

## Minutes of the "Ad Hoc" Committee on Emergency Communications and Dispatch

The "Ad Hoc" Committee on Emergency Communications and Dispatch of the McLean County Board met on Wednesday, February 12, 2003 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 700, Law and Justice Center, 104 West Front Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Sorensen, Members Renner, Johnson, Selzer

Members Absent: Member Hoselton

Other Members Present: County Board Chairman Sweeney, Members Ahart and Dean

Staff Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator;  
Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator;  
Ms. Christine Northcutt, County Administrator's Assistant

Department Heads/  
Elected Officials Present: Sheriff Dave Owens; Mr. A.W. Cannon, Interim Director, MetCom; Mr. Bill Gamblin, Director, ETSB, Chief Deputy Derick Love, Sheriff's Department

Others Present: Mr. Dan Vandiver, Technical Manager, Clear Talk, Mr. David Lander, Motorola Corporation

Chairman Sorensen called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m.

Chairman Sorensen presented the minutes from the January 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. He asked if there were any corrections or additions. Hearing none, the minutes were accepted and placed on file as presented.

Chairman Sorensen stated that at the last meeting, it was agreed that the Committee would invite representatives from Clear Talk, Motorola and EF Johnson to meet with the Committee. He advised the Committee that Motorola and Clear Talk are present, but that EF Johnson could not send a representative due to the late notice. The Account Manager that handles this area had previous travel arrangements that could not be changed. EF Johnson has asked if the Committee could reschedule a date for a presentation.

Chairman Sorensen introduced the first speaker, Mr. Dan Vandiver, Technical Manager, Clear Talk.

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Mr. Selzer asked if the Committee could set a time limit on each presenter due to the fact that he had commitments later on in the day.

Chairman Sorensen stated that was a good idea and suggested that they set a ten minute limit on each presenter and then open the floor for questions. The Committee agreed.

Mr. Vandiver advised the Committee that he was pleased to meet with the Committee and represent Clear Talk to, perhaps, clear up any misinformation or questions that the Committee may have about Clear Talk.

Mr. Renner stated that Sheriff Owens reported that there were some problems with reception in the LeRoy area. Mr. Renner asked Mr. Vandiver if another tower site added to that area would remedy the problem.

Mr. Vandiver stated that there was a proposal to Sheriff Owens to add a tower site in LeRoy. He noted that Clear Talk was not built specifically for McLean County. It was built, instead, for the electric co-ops and their coverage areas. The coverage was built for a wide area and there is a lack of coverage in the eastern portion of McLean County. The construction of the tower was to be a joint proposal with Clear Talk and the Sheriff's Department. It was not discussed what portion would be paid by whom or how the ownership would work. The additional tower would be necessary, though, to gain the coverage that Sheriff Owens desires.

Chairman Sorensen asked Mr. Vandiver how much an infrastructure enhancement like that would cost. Mr. Vandiver replied that most of their sites are guide towers which are 500-600 ft. tall and that would typically cost around \$250,000.00. For a smaller, 200 ft., self-supporting tower, it would cost around \$150,000.00.

Mr. Renner stated that there would be multiple users on the Clear Talk System. He asked Mr. Vandiver how the priority would be established for the Governmental Emergency Response users. Mr. Vandiver replied that the Smart Zone system (which is a Motorola Infrastructure system within the Clear Talk system) uses a ten-level priority system. Number one is reserved for emergencies. There is a button on the radio that will lock a channel directly with the dispatcher until the emergency is cleared. All other public-safety is at a priority two. The electrical co-ops on the network are at a priority five. All business customers are at a priority ten. When the individual channels become busy with traffic, if a Sheriff's Deputy and a business customer push the talk

button at the same time, the system establishes that the Sheriff's Deputy has priority and puts his call through first.

Mr. Selzer asked if McLean County decided to enter into a contract with Clear Talk today, would Clear Talk guarantee in writing that coverage will be available in all of McLean County. Mr. Vandiver stated that even with a new tower site in LeRoy, the system will not perform full-noise-quiet all over McLean County. If Clear Talk was going to build a system, specifically for the Sheriff's Department, that would dictate the design that they would use. Clear Talk can add language in a contract as to a level of service commitment provided to the Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Selzer stated that the perception is that a radio system can provide 100% coverage, even though that is impossible. Mr. Vandiver agreed that 100% coverage is impossible. Mr. Selzer stated that he believes that there should be performance standards in any future contract.

Mr. Vandiver commented that the major difference between the current system and Clear Talk is that the EF Johnson system was not tested before it was used by the various agencies. Sheriff Owens has been able to test the Clear Talk. Sheriff Owens realizes that Clear Talk has specific areas that are currently not covered, but he is able to use the Clear Talk system in many areas where there isn't any coverage. There will always be areas that users cannot get 100% coverage.

