

Statewide Interoperability Governance Board

Minutes
September 8, 2016
1:30 p.m.

Montana Department of Transportation Commission Room

Members Present:

Ron Baldwin, DOA/SCIO

Fire Chief Bob Drake, MSVFA, Alternate

Geoff Feiss, MTA

Tom Butler, DOJ, Alternate

Patrick Lonergan, MFCA

Jon Swartz, MDT, Alternate

Delila Bruno, MDMA

Doug Russell, MLCT

Siri Smillie, GOV

Staff Present:

Quinn Ness, DOA/SITSD, Jennifer Schofield, DOA/SITSD, Wendy Jackson, DOA/SITSD

Guests Present:

Mike Feldman, MDOJ/MHP; Roger Smith, Lewis & Clark County; Brad Steiner, Motorola Solutions; Steve Keller, MDT; Dan Sullivan, MDOA/SITSD; E. Wing Spooner, MDOA/SITSD; Dale Osborne, DOJ/MHP; Marjean Penny, Gallatin County; Bob Armstrong, DOJ/MHP; Trudy Skari, DOA/SITSD

Real-time Communication:

Sandra Barrows, Barrows Consulting; Charlie Gillmore, Lewis & Clark County, Mike Raczkowski, MDOC;

Welcome and Introductions

Ron Baldwin welcomed the council to the September 8, 2016 SIGB meeting. All members and guests were introduced.

Minutes

Geoff Feiss made a motion to approve the August 11, 2016 minutes as presented. Bob Drake seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Business

FirstNet 2016 Consolation Update

Quinn Ness gave an update on the FirstNet Consultation Activities. The regional Consultation Task Team (CTT) August meeting took place in Bozeman. Montana is part of FirstNet's Region 8 which includes Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, North and South Dakota. CTT members from all of the Region 8 states were in attendance. There was discussion concerning how priority and preemption could occur within the network. FirstNet will continue to move forward with research and engage with the CTT regarding these technical subject areas. A FirstNet Metro Meeting was held in Bozeman and an overview of FirstNet and its services was provided to potential subscribers. FirstNet is seeking input concerning local requirements to switch to FirstNet services from existing commercial services. Local agencies in Bozeman communicated that their primary requirements are for the same level of service and at the same cost or if possible for less. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 2, 2016 in Billings. Chief Bob Drake spoke briefly concerning his attendance at the FirstNet meeting in Bozeman. FirstNet explained the systems and its limitations. This information will be included in the training of primary system users to ensure that activities occurring on the system do not exceed its capacity capabilities. Selling the excess capacity was also discussed.

Trudy Skari commented on the FirstNet tribal activities that have been undertaken, in conjunction with representatives from FirstNet's native American office, to reach out to the tribes in Montana. They have visited the Blackfeet Nation, Crow Nation, and Northern Cheyenne Nation. Tribal engagement has increased and the idea is gaining popularity among the tribes.

Statewide LMR System

Mr. Ness introduced the Statewide Land Mobile Radio (LMR) system discussion and laid out guiding principles for this discussion per Mr. Baldwin's request. The discussion will address funding to procure, maintain and operate the statewide LMR system. The discussion will address what organization should be tasked with operating and maintaining the system as well as providing LMR services statewide. This discussion is forward looking. The board will engage in a high level discussion that does not include specific details or technologies. The board will discuss strategy not technical solutions and how to move forward with a statewide LMR system. There are several local and state agencies that require mission critical voice communications and LMR systems as well as agencies that have operational voice capability requirements. The board will make a decision regarding a recommendation for the need for a statewide trunked LMR system that will provide interoperability. Each local and state agency requires a voice communication or LMR system. State and local agencies may be able to collaborate and share the cost of this system. If it is determined that each agency is going to support their part of the system individually, then board would need to develop a vehicle to provide funding to individual agencies to facilitate the maintenance of this system.

Colonel Butler commented that there would be local agreements involved if there was a centralized state agency in charge of the LMR system. Diverse ownership will be maintained in either model.

Mr. Ness agreed that the implementation details of such a system would be decided on an individual agency basis. The board is only considering a high level decision regarding the nature of this system at this time.

Patrick Lonergan commented it makes sense to avoid duplication, leverage cooperation, and capture existing infrastructure when considering communication system needs.

Geoff Feiss advocated there is a need for a statewide LMR system. The board should consider further questions as to what that system would look like and who would provide the funding.

Q: Mr. Ness: Is one of our requirements a statewide system that can provide interconnectivity between jurisdictions and agencies?

A: Mr. Drake: for local agencies, there is no need for interconnectivity with other agencies statewide. Their need is strictly for local communication and they do not see the value in a statewide system.

