a legislator.

ALMR

There was a discussion about the upcoming state budget allocations and how jurisdictions may leave ALMR if they have to pay “per radio” fees to stay on the system. Jim Kohler spoke about basic services, level of effort, and the budgeting reality that could be sobering. There were concerns about draft HB 81 and the language in it around ALMR funding. Jim Kohler thought that it would be taken out but felt there needed to be a coordinated effort by SERC members advocating for interoperability. In addition there still is a need to make interoperable communications important and holistic to those that make legislation and deal with funding issues. Jim thought this needed to come from outside of ALMR. Major Leveque noted the limitations of state employees to lobby and the need to focus on those who can talk and lobby to get the message across pertaining to the value of interoperability. He added some jurisdictions have the attitude “If we have to pay, we won’t do it”. Rusty Lasell added that ALMR doesn’t do a lot for their jurisdiction. Matt Leveque thought we need to stress the importance of ALMR instead of the negatives. Brad Johnson added that we need to be careful how we phrase things. He believes legislators think they’re funding municipalities’ use of the system. Jim Kohler stated why that wasn’t accurate and spoke about ALMR’s history and build-out that was set up to be done in phases. Jim added that during the process the State of Alaska’s stakeholders said once build-out was done, entities, (major groups) had to plan together who would cover operating costs. It was determined that the larger issue was not just ALMR funding but communications at interoperable level for Alaska. and the risks if ALMR was not funded. Jim Kohler thought that the SERC members needed to find a way to get in front of legislature. Brad Johnson thought the dialogue should be about state’s commitment to interoperability and believes we have an opportunity to voice concerns about together public safety issue. Matt Leveque added that there is a need to a focus on what statewide interoperability can be.

SCIP Update

The remaining of the meeting time was spent on sections of the SCIP update. The committee addressed various sections of the SCIP including the new SAFECOM Continuum Baseline Assessment Tool.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