Chairman Sorensen asked Mr. Vandiver if there were any inaccuracies that he would like to clear up. Mr. Vandiver stated that he wanted to inform the Committee that Clear Talk came to Sheriff Owens, not to sell him radio equipment, but offer the equipment to the Sheriff on loan so he could test it and compare Clear Talk to his current system. Clear Talk offered the same option to the City of Bloomington. These offers were made in good faith due to the fact that Clear Talk is a part of the community and their primary focus is public safety. The three electric co-ops made a \$20 million investment so that the infrastructure could be maintained with no recurring maintenance costs to its customers. Subscribers pay an access fee monthly. The infrastructure, as it is presently constructed, probably covers 70% of McLean County full-noise-quiet. With an additional site, Mr. Vandiver estimates 95% full-noise-quiet coverage with the type of equipment that was originally used when testing the Clear Talk system.

Mr. Selzer asked how many tower sites the does the Clear Talk system currently have. Mr. Vandiver stated that they have 20 tower sites. There is one in McLean County, which is located on Waterson Towers at ISU.

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Chairman Sorensen thanked Mr. Vandiver and introduced Mr. David Lander from Motorola Corporation.

Mr. Lander stated that two years ago, the State of Illinois issued a Request for Proposal for a Statewide public safety communications system. Motorola was awarded the contract to build this system. Motorola is currently building the infrastructure which will include 186 tower sites Statewide. Motorola will own and operate the system and will provide levels of reliability as identified in the contract for public safety.

The coverage for the system is based on 95% of the geographic land mass for mobile coverage throughout the State of Illinois. For McLean County, there is one difference. Bloomington-Normal is required to have in-building coverage within their jurisdictional boundaries. The rest of McLean County is basically mobile coverage.

The system as it stands today in McLean County is expected to be fully functional by August of this year. Motorola has until September of 2004 to have the State fully functional and accepted by the State of Illinois. He stated that they anticipate being able to have the entire Statewide network up by the end of this year and to start running coverage tests. The tests will be run March through September because that is the season with full foliage.

Mr. Lander explained that Motorola has contracted with the State of Illinois to provide an APCO Project 25 digital system that meets the requirements for public safety. Project 25 is an open standard for public safety so that other vendors can actually produce the equipment that will operate on a Project 25 system. Because Motorola owns the system, it will probably limit the number of competitive radios on the network. Motorola has to be able to guarantee the functionality of the system and by offering other vendors the chance to put their radios on the system, it could cause interference. The system will be locally maintained by Motorola service facilities. The State system will be monitored 24 hours a day 7 days a week. An individual utilizing the system may not even be aware that there is a problem before dispatch fixes it remotely or before a service technician is sent to fix the problem.

Mr. Lander stated that Motorola is utilizing a good number of Clear Talk towers and other tower sites throughout the State. Motorola plans to utilize the Waterson Towers, Congerville, Pontiac and LeRoy towers. There are not a large number of sites in McLean County, but that is because the system will be covering the entire State of Illinois. The language in the contract with the State of Illinois guarantees 95% coverage Statewide, it may be up to 98% for McLean

County. Mr. Lander advised the Committee he would have to verify that with an engineer to be certain. He said he could research that fact if the Committee was interested. Coverage for the State of Illinois was based upon the requirements received from State Police and other State agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation and others. All State agencies that have radio communications today will be migrating to StarCom 21. This network will initially be using State of Illinois license frequencies. Motorola doesn't hold licenses to the frequencies. If McLean County wanted to join the network, Motorola would ask McLean County to gain licenses in their name and utilize any licenses that they currently hold in order to provide the level of coverage that the Sheriff seeks.

Mr. Lander stated that the StarCom 21 network does include contractual guarantees to the State of Illinois that would be passed on to any other agency that utilizes the network. For example, there are three master sites that Motorola has located within the State that are guaranteed to be up 99.999% of the time. There is one in Collinsville, one in Springfield and one in Downers Grove. The master site controls all of the towers within that zone. Each zone will have a dedicated individual, who will be stationed at that site during regular work hours. He can be called out during non-working hours, if required. There is a great level of reliability within the network.

Motorola guaranteed the State of Illinois that, depending upon the number of users, there will be 95% or greater availability to the network at any given time. That means if an individual pushes the button to talk, he will gain access to the system 95 times out of 100. If, for some reason that is not happening, Motorola will do whatever is necessary to accommodate those requirements.

Mr. Lander reminded the Committee that this is a public safety network. The user base is limited to local, state and sometimes federal government agencies. There will not be any public users on the network. The only exception would be if McLean County would sub-contract with a towing company or an ambulance service, etc.