Mr. Ness stated that, when garnering political support for any initiative, there has to be a perceived mutual benefit for all parties involved. Mr. Ness also commented the he believes that there is general support for a statewide public communications safety backbone and it would be beneficial to have that centralized in a state agency and local agencies would have access to the backbone network.

Mr. Feiss stated that he was not prepared to discuss what state agency would be in charge of the network at this time.

Mr. Ness agreed to defer that question for the time being. Mr. Ness clarified the objective of the day's board meeting pre Mr. Feiss' request. The end goal today is that the board recognize the need to identify a state agency to receive the authority to operate and maintain a statewide LMR system and make any required appropriation requests to do so. If the board determines it is not beneficial to designate a state agency to maintain the system, a funding mechanism must be identified that can be used to obtain appropriations from the legislature for the maintenance of communication systems by individual state and local agencies.

Mr. Baldwin restated the motion made in the last meeting that there be placed on the agenda for consideration options for centralized maintenance and administration of a statewide LMR system with the goal of sustaining its technology and funding as a trunked interoperable system that multiple state and local public safety jurisdictions depend on.

Mr. Butler commented that it is fiscally irresponsible for the taxpayer that all of the different agencies own their own radio systems when there is so much ability to share resources. A centralized system would allow local agencies to function as needed while also accommodating the needs of statewide agencies.

Mr. Ness stated that if the SIGB passes a recommendation to designate a state agency, every association and agency on the board should provide a formal resolution of support for the motion.

Mr. Baldwin recommended that the motion be parsed into two separate aspects. First that there be a statewide LMR system, and secondly that it be maintained by a state agency.

Motion: Mr. Ness moved that the board recommend that there be a statewide public safety communications system backbone network whose operations and maintenance is centralized within a state agency. Mr. Drake seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Motion: Mr. Ness made a motion that the board recommend there be a statewide LMR system where the operations and maintenance is centralized within a state agency. Mr. Drake moved the motion, there was no second. Motion failed.

Mr. Drake stated that he has concerns about giving local mission critical infrastructure to a state agency. Mr. Ness clarified that the motion does not include any assumption of takeover of assets, communication sites, or equipment. At this point, the board is only recommending that there be a statewide system. Charlie Gillmore clarified that this discussion does not include distribution of assets, this is just about setting forth an organizational map.

Mr. Feiss stated his concern that the local autonomy issue was not addressed in the motion. Mr. Butler confirmed there would be no appropriations of equipment or autonomy from local agencies who wish to maintain control of their own systems. Siri Smillie stated that participation in this system would not be mandatory. Mr. Butler agreed that joining this system would be totally voluntary.

Mr. Feiss commented that he believes there is funding available for existing operations and maintenance of LMR systems. The responsibility and funding should remain local. Mr. Feiss stated that he is not comfortable with a statewide LMR system which lacks local responsibility.

Marjean Penny commented on the need for a solution to radio system problems in Gallatin County. There already exists a statewide radio system and standing infrastructure, it simply requires a few more radio sites and core upgrades. These improvements and investments cannot move forward if there is not a known source of revenue to maintain the system. There needs to be an entity responsible for keeping the system functional. Mr. Feiss advocated that the motion includes the provision that this, in no way, infringes on local autonomy. Mr. Feiss also stated the need for a study resolution with the objective of developing a long term plan. Ms. Smillie stated her belief that a long term study on how to move forward would not conflict with this motion. Mr. Butler commented that the vote of the board is only a recommendation to the Governor. There will be ample opportunity for additions to address the specific concerns of board members.

Motion: Mr. Drake moved that the board recommends there be a statewide LMR system and that the operations and maintenance is centralized within a state agency. Ms. Smillie seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Motion: Mr. Lonergan moved that the state agency responsible for the maintenance of the statewide LMR system and the Public Safety Communications Backbone be the Department of Justice, Montana Highway Patrol. Mr. Drake seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Butler abstained from both votes and stated that a letter of support from all agencies involved will be required before the DOJ/Montana Highway Patrol will consider this matter. Mr. Swartz stated that the Department of Transportation (DOT) will fully support the Highway Patrol to sustain maintenance and operation of the statewide LMR system.

Motion: Mr. Ness moved that the board recommends that each association and agency that is represented on the board provide a formal resolution of support for the actions that the Board took today. Mr. Swartz moved the motion, Mr. Lonergan seconded. Motion passed.

Action Item: Mr. Ness will draft legislation, regarding the motions passed, for the board's review at the October 13, 2016 SIGB meeting.

Public Comment: none

Next Meeting

Date: October 13, 2016

Cogswell Room 151

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:18 PM