

**September 19, 2006**  
**SIEC Full Council Meeting Report**  
**11:30am-2pm – Office of Justice Assistance**

**Members Present:** Neil Cameron, Larry Nelson, Thomas Czaja, Ben Schliesman, Brian Rahn, David Spenner, Doug Meier (DNR), David Steingraber  
**Observers:** Greg Engle, Gale Sorum, Carl Guse, Lara Kenny, Ryan Sugden

**11:30 Meeting Called to Order**

The meeting notes from May 25, 2006 were approved.

Sub-committee Reports:

1. Outreach- There is no report.
2. Operations-Neil Cameron expressed some concern about inadequate staffing for the sub-committee meetings. The outreach committee has tentative plans to meet in October.
3. Technical- There is no report.

**Finalize the Technical Plan**

Chair Steingraber introduced two written documents to be discussed before the vote on passing the technical plan into final status.

**1. Document from Steve Dubberstein of Northway Communications regarding Appendix D of the Technical Plan**

Carl Guse summarized the document that was handed out to the council and the he provided some analysis for the council. The document “proposes a slight modification to the unit identifier to include the Time System County Number plan to further identified agencies within the county.” Carl Guse said the plan is similar to other plans he has seen and is not the most user-friendly option or the best plan. It allows for 3 digits for specific units and many agencies use 4 digit identifiers, so the plan would hinder some agencies in identifying radios.

Also, the Northway plan uses a different scheme for organizing and Steve Dubberstein’s plan doesn’t address this difference. Menominee County is taken out of order and put at the end of the list of counties so all the numbers are off on the radios programmed that way. The state plan is logical because it is alphabetical in numbering by county.

The council decided to have Carl Guse draft a letter for Chair Steingraber to sign that will be sent to Steve to let him know that the SIEC discussed his proposal but has decided to adopt Appendix D, as is, as part of the Technical Plan.

In discussing the proposal from Steve Dubberstein, some other questions were raised by the SIEC regarding Appendix D.

David Spenner- Is there a large enough block for all the federal and military agencies?

Carl Guse- There is 10,000 numbers available for national and military agencies in the state plan. There may be some talk at the national level about making a nation-wide system, but currently the number block is not big enough to assign numbers nation-wide.

Chair Steingraber- Why is the number block 7 digits?

Carl Guse- That is determined by the P25 plan.

David Spenner- On the 4 digits designated for the unit id, does the state plan allow for letters?

Carl Guse- No, just numbers.

David Spenner followed up with the comment that there will be a need for some education on this topic because many agencies use both numbers and letters for unit id.

Neil Cameron- A number for municipal agencies would be helpful.

Carl Guse- one number is available in middle of number block so he recommends that counties assign all first responders a unique number. If that cannot be done, space for extra digit could be used. This extra digit is labeled "C" in draft of technical plan.

Chair Steingraber brought some focus to the issue by asking if there were serious concerns about adopting the addendum to the technical plan, along with the plan itself. The consensus was that if it is adopted and re-programming is necessary, it is possible to re-program the radios and some networks. Neil Cameron asked if the SIEC has a responsibility to pay for the reprogramming that will be necessary.

The last point discussed in regards to the Appendix D is the possibility of changing the order the counties are listed in, to put Menominee County in the correct order.

Gale Sorum- SIEC is giving this number too much weight for how much it matters. Only rule that matters is do not duplicate numbers.

Neil Cameron responded that it is important in the long-term view of interoperability.

Gale said the radio users won't see the numbers anyways so it doesn't matter.

Carl Guse responded to Gale that you do see the numbers with the new P25 radios so the number should be made useful to people. (if you choose to program the radio to display the number)

Ben Schliesman said money is available for re-programming through grants, so why not?

Tom Czaja said numbers are important and will help. Doug Meier concurred based on the DNR's experience.

Tom Czaja made a motion to adopt Appendix D, as written, as part of the Technical Plan. Ben Schliesman seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of adopting Appendix D.

## **2. Document for Sam Steffan of the City of Milwaukee.**

Gale summarized the written document that was handed out to the SIEC. He said Sam's concerns about the Technical Plan are the following:

- Lack of funding
- Lack of regional planning
- Technical Plan will need extreme user participation
- Short -term goals are fine
- Long -term goals need to be allowed to happen ?

Gale's response is that the system that Milwaukee uses, called OpenSky by MACOM, was not funded by grants requiring P25 compliance.

