

Meeting: Wireless E9-1-1 Advisory Sub-Committee Eligibility List Review
 Date: January 22, 2013
 Time: 10:00 am
 Location: PEMA Headquarters, Harrisburg, PA

Committee Attendees:

Attendee	Organization	Attendee	Organization
Timothy Baldwin	Lancaster County	Wayne Nothstein	Carbon County
Sharon Bader*	AT&T	Daniel Tancibok	Centre County
David Cohick	Tioga County	Donald Tantum	Verizon Wireless
John Haynes*	Chester County	David Tews	Indigo Wireless
David Holl	Deputy Director for Administration PEMA		

Additional Attendees:

Jonathan Hansen 9-1-1 Office, PEMA
 Jane Benfer 9-1-1 Office, PEMA
 Ray Blouch 9-1-1 Office, PEMA
 Michelle Musser 9-1-1 Office, PEMA

*Via Phone

Welcome and Comments

Deputy Director Dave Holl called the meeting to order at 1000 and provided a brief overview of the sub-Committee meeting agenda.

FY 2013-2014 Eligibility List Review

Deputy Director Holl opened the discussion on the proposed change to remove Tier levels from the funding application process. The Tier levels serve no purpose now that all of the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) are deployed to Phase II. A committee member asked how it would impact the amount of funds distributed. Jonathan Hansen explained that it would still be a percentage of the total funds available. All eligible/approved items would be totaled versus the available funding and each county/city would get their percentage of the available monies.

The committee asked if this would prohibit the PSAPs from continuing to “game” the system, but Jonathan agreed this would only force the PSAPs to prioritize their spending and that those issues will continue until the

Agency implements the compliance checking portion of the new enhancements to the current program. With this enhancement, the Agency will be hiring additional staff as a part of its existing compliance monitoring program to visit PSAPs to verify items purchased and documents associated with wireless funds. This is currently done with Homeland Security and hopefully this would help to curb the unnecessary requests and the stockpiling of extra equipment that may be occurring in some cases.

Another question from the committee dealt with the requesting of the same items year after year and then reallocating the approved funding toward something the PSAP truly wanted. Jonathan replied that the staff routinely checks any new requests against prior years to ensure that the same item is not being requested every year. Additionally we check life cycles and industry standard costs to attempt to minimize system “gaming”. An additional enhancement to the current system will be assigning item numbers to each piece of equipment/service to ensure the item is purchased during the reconciliation process. This will also assist in the compliance checking aspect of the system. A committee member agreed this was a good idea as he is aware of the legislative intent of the wireless program, but now almost 10 years later we are still seeing the abuse of the system continue.

Jonathan gave another overview of the proposed funding mechanism the Agency is contemplating using the discontinuance of the Tier levels and reiterated that the unpaid balance will still be carried forward until a legislative change would take effect.

Another committee member questioned how regionalization would work. Jonathan and Deputy Holl explained the concept as it is working at this moment and that we anticipate possibly funding incentives to these projects, however, this has not been fully discussed.

Deputy Holl explained that during the development of the West Core project it was determined that possibly only three Customer Premises Equipment (CPE) systems will be needed ultimately. There will be an initial cost to purchase the systems, but the maintenance then will be shared among the participating counties and will prove to be significant savings over the long run.

A committee member added that with the potential funding model proposed, a PSAP can put in for 10 items and still only get a percentage for all of them. The counties/cities still struggle with coming up with the balance of the costs. With salaries and benefits being the number one priority and the highest cost, will we be safeguarding these costs over regionalization? Deputy Holl replied that we will still need legislative change to fix the personnel issues. Prior to wireless funding, the PSAPs still struggled with personnel costs and the program was never intended to fund that at 100%. The committee member responded that many times it is new leadership in the PSAPs that fails to understand the workings of the 9-1-1 wireless funding program and that perhaps more education in that area would be beneficial to all. Deputy Holl also stated that the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) observed the capacity of call taking positions funded in some cases exceeds the call volumes which equates to a system that is overbuilt and as such not cost effective.

Deputy Holl stated that this year is a “planning” year for regionalization assessment and regional designs. Jonathan stated that we must also be aware that 2014 is the sunset of the legislation and that we need to have NENA and APCO actively involved to assist us in making a clearer pathway for future funding.