Mr. Selzer asked Mr. Lander if the State has found 95% coverage acceptable. Mr. Lander stated that is the agreed upon contract language. He said that you are never going to be guaranteed 100% coverage, unless you have more channels than you have users.

Mr. Selzer asked if additional tower sites can be added to use with this system. Mr. Lander replied that they can add additional infrastructure to the system. The original contract with the State of Illinois calls for 186 sites. Since then Motorola has also contracted with the Illinois Tollway Authority and, as part of that

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Contract, Motorola is adding a tower to meet the Authority's needs.

The primary contract that Motorola has now is with the State of Illinois. If other agencies sign onto the StarCom 21 system, these agencies will be issued a separate contract and separate set of contractual requirements.

Mr. Selzer stated that McLean County's need is immediate. Mr. Selzer asked if the August, 2003 date is negotiable. Mr. Lander replied that there is not a lot of flexibility. His project director confirmed August as a start date, unless they run into major problems.

Mr. Renner asked if StarCom 21 users would have the ability to communicate with the State Police at that time. Mr. Lander stated that the State Police's intention is not to deploy any radios on the network until it has been fully tested and accepted which will be in September, 2004.

Mr. Selzer stated that it was his understanding that this network was not going to be available to the McLean County area until much later than what Mr. Lander reported today. Mr. Lander replied that there have been different schedules as to what part of the state would be rolled out first. Originally, the north was scheduled to be rolled out first because Cook County was having major service issues with their current system. Due to the fact that it is a more complex system, they have decided to do that region later, after central Illinois, i.e. Pontiac, Springfield. Motorola is required, by contract, to meet the coverage of 95% by testing quarter-mile by quarter-mile grids.

Mr. Selzer asked if Motorola would guarantee, contractually, a certain standard of coverage. Mr. Lander replied that Motorola has done that with the State of Illinois and would have no problems discussing performance standards with McLean County.

Chairman Sorensen stated that McLean County has approximately 4,400 quarter-mile by quarter-mile grid blocks. He asked whether under the contract with the State, each one of those quarter-mile grid blocks is supposed to be 95% covered. Mr. Lander stated that for all of the grid blocks 95% have to be covered with no two adjacent grids failing.

Mr. Lander stated that in earlier discussions there have been comparisons of analog and digital. There are some things that are unique to digital that you do not get with analog. With digital you will have perfect audio quality until it drops off. With analog, you will find that coverage is really good close to the towers. As you start to get farther away from the towers, analog crackles and pops, but you can still understand what an individual is saying. With the design that was approved for the State, unless you have no coverage at all, you will have clearly understandable audio. Motorola can make a presentation to demonstrate this if the Committee would like.

Ms. Johnson stated that she has spoken with an individual from the Illinois State Police project team who indicated that the 95% guaranteed coverage is based only on highway coverage and that if McLean County wanted 95% coverage, it would need to add additional tower sites. She asked Mr. Lander if she understood that the current tower sites of Waterson Towers, Congerville, LeRoy and Pontiac will provide 95% - 98% coverage. Mr. Lander responded 95% for sure and possibly better. He added this is mobile coverage, not portable coverage. He also advised the Committee that he has spoken to the project director about getting specific information as to McLean County's coverage. He can get that information to the Committee at a later date. Mr. Lander responded that what the individual from the project team indicated is not accurate. The primary use for the State Police is up and down the highways, but if they only had to provide coverage for the highway, they would not have 186 tower sites Statewide. It has been a very large investment for Motorola. The company would not come out in the black with this project if they were only serving the needs of the State of Illinois. The State has guaranteed 6,000 users when the system is turned on. Motorola needs 16,000 to 18,000 users on the system to even break even.

Mr. Lander informed the Committee that the Federal Government is going to mandate interoperability at some point and time. Funding for Homeland Security is going to be based on a couple of different criteria. Interoperability is one and the system must be an APCO Project 25 compliant digital system. In order to receive that funding there will need to be a regional plan put into place.

Mr. Renner asked if this system meets those interoperability requirements. Mr. Lander stated that the StarCom 21 system meets all of those requirements.

Mr. Selzer stated that Motorola is putting a lot on the line by requiring a 95% coverage rate by August, 2003. Mr. Selzer noted that Motorola must be confident that the product will perform to those standards.

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Mr. Lander stated that when Motorola received contract award notice, Motorola had only designed for 169 sites. As contract negotiations progressed, one of the changes is in the language "jurisdictional boundaries". There are 11-12 cities that were required to have in-building coverage. Bloomington-Normal, Champaign, and Peoria are a few. By introducing the word jurisdictional, Motorola's commitment had to be taken one step further and that is why the additional tower sites were added. Once the coverage testing takes place, Motorola may have to add a half dozen more sites to remain true to the contract.

