



NEW HANOVER COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

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Steve Smith
Director

Memorandum

To: Public Safety Communications Center Policy Board Members
From: Brenda Hewlett, Acting Director
Subject: August 23, 2007 Board Summary
Date: August 24, 2007

A Public Safety Communications Center Policy Board meeting was held on Thursday, August 23, 2007 at 10:00 AM in the Emergency Operating Center, 220 Government Center Drive, Wilmington, North Carolina.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sterling Powell
Andre' Mallette
Brenda Hewlett
Billy Younginer
Warren Lee
S. C. Hill Jr.
Tom Eason
Duane Ward
Wayne Pearce
Cynthia Deacon

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Larry Bergman, Excused
Brian Roberts, Excused
Steve Smith, Excused
Donnie Hall, Excused
Cliff Robinson, Excused
Leslie Stanfield, Excused
Duane Ward, Excused
Sharon Kane, Excused
Robert Matheson

GUESTS:

Jason Adams, Wireless Communications

Chairman Powell called the meeting to order at 10:06 A.M.

Chairman Powell verified that there was a quorum.

Chairman Powell asked if there were any questions, comments or changes regarding the July 26 minutes. No one had any comments or changes. Motion to approve minutes made by Billy Younginer and seconded by Tom Eason. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

800 MHz System

Chairman Powell asked if Warren Lee could give an update and Warren informed everyone that the system was up and running. The issues that occurred after the last storm are worked out. Jason got some replacement boards on Wednesday. Jason can update everyone on that. The paging that was disturbed during the process has been restored.

Some departments are continuing to order equipment during the promotional period with Motorola. Captain Ward said they were having a meeting with Motorola and if anyone wanted to join them to check out the options they have on leases and other things of the radios.

Warren stated that he had an update on the applications for the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Grant. They have extended the time to apply by one month. Warren will email to Lynn and have her forward to everyone on the PSCC Board.

Chairman Powell said that he was looking at the breakdown of the Grant and said that it seemed like there was not going to be much money coming to those that applied and if that was correct.

Warren said that it should, that it was done on a regional basis and it was up to the individual counties to put the package together to go to the State.

Chairman Powell asked about the storm and that we lost phones and VHF pagers and if there were any other problems. Warren informed him that part of the radio system was lost. Jason said that the digital system went into "site trunking" which meant that the consoles could not talk to the units in the field. It was fixed fairly quickly once Jason figured out what the problem. The system was "site trunking" for about an hour.

Chairman Powell wanted to know if this was something that could happen again and Jason said that it could. If the link between the closet and the tower goes away it will happen. It is a fiber problem.

Warren stated that they are working on a redundant path. Progress Energy fiber also runs from this building to that building and it has capacity on that. Jason thinks it was an isolated problem from a surge and that caused the fiber issue. Warren said that there are two fiber paths and one is being utilized for transmission between the buildings. The one for the radios is where the network resides but there is additional fiber.

The police department asked Warren if they could apply for the Grant money for an additional radio for the helicopter. Captain Duane Ward stated that he knew of someone who had made a harness for a mobile radio. Jason said that he also talked to the same person but the drawback to that would be only one channel could be utilized not a multi-band. Wayne replied that the harness was only for the 800 MHz or the VHF.

Chairman Powell asked if there was a problem with the 9-1-1 lines. Brenda responded that she and AT&T were supposed to have a meeting a couple of weeks ago. They did not have answers for everything so we are waiting for AT&T to finish their investigation on what has happened.

Two weeks after the incident of the storm, the phones had to be switched over to Brunswick County so that they could replace a shelf that was bad. Brenda has gotten a report from their (AT&T) business repair center on the number of calls from May of 2006. The report shows there has been almost a call a day to their repair center. AT&T is insistent that the one piece of equipment needs to be grounded separately but they cannot guarantee that it will solve the problem.

