

Minutes

South Dakota Public Safety Communications Council August 16, 2007

The first meeting of the South Dakota Public Safety Communications Council was held at 9:00 am, August 16, 2007 in Conference Room 3 at the Kneip Building in Pierre, SD. Any additions or corrections prior to the next scheduled meeting are welcome.

Members Present: Steve Christensen (SD Police Chiefs' Assoc.), Sheriff Fred Lamphere (SD Sheriffs' Assoc.), Bryan Gortmaker (DCI), Emmett Keyser (SD Game, Fish & Parks), Greg Fuller (SD DOT), Dayton Myers (SD National Guard), Brad Steifvater (SD Emergency Managers Assoc.), Dennis Gorton (SD Fire Fighters Assoc.), Rebekah Craddock (SD Assoc. of Healthcare Organizations), Sgt. David Driscoll (SD DPS), David Atherton (SD APCO/NENA Chapter), Danny Hayes (SD EMT Assoc.), Ken Wesche (SD DOA/Wildland Fire), Shirlee Leighton (SD Assoc. of County Commissioners), Jim Holmes (SD Dept. of Health), Larry Jandreau (Tribal Government), Christopher Lewis (Dept. of Interior), Jeff Pierce (BIT)

Guests: Sonny Hagseth (Motorola, Inc.), Patrick Russell (EF Johnson), Todd Dravland (BIT), Tom Dravland (DPS), Daren Ketcham (DPS), John Berheim (Homeland Security Coordinator).

Tom Dravland started the meeting with a welcome message and introduction of the Council members.

The first order of business was to approve the By-laws for the South Dakota Public Safety Communications Council or SDPSCC. The floor was opened for comments or questions in regard to the By-laws as written. Chris had a question in regard to Article III, Section 4, and Paragraph 1, titled Attendance. The wording in question states that SDPSCC members may not designate a person other than themselves to attend SDPSCC meetings.

The concern was that some of the members have to travel long distances and it would be helpful and beneficial if the members could appoint someone to fill in if they are unable to attend. There may be instances where budgets will not allow the expense for travel or other situations may arise. This concern was voiced and members agreed that Section 4 would be changed to read as follows: SDPSCC members may designate persons other than themselves to attend meetings as a non-voting attendee. The appointed person would then be responsible to inform the member they are filling in for of concerns brought to the council. SDPSCC members shall notify BIT staff when they are unable to attend a meeting.

At this time it was suggested that the election of officers take place and then the council would proceed with the discussion/approval of the By-laws.

The floor was opened for nominations of Chairman. Jim Holmes nominated Dennis Gorton, seconded by David Atherton and there being no further nominees, motion was carried.

The floor was opened for nominations of Vice-Chairman. Shirlee Leighton nominated Brad Steifvater, seconded by Ken Wesche, there being no further nominees, and motion was carried.

The floor was opened for nominations of Member at Large. Danny Hayes nominated Steve Christensen, seconded by Bryan Gortmaker, there being no further nominees, and motion was carried.

The meeting continued with discussion of the By-laws. Article 1, Section 3 was clarified to read that all final decisions will be approved by the BIT Commissioner. This being the only remaining question in regard to the By-laws, the motion was made by Dennis Gorton to approve the By-laws as amended, seconded by Shirlee Leighton, motion carried.

Tom Dravland, Department of Public Safety reported on South Dakota's state of the art digital radio system. Some areas in the State are still using the analog radio system and are resistant to moving into digital, others who have been using the digital system love it. There are still some areas of the State where there are dead spots but that has greatly improved. Our goal is to get more users on the digital system so that it is complete.

Good communication is the backbone of a solid, not fractured system and that means more success when disasters such as the Spencer tornado threaten our communities. Getting closer to that goal is the charge of this Council. We appreciate your willingness to wrestle with the issues that you face and as begin this journey keep our goal in mind.

Todd Dravland, State Radio Manager gave the council an overview of the radio spectrum, explaining how South Dakota obtains frequencies and the costs to maintain and also purchase additional radio equipment such as towers, repeaters and radio systems.

The council discussed the need for training out in the field and controlling such issues as abuse of the radio systems, meaning users are tying up the system by tuning into others talk groups thereby bogging down the system.

Jeff gave a quick overview of the budget that Bureau of Information and Telecommunications has for the 2008 fiscal year.

Lunch break: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

SDPSCC reconvened at 1:00 PM.

The council began the afternoon meeting with an overview of the results from a survey that was sent out to various emergency managers and agencies responsible for disaster assistance. The following are some of the concerns voiced by the survey:

1. Local dissatisfaction with the lack of portable coverage
2. Dissatisfaction with the EF Johnson radios
3. Coverage issues
4. Complication of the digital radios
5. Service provided by the state was a mix of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
6. The survey indicated that dealer satisfaction is good.

The council indicated that due to the lack of responses to the initial survey, it should be extended to the local departments and associations. It was also noted that the survey could be added to the website.

At this time the floor was opened for discussion on any issues of concern. The majority of the council felt that additional training in the proper use of the radio system is needed; how to operate digital radios, when it is appropriate to switch talk groups to obtain information and to have a tracing system in place that can prove the trainers and those being trained have been certified.

Action Required: The PSCC recommended that all using agencies, need to get training back out to their members and in the field.

Also noted was the importance of keeping SDPSCC manual updated as a workable document.

Chris Lewis informed the council that they should consider signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the State of South Dakota and the Department of Interior. Motion to review this was made by Brad, seconded by David Atherton, motion carried.

The SDPSCC also made the motion to use PSIC grant monies for: first priority was to add capacity/coverage and second priority was to purchasing additional radios.

Chair Gorton asked all members to take this information to their respective membership. If there are issues that the PSCC need to address, Chair Gorton asked that the issues be in some sort of written form to provide a means to track any issues. Gorton also stated that at each meeting every member will be given the opportunity to report on issues.

Next meeting will be Monday, October 22 at 10:00 AM Pierre time, with the location to be determined.

Council adjourned at 4:48 PM