



East Bay Regional Communications System Authority



Participating agencies include Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and the following cities and special districts: Alameda, Albany, Antioch, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, Danville, Dublin, El Cerrito, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Hercules, Lafayette, Livermore, Martinez, Moraga, Newark, Oakley, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Pleasanton, Richmond, San Leandro, San Pablo, San Ramon, Union City, Walnut Creek, East Bay Regional Park District, Kensington Police Community Services District, Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District and San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District

MINUTES

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

SPECIAL MEETING – JULY 1, 2008



1. Call To Order/Roll Call:

A special meeting of the East Bay Regional Communications System Authority Operations Committee was held on July 1, 2008, in Room 1013 at the Alameda County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, 4985 Broder Boulevard, Dublin, California. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Ahern.

Present: *Cms. Ahern, Attarian, Casten (Alt. for Cm. Rumpf), Cody, Kirkland, Richter, and Roderick*

Absent: *None*

Staff Present:

Executive Director Bill McCammon and Secretary Fawn Holman

2. Comments from the Public

No comments were made by any member of the public at this time.

3. Approval of Minutes: Special Meetings of March 12 & March 21, 2008

On motion of Cm. Kirkland, seconded by Cm. Richter and by unanimous vote, the Committee approved the minutes of the March 12 and March 21, 2008 Special Operations Committee meetings.

4. Review Scope of Work for Solano County Needs Evaluation/Assessment and Potential Future Sharing of EBRCSA Infrastructure and Make Recommendation for Board Approval

Executive Director McCammon presented the staff report and advised that agencies within Solano County had formed the Solano County Emergency Communications Activity (SECA), and have been working to address interoperability issues in Solano County. SECA members have expressed a willingness to partner with the EBRCSA. The EBRCSA's RFP for an engineering consulting firm included a section requesting an evaluation of the existing systems in Solano County and how they might connect to the EBRCSA. The Bay Area SUASI has committed to provide the \$92,933 needed to complete the study. Staff recommended that the Operations Committee review and support the scope of work and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors that Staff move forward with the work.

The Committee and Staff discussed that it would be advantageous to have Solano County partner with the EBRCSA because a site would need to be located in Benicia, which is in Solano County, in order to serve Martinez and Crockett. The monies coming from the SUASI to support this program would not come out of the EBRCSA's share of funding.

On motion of Cm. Cody, seconded by Cm. Roderick and by unanimous vote, the Operations Committee agreed to recommend to the Board of Directors that Staff and CTA Communications move forward with the work as outlined in the scope of work.

5. Review Proposal to Expand CTA's Contract to Complete the Scope of Work for an Engineering Study of the City of Oakland's Emergency Radio Communications System and Make Recommendation for Board Approval

Executive Director McCammon presented the staff report and advised that the issue of Oakland joining the EBRCSA or remaining on its own had been discussed over the last few years without any resolution. In recent discussions between representatives from the SUASI, City of Oakland and EBRCSA, it was agreed that it would be prudent to develop a scope of work and expand the CTA contract to complete a study of the Oakland system and address the issues that have been identified as obstacles to the City of

Oakland joining the EBRCSA. The cost of the proposed scope of work was \$233,236 and would be funded through the SUASI.

The Committee and Staff discussed that the monies funding the scope of work would come from Oakland's share of the 2007 SUASI monies. Regarding the left over portion, Oakland could not expend any of it except of support the recommendations of CTA's study. It was determined that a letter from Laura Phillips of the SUASI would be included in the Board's staff report that outlined the parameters of the expenditure of Oakland's share of the SUASI funds.

Executive Director McCammon advised that both Mayor Lockhart and Mayor Shinn each, on separate occasions, had an opportunity to discuss the situation with the City of Oakland with San Francisco Mayor Newsom. Mayor Newsom indicated a willingness to work with the EBRCSA to encourage Oakland to join the system.

The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to have Mayor Newsom on the EBRCSA's side.

