

Knox Regional Communications Center Executive Board

Wednesday
July 27, 2016
3:00 p.m.

A meeting of the Executive Board of the Knox Regional Communications Center took place on **Wednesday, July 27, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.** in the Knox County Emergency Management Agency Office.

Executive Board members in attendance: Adam Miceli, Rockland Fire/EMS; Camden Fire Chief Chris Farley; Ruston Barnard, Rockland Fire/EMS; Jesse Thompson, Union EMS; and Knox County EMA Director Ray Sisk.
Members absent: *Craig Cooley, Rockport Police Department and Rockland PD Deputy Chief Chris Young.*

Others in attendance: Knox Regional Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, Knox County Administrator Andrew Hart, and Administrative Assistant Candice Richards.

I. 3:00 Meeting Called To Order

II. 3:01 Action Items:

1. Approval of Board Minutes of April 7, 2016 & July 12, 2016.

III. 3:05 Discussion Items:

1. KRCC Hiring Process
2. Enhanced Mutual Aid Discussion
3. Multi-Jurisdictional Toning
4. Digital Radio testing
5. 2017 Budget Discussion
6. Fire Protocols Approved

IV. Other Business

V. Adjourn

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chief Farley at 3:12 p.m.

II. Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes of April 7, 2016 & July 12, 2016.

- Ray Sisk motioned to approve the minutes. Jesse Thompson seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

III. Discussion Items

1. KRCC Hiring Process.

Director Lothrop explained that the County was in the process of hiring a temporary full-time person so the department can get someone started training before there are enough viable applicants to hold an oral board. He noted that based on some of the concerns that had been raised during the survey process, the new employee will be trained by only one trainer, and the department will delay sending him to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy until he's ready. If the trainer the new employee is working with goes on vacation, he will be trained by one of the two supervisors until the trainer is back.

It was noted that Administrative Assistant Richards had designed a creative ad for Facebook to try and drum up some interest in working in dispatch. It's been sent to all County staff to see if they'd be

willing to post it on their own Facebook page. The sheriff's office and EMA office have already put it on their departmental Facebook pages. When asked if she had gotten any interest as a result of the ad so far, Administrative Assistant Richards replied that she wasn't sure since no one has specifically mentioned that they were applying because they had seen the ad on Facebook.

2. Enhanced Mutual Aid Discussion.

Director Lothrop explained that he was being copied on all the emails between members of the Knox County Mutual Aid group about enhanced mutual aid. He said that he had highlighted the changes in the SOG to meet the needs of this group in response to those emails. Then, however, he had received a copy of the minutes from Fire Chief Clarence Keller from the July 20th Knox County Mutual Aid meeting and there were some comments at that meeting that he was taken aback by, which implied that agencies aren't required to follow the standard. Director Lothrop was a little confused about whether it was mandatory, or whether agencies only do it if they want to.

There was a discussion about encouraging the towns pushing back to follow the protocols in the SOG because there are limited methods available to the Board in instances where towns and agencies don't want to participate. Towns that are following the SOG need to point out to mutual aid responders that they need to be using the same communications protocols. There's no way to force them to do so, but it has been discussed in that offers for training can be made and also the Executive Board can reach out to town officials to encourage participation.

3. Multi-Jurisdictional Toning.

Director Lothrop mentioned an incident on the 4th of July and said that the question "do we really need to say that?" had been raised. He said that he felt that, yes, it should be done just in case the IAR didn't go through. They'll still get the tone but the only thing that was said was St. George. It's outside the Center's current written procedures so Center staff made the corrective action. The issue has since been brought up again so Director Lothrop felt he should bring it up to the Executive Board. He said that he could understand that in the heat of the moment people don't want to jam the radio, but how long does it really take? It was suggested just changing the wording a little to be inclusive of all responding departments. It was also suggested that it sounded like it's time to update the policy since there's an issue, so Director Lothrop said that he would write it up as an SOG change, send it out to the Users Group as an update, and have it as a discussion item at the next Users Group meeting.

4. Digital Radio Testing.

Director Lothrop explained that everyone I've heard back from that has tried the radios has had good results with them. Rockland and Union haven't tried them yet. EMA Director Sisk suggested that agencies seek funding to aside money for the transition sooner rather than later. He noted that the Homeland Security fund stream has gotten really small so there's not much money left to get for funding assistance.

5. 2017 Budget Discussion.

Director Lothrop explained that he hadn't really had a chance to work on his budget yet but he noted that he has changed radio vendors since the last Executive Board meeting. The original contract was with Active Communications, which became MaineStream Solutions. The problem is, MaineStream Solutions is basically a computer company now – all of their radio techs, but one, are gone. The County did a site inspection on all of the towers and there is equipment from the towers that the County purchased two years ago. Director Lothrop said that he spoke with the Avtec dealer at a conference and the rep asked him why the County let its contract lapse. It was part of the maintenance contract but it turns out that MaineStream Solutions is no longer certified so they can't do the County's maintenance. The County now has a contract with Horizon Technologies. It's close to \$6,000 for equipment and services not delivered by MaineStream that they owe the County. He said that he sent them a letter to request payment.

The idea of offering a recruitment bonus for anyone (not just union employees but also all other employees and other agencies) was raised. Administrator Hart was hesitant about the idea because of the

cost and wanted to try the Facebook advertizing first. The group discussed that if the recruitment bonus were offered to people, there would have to be a stipulation that the person hired has to be employed for a year before anyone gets the money to prevent someone getting hired just so someone can get some money. Earlier this year, two employees received \$1,000 as a recruitment bonus after an employee was here 6 months, and then that employee resigned right after getting off their probationary period. Administrator Hart felt that for something like this, the union has to buy in, and if not, then he was not interested in doing it. He asked the Executive Board members who were going to be meeting with the dispatch staff later to mention that the union employees are harming themselves by getting in the way of solutions because of the union representatives blocking changes from happening.

6. Fire Protocols Approved.

Director Lothrop explained that the Fire Protocols were formally adopted by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) with very minor wording changes. The PUC did not support the interface so each PSAP is going to be responsible for their own purchase if the users want the component added to the call taking phase. Training will start regionally in October. The first region picked will be trained by the end of the year but nobody knows which region will be picked first.

IV. **Other Business**

Excess Radio Traffic Complaint

Chief Farley noted that Chief Peasley's complaint is that the problem of excess radio traffic is still ongoing. Chief Farley was told that dispatch staff and the Executive Board offer training to departments that perpetrators of the excess radio traffic, but they don't accept the training. At some point the Board will have to communicate with the agency's administration/selectmen to make them aware of the problems. There was a discussion about whether the Board had any legal standing to be able to force an agency to correct issues. Most Board members felt that it is best to work with agencies and encourage them to improve but if not, town officials need to be made aware of the problem and hopefully things will change. It was suggested that if any town or agency is complaining that they don't know what goes on or they don't know what they are paying for, they should visit the Center and see for themselves what goes on there.

Director Lothrop noted that the KRCC has not been asked by any agency to do training even though he emailed everyone previously and made the offer. It was suggested scheduling a few training classes a year without waiting for agencies to ask for training, and then invite fire, police, and EMS to those dates. Adam Miceli offered to help teach since he already has a 30 minute PowerPoint presentation ready.

V. **Adjourn**

- Rusty Barnard motioned to adjourn. Ray Sisk seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Richards
Administrative Assistant