Chairman Powell asked if it was a major process to ground it separately. They have told Brenda that it would be run over to the center somewhere but Leslie says that everything is grounded in this building well above what is required.

Warren stated that the grounding was an issue from day one. The engineers said a single point ground is required. If you have more than one that causes a possibility to have problems. This building has a single point ground. Brenda stated that the in-house lines come in on the same bundle and they are not affected.

Wayne stated that it doesn't make sense to ask for a separate ground for one piece of equipment.

Brenda said that they came out after the storm and said the shelf needed to be replaced and for two days the center was answering 9-1-1 calls on the in-house lines and it was not replaced until the second incident two weeks later.

Warren spoke with the representative for the EOC last week and she will be the in-house rep for in the EOC during storms. Warren told her that it would be advantageous to find out why the center lost service and she didn't know anything about the loss of service. Warren forwarded her the information and she was taking it to her boss. Brenda said that Leslie sent Tom Whitford an email and there has not been a response back from him.

Chairman Powell stated that he would like to be kept posted on this and the outcome.

Rebanding Project

Warren stated the Rebanding Project is going full steam ahead. There are two consultants working on this project gathering the information on the inventory. There are some questions on some of the units that they thought might not be eligible but may qualify for replacement. The question is if they can really be rebanded. Some of the agencies may hear from someone in reference to the ones in question.

NEW BUSINESS:

Backup Paging and Simulcast

Chairman Powell wanted to talk about this because of the storm and when we lost paging. There are some fire stations that can do VHF paging and he would like to start a project to help each other out.

Jason spoke with Donnie Hall and he was interested in a decoder for one of the stations close to the Flemington Tower so that a phone line can be run from the station to the Flemington Tower for a backup pager and that would cover almost as much footprint as the analog system covers. If the simulcast paging was lost this will cover that side of the county, it could be done the same way on the Wrightsville Beach part of the county.

Jason said that there could be a list made of tones for each station and the list could be kept at each of the decoder sites.

Chairman Powell asked if we could get anything here for a decoder and Warren said that he didn't know what problems that would cause. Jason thought that as long as it was contained here that he didn't think it would cause a problem as there was already a VHF antenna here.

Chairman Powell asked if Jason was working on the decoder for Donnie Hall and County Fire. Yes Jason and Mike are working on that and Chairman Powell asked if he could get a copy of that. That may be a something for Wrightsville Beach to look at as a solution.

Chairman Powell asked if anyone else had any simulcast paging issues and there were none.

Public Safety Communications Center:

Brenda Hewlett distributed the monthly agency reports to Committee members and gave an update on the happenings in the Center.

- There are two new employees, five are in training and five were sent to Jacksonville for DCI school. New Hanover County hosted an Emergency Fire Dispatch class last weekend in the EOC.
- Debora Cottle is in Greensboro for an OSSI Conference for data for what is being done with the CAD system.
- Waiting for AT&T for a meeting date with Warren, Leslie, Andre and Brenda will be meeting with them.

Warren asked if there was anyway to find the number of calls that came in during the period the phones were down and Brenda said that she had already gotten a no when she asked.

Captain Ward wanted to know when the Sheriff's Department would go back to two channels at night and Brenda replied that when the Center is fully staffed that would happen. Captain Ward asked if there was a projected time and Brenda informed him hopefully by the end of the month.

The problem with staffing is some of the new hires are thinking that it is just answering the phones when it involves talking, typing, running NCIC, answering the radios, checking warrants and an answering 9-1-1.

Andre' reiterated about the training of new Telecommunicators and trying to get them trained and the problems of retaining personnel once they find it is not just answering phones. Have patience because we are getting there.

Chairman Powell asked how long it takes to train a new telecommunicator. Brenda informed everyone that it six weeks but about a year to get trained around the room. Some learn quicker than others but each agency has different policies and procedures as well as the Center policies to learn.

Chairman Powell adjourned the meeting at 10:31 A.M.