

**STATE OF COLORADO  
COUNTY OF ROUTT**

**OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
July 24, 2014**

Chair Chuck Wisecup, Oak Creek Fire District, called the meeting of the Routt County Communications Advisory Board (CAB) to order. Bob Struble and Cheryl Dalton, Emergency Management; Doug Brown and Levi Pietrick, Routt County Communications; Kristia Check-Hill, Routt County Search and Rescue; Dal Leck, West Routt Fire Protection District; Bobby Rauch, Oak Creek Police; Joel Rae and Jerry Stabile, Steamboat Springs Police; Machia Cox, Yampa Fire Protection District; Rob Ryg, County Coroner; Tyler Whitmore, Yampa Valley Regional Airport; Greg Tuliszewski, Hayden Police; Garrett Wiggins and Ray Birch, Routt County Sheriff's Office; Chad Bowdre, Classic Air Medical; Julie Arington, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Steamboat Lake; Janet Hruby, Road & Bridge; Daniel Harris, Classic Air Medical; Brita Horn, Rock Creek Volunteer Fire Dept.; Mike Swinsick, North Routt Fire; and Tom Sullivan, County Manager, were present. Carrie Mansfield recorded the meeting and prepared the minutes.

**EN RE: ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM**

Chuck established that a quorum was present this day.

**EN RE: ADMINISTRATIVE**

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The draft minutes of the April 24, 2014 quarterly meeting of the Communications Advisory Board (CAB) were reviewed. No changes to the minutes were proposed.

**MOTION**

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the Communications Advisory Board meeting held on April 24, 2014. The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY FIRSTNET COLORADO**

Ed Mills, FirstNet Outreach Manager, gave a presentation to the Board on FirstNet, the First Responder Network Authority. FirstNet is an independent authority within the National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) created to provide emergency responders with the first high-speed wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety. An introduction and overview to FirstNet was provided with a Power Point presentation followed by a question and answer session.

## **EN RE: PROJECTS AND ISSUES**

### **FARWELL FUEL TANK**

Levi said that next Monday he and Albert will be going up to Farwell to get final measurements. After that they will place the order and hope to get it in September.

### **DISPATCH CONSOLES**

Levi said they do not have a definite date yet for installation of the new dispatch consoles, but it should be in the next couple of weeks. The company doing the installation is currently working on console projects in other parts of the state. Doug commented that Levi cleaned up the racks and got rid of any unnecessary equipment and that they have been working with Motorola to make the transition as seamless as possible.

### **MDT (MOBILE DATA TERMINALS)**

Doug said that after researching all of the County's VHF systems, he concluded that using the Packet Cluster or similar system to replace use of the air cards is not feasible. He said the fee is astronomical, and none of the MTR 2000's in the VHF network will accept mobile data transmissions. He said we would have to replace all of the components to make the system operational, so it will be less expensive to continue using the air cards.

### **RADIO CHANNEL TEMPLATES**

Levi stated that the subcommittee got together recently. The conclusion from that meeting was that some of the radio programming needs to be updated, and we need new channel maps. He also said that 10 channels are not labeled correctly. Levi asked the board for direction as to what needs to be changed on each channel. As soon as Levi has that information, he will proceed with making the appropriate updates.

### **RADIO TECH REPORT**

Levi said he hopes to have all of the site maintenance done by mid-September. Chuck asked about the status of Emerald Mountain. Levi said he has been told by CCNC Technical Services that the power distribution for one of the racks for the DTR suite has been bypassed, and there is still a failed power amplifier in the channel three Quantar. As a result, Emerald is currently operating as a three-channel site instead of a four-channel site. Chuck asked if this happened due to old equipment. Levi said that the power amplifiers generate a lot of heat, and that is what generally causes them to fail, but a lightning strike has not been ruled out.