Executive Director McCammon advised that Berkeley's issue for not joining was lack of funding. It was his understanding that there was a ballot measure scheduled for the November election to increase the paramedic tax, which included money for emergency communications. If the measure passed, Berkeley would join the EBRCSA.

On motion of Cm. Kirkland, seconded by Cm. Cody and by unanimous vote, the Operations Committee agreed to recommend to the Board of Directors that the CTA Communications contract be expanded to include the City of Oakland scope of work.

6. Discuss Definitions of Terms (Member Agency vs Subscriber Agency), as well as Methods to Accept New Agencies into the EBRCSA

Executive Director McCammon presented the staff report and advised that, at its March 21, 2008 meeting, the Board of Directors directed the Operations and Finance Committees to discuss and recommend definitions for "member" and "subscriber" and formal procedures for admitting new users. The Board also requested that the Finance Committee consider how new members would be charged. At this time, until the ongoing operational

maintenance, upgrade and replacements cost have been determined, it was premature to determine the subscriber fees.

Executive Director McCammon advised that the Joint Powers Authority agreement mentioned “members” and “subscribers” in a number of sections throughout the agreement and, in order to consider whether or not there was a category of system user called “subscriber,” there were a number of issues that should be considered.

Executive Director McCammon advised that the Finance Committee had discussed this item at its June 30th special meeting and agreed that, as a starting point for future discussions, “members” should be defined as those who make a long term financial commitment and would be responsible for their portion of the debt incurred by the EBRCSA and should be limited to cities and special districts within Alameda and Contra Costa. As such, it would be important get those cities and special districts who are not currently members on board before any debt was incurred. Only members would have Board representation. The Finance Committee further felt that “subscribers” should be defined as those who pay for services on a monthly contractual basis and could opt out of the system at any time. Subscribers would include state and federal agencies and or private emergency responders, such as ambulance services. Subscribers might pay a substantially different fee structure than members.

The Committee and Staff discussed the possible definitions of “member” and “subscriber” and agreed with the Finance Committee’s preliminary definitions. In addition, the Operations Committee discussed possible rate structures for “members” and “subscribers” and agreed that it was important that current members maintain their member status once the cost analysis was complete and the rate structure was in place and not opt out, as is possible per the JPA. It was important to have as many members as possible when the debt was incurred in order to have a larger base of funds, as well as to bring down the monthly rates for members. There should be an incentive for cities and special districts to be a member instead of a subscriber. Subscribers should have higher monthly rates, as well as buy-in and annual operations/maintenance fees, so they would be paying as much as members.

Chair Ahern advised that this issue would come back before the Committee for further discussion at a future Operations Committee meeting.

7. Discuss Problems with Digital Radios in a High Noise Environment and the IAFC's Establishment of a Working Group to Investigate and Evaluate the Issue

Executive Director McCammon distributed copies of articles regarding problems with digital radios in high noise environments and advised that detailed information could be obtained at

<http://www.iafc.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=719>.

Cm. Cody, who asked that this item be agendaized, explained that there was a lot of discussion about digital noise that interrupts voice communications in high noise environments. Essentially, the problem was that a device called a vocoder that converts a voice to a digital signal in a digital radio can have interference by loud background noise, which is a frequent occurrence when fighting a fire. Some fire departments across the country were delaying implementation of the use of digital radios in response to this issue. Another issue of concern was that digital signals drop more abruptly than analog signals, which tend to fade away. The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) was aware of and researching the problems and was providing "best practices" suggestions to deal with the issue while manufacturers worked to resolve the problems. It was important for the EBRCSA to be on top of the issue in order to allay any concerns that any local agencies might have about converting from analog to digital.

Executive Director McCammon advised that the vocoder had already been somewhat improved and it was some of the older radios still being used that were getting the air play regarding this issue. The digital signal provides better coverage and reception than analog, but it cuts off more quickly. At Cm. Cody's suggestion, once the Doolan Canyon site was up and running, the Motorola radios would be tested from the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire training area to make certain that the coverage was adequate.

