

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 Thursday, March 10, 2003 at 1:00 p.m. 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: Members Sweeney and Owens

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; Chief Deputy Derick Love,
Sheriff's Department

Others Present: Randolph Township Fire Protection District, Chief Dennis Powell

Chairman Sorensen called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

Chairman Sorensen presented the minutes from the meetings of February 18th and February 27th. He asked if there were any corrections or additions. Hearing none, the minutes were accepted and placed on file as presented.

Chairman Sorensen introduced Sheriff Dave Owens to present his report on the on the Pyramid in-car-repeaters.

Sheriff Dave Owens distributed a summary report to the Committee. He explained that he and his deputies field tested the EF Johnson system with the aid of the Pyramid repeater for about a week and a half. The report shows that transmissions with the Pyramid repeaters had absolutely no transmission 39% of the time. The transmissions were poor 19% of the time, fair 19% of the time, good 15% of the time, and best 8% of the time.

Minutes of the "Ad Hoc" Committee;
Emergency Communications and Dispatch
March 10, 2003
Page Two

Sheriff Owens then explained the reception quality using the Pyramid repeater. He explained that there was no reception 22% of the time. Reception was poor 49% of the time, fair 19%, good 7% and was best only 7% of the time. Sheriff Owens informed the Committee that the test was performed by an several deputies. It was done in different areas throughout the County and in various buildings.

Mr. Selzer asked Sheriff Owens what was meant by transmissions. Sheriff Owens replied that it is transmitting from the portable to the in-car-repeater.

Mr. Renner asked Sheriff Owens how he determined what was best, good, fair and poor. Sheriff Owens replied that anything above "None" means that it worked to some degree. He stated that he would like to have seen more "Best" transmissions and receptions.

Mr. Selzer asked if any of the proposals that the Sheriff has reviewed have guaranteed greater than 50% in-building coverage Countywide. Sheriff Owens replied that when his deputies tested the Clear Talk system, they were able to obtain 98% coverage Countywide. They were using a combination of the FutureComm in-car-repeater and the Motorola portable radio provided by Clear Talk.

Mr. Selzer asked Sheriff Owens if the tests that they did with the Pyramid in-car-repeaters were done at the same locations as were done with the Clear Talk system. Sheriff Owens replied that they were not the exact locations, but they are generally the same areas that were previously tested. He stated it is very important to have in-building coverage for the County Deputies. He stated that some agencies use portables radios only, but the County has a definite need for the mobile radios.

Ms. Johnson asked if Sheriff Owens had the logs from the Clear Talk tests to compare to the Pyramid in-car-repeater tests. Sheriff Owens stated that he has the Clear Talk test log back at his office. The department tested the Clear Talk system with and without repeaters.

Chairman Sorensen asked Sheriff Owens how many watts are the current EF Johnson portable radios. Sheriff Owens stated that the portable radios are 3 watts. Chairman Sorensen stated that in some of his reading, he had seen a recommendation that portables should be between 6-7 watts. Chairman Sorensen then asked Sheriff Owens if the portables were tested with patch mics with the portable radio worn at the belt. Sheriff Owens replied that they were tested in that manner and that the patch mic had a spike antenna.

Minutes of the "Ad Hoc" Committee;
Emergency Communications and Dispatch
March 10, 2003
Page Three

Chairman Sorensen asked the Committee to refer to the draft Interim Report that was included in the packets. He asked the Committee if there were any changes that they would like to make to the document. The Committee agreed that the Interim Report was acceptable as printed.

Motion by Selzer/Renner to Recommend Approval of the
Draft Interim Report and to forward the report to the County
Board in the March cycle. Motion carried.

Chairman Sorensen stated that the next agenda item is to set the next meeting date and items for discussion. He advised the Committee that information from Clear Talk and StarComm 21 is due on Tuesday, March 18th. He asked that the Administrator's Office distribute that information as soon as available and that the Committee meet after they have had time to review that information. He suggested Thursday, March 20th at 1:00p.m. as the date for the next meeting. The Committee agreed.

Ms. Johnson asked for a copy of the information that was sent to the vendors. Chairman Sorensen stated that the information was included prior to this meeting. County Administrator's Assistant Christine Northcutt said she would provide Ms. Johnson with that information.

Mr. Renner asked the Committee if they should go over options prior to receiving the information from the vendors. Mr. Selzer stated that he wanted to reaffirm what the Committee will be discussing at the next meeting. He stated that the Committee will be discussing vendor options. He asked if that will be the final meeting. Chairman Sorensen replied that he has no problem making that the final meeting, but that is probably not feasible. He informed the Committee that there are three items left to accomplish. The Committee needs to review the technical options and review financing mechanisms. Finally, the Committee needs to study the implementation of the plan. This plan may require participation from ETSB and MetCom due to the fact that there may be issues with our frequencies.

Mr. Selzer requested that someone from ETSB be invited to the next meeting to explain ETSB's financing to the Committee. He explained that, perhaps, the County can help them if they can provide some financial support to a Countywide radio system.

Emergency Communications and Dispatch
March 10, 2003
Page Four

Chairman Sorensen said that he thought this conversation was a bit premature. He thought the Committee should wait to see what recommendations are included in the Clear Talk and StarComm proposals.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee at this time, Chairman Sorensen adjourned the meeting at 1:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine S. Northcutt
Recording Secretary