

MEMORANDUM

To: Traffic Incident Management Group and Interested Parties

From: Josh Mack, Transportation Planner

Date: May 11, 2007

RE: Meeting Notes from Traffic Incident Management Group-Communications Interoperability Task Force on May 7, 2007

Those in attendance included: Robert Bohlmann, York County EMA; Gary Eaton, Kittery Police; Gil Emery, Portsmouth Police; David Ferland, Portsmouth NH Police; Pam L'Heureux, York County EMA; Josh Mack, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC); Tom Reinauer, SMRPC; Gregory J. Stone, Maine Turnpike Authority; Charles Szeniewski, York Police Department. The meeting was held at the Maine Turnpike Authority's York Maintenance Facility.

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Call Down List

Tom Reinauer started the meeting off by explaining that staff have found that planning for communications interoperability has been somewhat of a chicken-egg issue. In the past the group has recommended that a call down list be developed to enhance communications for traffic incidents. But it is also likely that who should be on the call down list will differ depending on the type of incident and scale of the incident. Should the task force look at Major Incident levels/types to determine the make up of a call down list, or should we proceed directly with a call down list and proceed from there? Tom opened the floor up for comment.

- Bob Bohlman recommended that a call down list be developed first. Even for a short term event, a call down list should be used.
- Gil Emery said that starting with a call down list is a good way to proceed. At the heart of the call down list idea is that there is better sharing of information.
- Dave Fernald stated that Portsmouth has found value in participating in the Traffic Incident Management group by understanding that there will be impacts on neighboring communities depending on how the City handles a traffic incident. The call down list is important, because it will help spell out who needs notify whom. Any event has potential to become large scale also.
- Pam L'Heureux said there should be a step by step checklist of who to call and let those calls fan out, giving each person the responsibility of calling a handful of towns or agencies.
- Gary Eaton said the starting point for this exercise is developing a list of stakeholders.
- Tom Reinauer said that another issue with stakeholders is that the group needs to more formally develop a better sense of the geography that the group should look at. There was consensus that Rockingham and Strafford Counties in New Hampshire should be invited to participate in this initiative and York County.

Northern/Northwestern York County may not need to be in a communications interoperability plan as of yet.

Tom asked the group for the current status for 24/7 dispatch centers.

- Charlie Szienewski said that the restructuring for the new PSAP for the York County area is currently scheduled to be implemented in October 2007. This will include 7 towns.
- The major call center locations for the Southern Maine, and the ones who should be notified first of any incident are York, Portsmouth, and Gray.
- Concord has become the state of New Hampshire's new dispatch center hub. However, Dave Fernald and Gil Emery suggested that Portsmouth should be used instead and could be managed better.

During the discussion the group identified some important considerations for the call down list idea.

- Call down list will need to be updated/tested every 6 months or so.
- Should look at National Advisory Weather Phone system for fanning out information
- Page Gate should be used. The system is in place to accomplish automatic paging for incidents.
- Examine use of 96.7 clear channel and traffic advisory service
- Communications must take place at least for front-end and back-end of an incident
- No codes should be used for the call down list, as this could be confusing to dispatchers who are already dealing with many different number codes.
- The dispatch community should not be overlooked in training.
- A large-scale training should be part of this initiative.
- If major incidents are categorized for communications, group may need to look at timeframes (time of day) of incident, how many lanes blocked for how many hours, what time of year, etc. The group agreed that there should be one threshold of notification (for example – more than one lane closed for more than one hour) that will be used.

There was consensus among the group that SMRPC would try to put together a draft call down list based on the group's direction and guidance from other documents.

3. York, ME and Newington, NH Incident Command Centers

Tom Reinauer asked the group to address the idea of using York and Newington as communications centers for Traffic Incident Management.

- Greg Stone explained that both centers are wired for equipment and a frequency has been established so that the two states can talk to each other.
- Gary Eaton also pointed out that there is a communications center at Pease, which could also be used depending on the size and duration of an incident.
- The Group discussed how the Newington station might be the best place for Maine and New Hampshire to use as an Incident Management Command Center. It was brought up that the York equipment was developed in case there was no way for the towns to get on the other side of the Piscataqua River. However, most of the group

thought it would probably be manageable to get Maine people across the river for a long-term event by detour or boat. The group recommended that the idea of having incident command in New Hampshire be brought up with the larger group at the next meeting. The State Police should be asked to weigh in on this idea.

4. Other Business

- Dave Fernald requested electronic and paper copies of the routing scenarios developed for Portsmouth and Kittery.
- Charlie Szienewski recommended that the group discuss with Maine DOT the idea of using their York Facility for storing Traffic Incident Management resources such as signs, cones, etc.,.
- Little Bay Bridge plan should be examined on resources available for traffic incidents.