A discussion ensued about whose responsibility it would be for the repairs. The City of Steamboat Springs owns the equipment at the site. Jerry Stabile stated that the city is not ready to invest a lot of money into the Emerald site. There was more discussion about how the site being down or not fully functioning affects coverage. Levi said that when the Emerald

site is off-line, the site that everybody in Steamboat receives is Walden, so the reception is not as good. He said as a result, there probably won't be in-building coverage anywhere in the City of Steamboat. Bob Struble commented that one of the reasons they needed the Emerald site was that it allowed them to talk while they are in the Sheraton and at the base of Mt. Werner. He said before the Emerald site was activated, those areas were dead zones.

Jerry Stabile asked if there is a different type of antenna that can be put on Mount Werner that would take care of communications if Emerald goes down. Doug responded that there are directional antennae called Yagis that can be pointed to a specific area. He said a propagation study would need to be completed to see how it would affect coverage in Steamboat. Tom Sullivan commented that after an engineering study is performed, he would like to get an estimate of the costs to move or get new equipment on Mt. Werner. He said this issue will need more discussion.

Levi said that Farwell was off-line recently but it's back up today. The state technician was up there today to run some additional testing.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS STAFFING**

Doug said he brought the last trainee out of training two days ago. He said the remaining opening for a Communications Specialist was posted recently. He received thirteen applications and will be interviewing five candidates starting tomorrow.

#### **EN RE: OLD BUSINESS**

No old business was presented.

#### **EN RE: NEW BUSINESS**

Garrett asked about the status of the Communications van. Doug responded that it is still at Road and Bridge waiting for six replacement batteries to come in.

#### **OPEN DISCUSSION: FUTURE PLANS FOR ROUTT COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT NEEDS**

Doug began by saying that a determination needs to be made re: where 800 communications are going in the future and how much money the County is willing to invest to keep the system operational when other, possibly better, technology is available such as FirstNet. He said if the County buys into this, for a period of time, the County could be supporting two, possibly three different communication systems (800/VHF/FirstNet) to accomplish the same thing, and the workload of the dispatcher will double or triple because they have to man two or three different systems to be able to talk to everybody.

Joel Rae said even if you take FirstNet out of the picture, the 800 MHz radios we possess will no longer be supported by Motorola as early as 2017. This will mean replacing

every radio at \$3,000 to \$4,000 a piece to continue using the state's DTR system. He said there is beginning to be a wave of law enforcement, fire, and public safety professionals across the state and the nation that are saying that even though interoperability has been achieved, the system has become a monopoly; it's unaffordable; and they are considering alternatives. He said a decision needs to be made regarding what is best and most effective for Routt County.

Tom Sullivan said we have a lot invested in the 800 system. The 800 equipment at the sites was obtained through a DOLA grant. Even though ownership of the DTR site equipment was transferred to the state after 5 years, purchase and replacement of the mobile and portable radios remained the responsibility of the County and other system users. In addition, the County funded installation of the 800 equipment at the Oak Creek site. He said the fact that the state hasn't made a decision about FirstNet makes the County's position more difficult. We don't know how FirstNet is going to affect communications in the future or if it will eventually replace the radios. Ed Mills commented that they should have more information in the next few months, but he said LMR (land mobile radio) is not going anywhere.

Chuck asked if FirstNet would be able to replace pagers. Ed responded that companies are talking about having "Push to Talk" available for cell phones, but it is probably years away.

Garrett asked if it would be possible to go back to the VHF system. Doug responded that most of that equipment is approaching the end of its life cycle and would need to be upgraded. He said a number of factors need to be considered including the cost of upgrading the VHF system to make it functional, the possibility of narrowbanding decreasing our coverage, and compatibility with the rest of the state. Levi added that the Motorola VHF radios cost about the same as their 800 radios. It was agreed that there needs to be further discussion on this issue.

#### **EN RE: ADJOURNMENT**

At 4:40p.m., Chuck moved to adjourn the Communications Advisory Board meeting. A board member seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

No further business coming before the Communications Advisory Board, same adjourned sine die.

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Carrie Mansfield, Administrative Assistant

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Chuck Wisecup, Chair

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Date