A question was posed by a member of the committee about counties sitting on money – essentially “island” money – and what can be done about this. Jonathan stated we are currently wrapping up the FY11-12

reconciliations and, if there seems to be significant amounts of unencumbered monies out there, these PSAPs will be encouraged to use it against their unfunded items until this money is paid down and used. Currently, we do not have the actual numbers of unspent money out there, but we must be careful not to affect projects that are planned or are in pending. The Agency will discuss this internally to find a solution to use this money in a fair and equitable manner for all. The Agency is striving to have the FY11-12 reports ready in plenty of time for the March 3, 2013, funding requests so the PSAPs have an idea how much unspent funding they have on hand.

The next discussion was the definition of a region. Deputy Holl stated that a region could be defined as anywhere from two PSAPs to multiples. Yes, this could allow for two PSAPs to come together. However, not having the assessments completed yet we don't have a handle on the magnitude of the regionalization possibilities. Currently, there are two regional plans under construction with a few more "bubbling up" that we have no specifics on as yet. There needs to be more clarification prior to creating guidelines and criteria for a project. That information should be available for release to any PSAPs intending to partner in the process of assessments or ESInet designs. The Agency reserves the right to deny funding for a project that does not meet the minimum requirements.

As for the ESInet build out, there was a discussion on the microwave portion. County assets, state assets, or private and public partnerships are all possibilities. The question was posed about some PSAP directors who do not have the technical background to understand what a vendor is proposing, ergo there may be some overkill with respect to build-out. Jonathan explained that we will have technical resources here, and that all proposals will need to have background info, including criteria based on the guidance that will be established. As for the funds allotted for assessments, if the assessment project comes in at less than the allotted amount, the balance of the money can be reallocated. However, Deputy Holl reiterated that no funds will be released until a multi-project plan is submitted and accepted by the Agency.

The following items were discussed as being changed on the eligibility list from previous years:

No Longer Eligible

- Wireless Test Phones
- Personal Environmental System for Workstation
- Access Control
- Fax Machine (however, now eligible under wireline at the primary PSAP only)
- Provisioning and Maintenance of Tower Sites That Are Used to Provide Microwave Transport as Part of the 9-1-1 System
- Alarm Monitoring
- Landscaping (includes mowing and ground cover)

- GIS Data Required
- Portable GPS Unit
- Chair Mats
- Publication Notices for Proposals
- Mass Notification Systems

Eligible with Modifications

- GIS Data Layer Development Professional Services and Maintenance (removed the 3 to 5 year restriction as it is an ongoing process)

Wireless Deployment (routing sheet validation of NEW SITES ONLY)

*Wireless Accuracy Testing Services (existing contracts only and funding will only be available through December 31, 2013)

*Funds Management Services (existing contracts only and funding will only be available through December 31, 2013)

***Note: These two items have to be proven to be existing contracts as of March 3, 2013. Moving forward, PEMA staff will be available to assist in helping the PSAPs. CCAP representative added that contiguous counties could also assist in aiding counties who need additional help.**

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the importance of maintaining GIS data layers and how they have evolved with the program. NG911 will have GIS shared databases as a central core and we need to explore how that process and program may become operational over this next year. The commonwealth is open to suggestions as to how to mesh the different platforms that are currently in use and create a statewide GIS platform. Deputy Holl mentioned another state as currently having all of their data on the same platform and updates are frequently uploaded from local PSAP sources. That may be a model to explore. We would like to establish a working group to develop a solution that would benefit the entire commonwealth as well as creating an overall cost savings.

Finally there was a short discussion on LEC charges being applied for and what impact Next Gen will have on these costs. Currently many PSAPs are unaware of what the line items on the monthly invoices mean as each carrier's naming conventions differ. This leaves the interpretation open ended. PEMA will attempt to assist the PSAPs in deciphering some of the line items as we have investigated and accepted assistance from a carrier source. Keep in mind though that radio circuits remain ineligible. The impact of Next Gen in the near future should not have any impact as the carriers are finding it difficult to utilize current pathways for both data and voice. They do not expect a quick fix in the very near future.

No further questions were posed and the meeting was adjourned. Deputy Holl and Jonathan thanked everyone for their attendance and input. The next meeting will be for funding appeals.

These minutes are a summary of the writer's interpretation. Unless changes are identified within ten (10) days of receipt, via letter, agreement with the content shall be assumed.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Benfer, Michelle Musser/blb
9-1-1 Office, PEMA