Milwaukee probably has a good plan that works for them. He said Sam makes some good points but that they are more general than specific critique of the Technical Plan.

At a listening session, P25 Phase II was discussed. Sam Steffan argues that Phase II could make all the Phase I radios obsolete. Gale responded yes but Phase I has taken 20 years; how long with Phase II take? The SIEC concurred that cannot wait to move forward because Phase II may change things.

In reference to an email that Gale Sorum read a part of, where Sam Steffan indicated if he were to apply for grant money, it would be for non-P25 compliant radios, Neil Cameron asked if Milwaukee was allowed to purchase different radios because they were using UASI funds.

Greg Engle said no, all radios purchased with grant money are P25 compliant.

Gale informed the council that as a connection to MACOM Opensky, Sam Steffan is building in links to make P25 interoperable in their area. Once they (an MACOM OpenSky unit) leave their area, OpenSky won't work into a P25 system.

Ben Schliesman asked if there is a communications problem if response teams from Milwaukee respond outside their area. Carl Guse said no because of MABAS language. Tom Czaja responded yes when Milwaukee has come into his jurisdiction, they have had to provide local radios to responders.

Tom Czaja said response is need to move forward with plan and another council member agreed that it is not appropriate to back away from P25.

Carl Guse said they have their own system but Milwaukee is open to interoperability more than in the past, so this is not a significant problem. This issue can be solved with some planning.

Neil Cameron asked if Sam brought up any other issues besides MACOM that need to be addressed in regards to the Technical Plan. Carl Guse said no, there are no conflicts- its more of a discussion of how to deal with VHF versus 800 problem in that area, Milwaukee. Sam Steffan's questions are regional and can be discussed at a later time as an addendum to the discussion surrounding the Technical Plan.

Chair Steingraber suggested SIEC accept Carl and Gale's comments that the issues do not specifically address the Technical Plan. Eventually, SIEC should speak with Milwaukee to discuss the issues, but for now Gale will draft a letter to Sam to acknowledge his comments.

### **3. General Discussion of Technical Plan**

Carl Guse spoke on behalf of the Technical Sub-committee:

The question was posed, are we adopting the technical specifications as part of the plan? Carl Guse replied yes, since that is how it was presented the public for comment. No changes to the document are needed as a result of feedback from the listening sessions.

The technical specifications are limited to state guidelines, they are not intended to dictate to locals all of the details required to put a system in place.

The issue was raised Neil Cameron's concern from last meeting about the specifications. Carl Guse said if there is a need to have higher coverage specific specifications, who pays for it? Neil would like something to address the in building need for locals. Is there funding to support local for this, to fund repeaters and such?

Chair Steingraber said he thinks the specifications already cover this with the language on page 5, regarding funding issues.

Gale Sorum also said that there is some legal language somewhere about fire responders cannot use repeaters a certain distance from a building. Neil Cameron said there was some way around that. Chair Steingraber said the language is not incompatible with plan for funding.

Neil Cameron suggested that maybe SIEC should send a letter to the Department of Commerce about building codes and architects designing buildings that prohibit the use of cell phones, so radios would not work either, which is a problem for emergency response.

Neil Cameron made a motion to draft the letter expressing the concerns of the SIEC. Tom Czaja seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of drafting the letter.

Neil Cameron brought a point that was made at two listening sessions about the hierarchy of imminence on radio towers. This came up at the Eau Claire listening session because someone wanted a document from the state with a list of the hierarchy of towers so they could get answers to their questions. Gale Sorum explained this is a statewide issue. Tom Czaja said if the problem is in reference to a specific tower, which needs to be addressed to the owner of the tower. Carl Guse replied that there is nothing the SIEC can do because each time it was raised at the sessions; it was in reference to a specific tower. These are issues for the tower owners to address. Chair Steingraber suggested to the council that if this is a widespread problem, maybe legislation could be passed to address public towers. This is complicated and may not solve the problem, but instead create more bureaucracy. He suggests waiting to see if there are more complaints that come to the SIEC regarding this. Neil Cameron said that he thinks the SIEC has a responsibility to respond to people if it asks the public for feedback. SIEC needs to follow up to show it addressed the issue with the towers. It was suggested that maybe something could be posted on the website, but nothing was planned.

Tom Czaja made a motion to adopt the Technical Plan, including all of the appendices and the technical specifications.

Ben Schliesman seconded the motion and the council voted unanimously to adopt the plan.