8. Discuss Establishment of an Inventory List Describing Current and Anticipated Assets

Executive Director McCammon advised that Sheriff Rupf had requested a more complete inventory of assets of the EBRCSA. CTA's Phase I scope of

work included the inventory of current assets and making recommendations for anticipated assets needed at each site.

Cm. Casten advised that Sheriff Rupf also wanted the ownership of the assets included on the inventory, which was not part of the CTA scope.

The Committee and Staff discussed ownership of current and anticipated assets, as well as disbursement and expenditure of SUASI funds, and agreed that when Staff had the kickoff meeting with CTA, a request would be made to include ownership and maintenance of assets as an element in each one of the site evaluations.

Bm. Shinn expressed a need for all Boardmembers to voice their concerns about issues, such as asset ownership and disbursement of funds, early in the process so solutions could be found in a timely manner and would not hold up the project's process.

Chair Ahern advised that Item 10, related to status of grants, would be heard prior to Item 9, as it was related to the discussion in Item 8.

10. Receive Verbal Update of Grants Status (PSIC, COPS, SUASI)

Executive Director McCammon distributed and reviewed a copy of the status of the SUASI Interoperability Funding East Bay Allocation for 2007 advised that originally the EBRCOA was to receive \$2.6 million, which was to be split between Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The SUASI, however, determined that it did not have enough money, so the total was reduced to approximately \$2.3 million. Contra Costa County was requesting that it receive \$598,425, or half of what the JPA would get in total, instead of going directly to the EBRCOA.

Cm. Casten advised that Sheriff Rupf intended to use the monies to support the EBRCOA, the issue was more about the ownership of the infrastructure. He also noted that Oakland, which was located within Alameda County, was approved to receive \$234,000, which would technically put Alameda County's total share higher than Contra Costa Counties.

Chair Ahern stated that it served the point that all monies should go into the JPA account and so the different agencies were not competing for the funds.

Executive Director advised that Contra Costa County did not have representation on the SUASI approval board and the City of Oakland did, which was why it was so important to bring Oakland into the JPA as a member. The more the solidarity the EBRCSA exhibited the better. The issue of ownership and maintenance would have to be resolved, and would be through the MOU process; however, the intent of the grant funds was that the monies would be pooled together and the EBRCSA would build and own the system, limiting the numbers of owners.

9. Receive Presentation Reviewing County of Riverside’s Public Safety Enterprise Communication Project (PSEC) System

Executive Director McCammon distributed a handout of the County of Riverside’s PSEC System presentation that he and representatives of the SUASI received on a recent trip to view the PSEC system, and advised that the system purchase had been a competitive bid process between Motorola and Maycom. Motorola won the bid by including many extras in their package, which made the overall system very economical. The handout included information regarding the project background, timelines, project specifications, costs, system design and coverage, and interoperability. Motorola was also doing the site development.

Executive Director McCammon further advised that Laura Phillips, with the Bay Area SUASI, recommended a competitive master bid for the entire Bay Area, which would bring the costs way down. The master bid would include the EBRCSA, San Francisco and Santa Clara County. When the EBRCSA was ready to develop a site, it would just buy off of that master bid.

11. Receive Verbal Project Status Update

Executive Director McCammon distributed a handout outlining progress to-date and briefly reviewed the status regarding access easements, the Harris Microwave, PG&E design and permitting process, site development and coverage studies.

12. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Continue discussions regarding definitions of “member” vs. “subscriber.”
- CTA Communications contract update.
- Continue discussions on inventory ownership, including an anticipated ownership model.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m. The next regular Operations Committee meeting will be held on August 1, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., at the Alameda County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, 4985 Broder Boulevard, Dublin, CA 94568.

APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE EAST BAY REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM AUTHORITY THIS 15th DAY OF AUGUST, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,



Fawn Holman
Secretary