Ms. Johnson asked if there was a guarantee on portable radios as there is on mobile radios. Mr. Lander stated that there is no guarantee on portable radios, except within the cities of Bloomington-Normal. That guarantee is to provide portable with direct access to the system without the use of a mobile in medium sized buildings at the 95% level.

The Committee had no further questions for Mr. Lander.

Chairman Sorensen asked the Committee would be interested in trying to reschedule a time for EF Johnson to make a presentation.

Mr. Selzer stated that he would not be interested in hearing from them.

Ms. Johnson stated that if they did come, she would be interested in asking why they did not make it to this meeting.

Mr. Renner said that he echoed both sentiments. He said that it does fall in line with comments that Sheriff Owens has made about them in the past. He added that he realized that it was short notice, but he thought that EF Johnson could have done something.

Mr. Selzer stated that he has sent two e-mails and made three phone calls to the company. He has only received one e-mail response, that said that it was another department which handles his request, and that someone would contact him.

Mr. Renner noted that he would be more interested in having Sheriff Owens process some of this new information, do some checking on the StarCom 21 network and advise the Committee at the next meeting of his findings.



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Mr. Selzer stated that some communities are very happy with EF Johnson and others are very unhappy. He reiterated that the one thing that McLean County can do is to insure that contract language guarantees the performance they are looking for. The Committee needs to define what it is they are looking for.

Mr. Renner stated that it would probably be an advantage to look for a long term solution because that is ultimately what is needed. Mr. Renner added that the Committee will need some cost estimates.

Mr. Selzer recommended that the Committee needs to define whether this is the County Board's decision or if it is MetCom's or if it is ETSB's. He added that he thought the MetCom's Operations Board has the ultimate decision.

Mr. Renner stated that if the Committee makes a recommendation for a viable solution and that solution is not accepted then the County Board can opt to pull support from MetCom and ETSB.

Mr. Selzer stated that he agreed with that sentiment. He said the Committee needs to research the intergovernmental agreement and find out how the responsibility is divided.

Sheriff Owens advised the Committee the Attorney General's Office issued an advisory letter stating that an ETSB can, in fact, purchase radios. That particular letter stated that they can purchase radio equipment. It does not say they are required to make purchases.

Sheriff Owens noted that some of the equipment is owned by the ETSB and some of the equipment is owned by MetCom. Most of the telephone equipment that is operated by the ETSB is owned by the ETSB. The original infrastructure that was built was owned by the ETSB. MetCom has taken some ownership through maintenance and so forth, but it was originally provided by the ETSB.

Chairman Sorensen added that at the next meeting the Intergovernmental agreement that established MetCom should be reviewed and any recommendations should be made to the full County Board.

Chairman Sorensen stated that the Committee has been provided some new information regarding StarCom 21 at this meeting. He suggested that, as Mr. Renner had recommended, gaining a reaction from Sheriff Owens is important.

Chairman Sorensen stated that at the next meeting he would like to hear from Sheriff Owens and the Committee can review the Intergovernmental Agreement that established MetCom.

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Sheriff Owens advised the Committee that, at the last meeting, he was asked to do some in-car-repeater testing on the EF Johnson system. Sheriff Owens reported that he should obtain a Pyramid repeater this week and have it installed in one of his vehicles. He will have access to the Pyramid repeater for approximately three weeks.

Mr. Renner stated that with the new information that has been presented today, it would be very helpful for him to look into the StarCom 21 system and prepare an informal report for the next meeting.

Mr. Selzer added that he was very pleased to hear a company come forward and talk about putting performance standards in writing.

Chairman Sorensen stated that he had distributed a draft memorandum to the Committee. This is an attempt to provide Board Members with the Committee's interim findings. He asked the Committee if this was an acceptable document to present to the Board.

Motion by Selzer/Renner to recommend Approval  
of the Interim Findings to be presented to the County  
Board. Motion carried.

Chairman Sorensen asked the Committee when was a convenient time for the next meeting. He suggested a meeting immediately following the County Board meeting on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>. The Committee agreed and the meeting was tentatively scheduled for 10:00 a.m.

Chairman Sorensen asked Sheriff Owens if he may have some preliminary thoughts regarding the StarCom 21 system by the next meeting date of Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>. Sheriff Owens replied that he would try to have something ready by the next meeting.

Chairman Sorensen stated that County Board Chairman Sweeney and he have received a letter from the Fire Chief's Association of McLean County. It is regarding the topic of MetCom. Chairman Sorensen advised the Committee that he would distribute copies to all Committee Members so they can review it. He would like to invite Chief Powell and Chief Raney or to address the Committee at the next meeting.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee at this time, Chairman Sorensen adjourned the meeting at 2:24 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Christine S. Northcutt  
Recording Secretary