**Cyren Call Proposal** was presented by Gale.

Background of proposal is that Cyren Call is a company that made a proposal dealing with the block of 700 MHz. The initial plan was to use 60 MHz emptied for public use and sell the other 40 MHz in an auction that is expected to bring about \$1 billion dollars in revenue, which would be used for interoperability. E911 lobbied congress and the now there is the potential for the revenue to be split between the E911 systems and interoperability.

Cyren Call's proposes to use 30 MHz to create a quasi-government organization to broadband public services communication. Cyren Call will raise \$5 billion privately to put in the support for broadband. They would then rent broadband communications devices. These devices would work nation-wide because they are built on a nation-wide standard. They also propose selling the user time not being used by public service users to commercial interests.

The issue Gale Guse had the council address is that the FCC will announce the sale of this 60 MHz unless ordered not to do so by October. APCO and other agencies are petitioning congress to have the FCC not announce the sale and have further discussion about the uses of the 30 MHz.

Gale Sorum pointed out what he sees as the pros and cons for Wisconsin.  
Pros: Money would be raised for interoperability

Cons: It requires significant infrastructure in states like ours and only high density areas would be able to put this service in use until a very large investment in infrastructure is put in place.

There are two other companies that have proposals ready, if there is a discussion about it. One company said they can do the same thing with only 12 MHz.

Gale Sorum suggests that the SIEC draft a letter asking for congress to direct the FCC to allow for discussion of this issue/proposal.

Brian Rahn made a motion to draft a letter to send to Wisconsin's Congressional delegation requesting they have the FCC suspend the announcement. Neil Cameron seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of drafting a letter.

Gale Sorum will draft the letter and send it to Dave Steingraber to present to the congressional delegation, on behalf of the SIEC.

### **Status Report on Technical Interoperability and Update on Funding**

Greg Engle updated the council on what progress OJA has made with interoperability grants. The short term goal is to upgrade radios, bases, MARC repeaters to increase interoperability. 23,400 radios were upgraded in the latest round of funding. In the pre 2003 WEM survey it was estimated that the state was 6% done with this goal. Now we estimate that we are a little over 50% capable.

MARC Repeater 90% there, with only 7 counties that don't have one. OJA needs to contact them again.

Some counties moved off mutual aid frequencies. 16 of 50 counties were moved in the last round of funding.

There will be future funding for more MARC repeaters. All reprogramming requests are honored. Neil Cameron asked about relaxing the 16 channel re-programming rule and Greg Engle replied that OJA has already made some exceptions to that rule when necessary.

In regards to current funding, \$8 million is being spent in 2005 funds to achieve the short term goals. The 2006 budget was just approved the Department of Homeland Security. The total award for Wisconsin this year is \$16 million. Out of the \$16 million, \$4.4 million is available for interoperability. Grants for radios will likely be rolled out next summer, as we are just finishing up the radio grants using 2005 funding.

The interoperability emphasis on long term goal, in addition to mutual aid, repeaters, and training is part of the budget for the 2006 interoperability funding. OJA also is encouraging exercising with the radios. The long term goals using funds is dependent on the technical sub-committee recommendations. Gale Sorum said the money for planning will be put into a grant award through RFP to do a study for plan for entire state long term. The figure set aside to pay for this plan is based on a quote for CTA, which is the firm who did the previous study for Wisconsin. Neil Cameron asked if we are using the previous plans and if a new plan is necessary? Carl Guse said \$1 million is not for a study, it is for frequency planning. After the meeting, it was learned that this figure is closer to \$400-500,000. But, Neil Cameron has a good point in that things can be drawn out of earlier studies. NEWCOM's study in particular has good information on microwave links. Gale Sorum emphasized that part of the reason we went back to CTA for a quote is that they knowledgeable about the past plan, since they put it together, so they won't duplicate work.

**State EMS Communication Plan**

The new plan was handed out to the council members that were present. There are extra available if anyone would like one. Carl Guse presented the plan on behalf of Paul Wittkamp of DHFS who could not be at the meeting. Carl Guse pointed out that some changes have been made; including SIEC has been added to the glossary. He said Paul did a great job of following up on feedback from SIEC about the plan.

**Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting date was set for November 21 at OJA from 11am – 2pm. There will be a meeting if there is sufficient business to conduct. Both the technical sub-committee and the operations sub-committee should be meeting before then so that they will have reports to share with the council.

**The meeting was adjourned at 2pm.**