

**Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission Meeting  
November 19, 2013  
Montgomery, AL**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Roberts, Shirrell – Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (Commission Chair Proxy)  
Barton, Michael – Alabama Sheriff’s Association  
Blair, Dennis – Alabama Department of Public Health  
Blair, Ernie – HMC 9-1-1  
Fields, Willie – Alabama Department of Corrections  
Goff, John – Alabama Forestry Commission  
Hargrove, Jeb – Alabama Emergency Management Agency  
Johnston, J.T. (John) – Alabama Association of Emergency Managers  
Lord, John – Alabama Fire Chiefs  
McGhee, Chris (Gerry) – Poarch Band of Creek Indians  
Murph, Charles – Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (SWIC)  
Patterson, James (Capt.) – Alabama Department of Public Safety  
Peterson, Jim (James) – Alabama Association of Chiefs of Police  
Pilgreen, Scott – Alabama Fire Marshall’s Office  
Smith, Gina – ADECA  
Stokes, Michael – Alabama Department of Transportation  
Summerford, Howard – Jefferson County 911  
Thompson, Steve – Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources  
Wood, Chauncey – Alabama Association of Rescue Squads  
Hays, Merritt – Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (acting Secretary)  
Lee, Michael – Jefferson County 911 (workgroup Chair)  
Cook, Ashley - Alabama DPS (Special Projects)  
Cosby, Drayton – The Cosby Company  
Cord, James Brent – Alabama Forestry Commission  
Pilgreen, Michelle – Southern Linc  
Prestwood, Larry – Alabama DPS IT Div.

**Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission Meeting**  
**November 19, 2013**  
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Shirrell Roberts called the meeting to Order. Introductions were made by those in attendance. The agenda provided to each member was reviewed and a motion to accept the agenda was made by Chauncey Woods and seconded by Chief Jon Lord. The motion passed unanimously and the agenda was accepted.

Next, Shirrell Roberts called attention to the attendees to review the Minutes from the September 17, 2013, meeting to determine if any corrections are necessary. J.T. Johnston asked that his name be corrected as well as Chauncey Woods whose name is misspelled in various places. Motion to accept the Minutes as amended with corrections was made by Chauncey Woods and seconded by Chief Jon Lord. The motion passed unanimously and the Minutes were accepted.

Mr. Roberts recognized Charles Murph with ALEA who is in coordinates interoperable communications. Mr. Murph continued with the agenda by asking for Chairman reports from the workgroups.

**Reports from Workgroups**

Michael Lee is the Chair for the P25 Administrators Workgroup. Discussion regarding continuing work on initiatives tasked by the AFRW Commission. The workgroups will continue to work on all initiatives tasked by the AFRW Commission. AFRWC P24 Administrators Workgroup will meet after the first of the year.

Chief Jim Peterson asked Michael whether or not Jefferson County is currently upgrading their communications system?

Michael acknowledged that the City of Birmingham is upgrading to a P25 switch and the County is upgrading the sites to match the switch upgrade. Jefferson

**Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission Meeting  
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County 911 is getting their dispatch center in Centerpoint and signed a contract for 10 P25 consoles. He anticipates three (3) to (4) months transitioning over to the P25 consoles.

Charles Murph then asked whether or not Jefferson County has plans to connect to the Madison and Baldwin County switches? Michael informed the Commission that the City of Birmingham has hired former Hoover 911 Director Greg Silas as their 911 Director and will report to IT Director. Mr. Silas does plan to connect to the existing switch connection with Madison and Baldwin counties.

Mr. Blair with ADPH asked whether or not Jefferson County 911 dispatched for EMS agencies? Michael Stokes explained that yes they do, but not for private ambulance services. Mr. Blair then asked whether or not the vehicles that are dispatched used solely for transport? Michael stated yes, but it varies by jurisdictions.

**State Agencies Workgroup**

Chairman of the State Agencies Workgroup, Jeb Hargrove stated that there is no new news to report since the previous meeting.

**Old Business**

Charles Murph gave the Commission an update on the FCC requirement for statewide 700 MHz frequencies. Mr. Murph asked Jeb Hargrove to provide an update since Eric Linsley was not present. Mr. Hargrove is working with Randy Aldridge at the Department of Public Safety to transfer the license over to the State of Alabama in c/o AFRWC per the Commission's request. He expects no problem with the transfer. Mr. Hargrove with AEMA will be the coordinator of the frequencies on behalf of the AFRWC.

**Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission Meeting  
November 19, 2013  
Montgomery, AL**

Mr. Murph asked Michael Lee if they would be adding any 700 MHz state frequencies to the system? Michael answered they may not initially, but would talk to Greg about the idea. He feels it is a good idea and thinks it should be no problem.

In the follow-up conversation the Commission felt that between Mobile, Madison, Montgomery, and Jefferson County, the FCC requirements would be met. Jefferson County also has additional frequencies as allotted in the Region 1 700Mhz Plan. Michael said he would get with Jeb Hargrove on the frequency use agreement and take it to their board for consideration.

**Update on the State and Local Grant Program (SLIGP)**

Mr. Murph gave an update on the grant program as follows:

The Dept. of Commerce NTIA awarded Alabama the grant as outlined in the SLIGP guidance released by the NTIA.

Alabama will follow the program application as approved by the Department of Commerce. Alabama will hire two (2) Project Managers and one (1) Program Assistant. One Project Manager designated for Education and Outreach and the other Project Manager will be designated for Governance and Planning. The Program Assistant will help the AFRWC in an administrative capacity.

The project team will report directly to Mr. Murph at ALEA and updates on their work will be given to the AFRWC at the regularly scheduled meetings.

The employees will most likely be contracted for three (3) years during the grant's period of performance.

We're anticipating holding regional meetings beginning in the second quarter of 2014, if there are no problems with the hires. Will also meet with some local

**Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission Meeting**  
**November 19, 2013**  
**Montgomery, AL**

areas that are eagerly awaiting the implementation of broadband due to projects within their jurisdictions.

Mr. Murph stated that we are in the planning stage for the first of three (3) annual conferences once the project team is set. Hopefully the registration site for the conference will be up by summer 2014 with the conference set for some time in the fall.

Mr. Murph stated that he has not received any word from FirstNet as of this date concerning the data collection to take place in Phase II of the grant. No date has been given to the states for release of that data request. We anticipate contracting to assist the state in the collection of the data.

J.T. Johnston asked what time frame is the AFRWC anticipating bringing on the project team. Chuck Murph explained the process. The contract is under review by ALEA legal counsel and once signed, it would then go before the Legislature's Contract Review Committee. Hopefully the project team can be introduced at the next AFRWC meeting. Chief Jim Peterson asked if we anticipate that the AFRWC still having governance over FirstNet within the state. Mr. Murph responded yes and Secretary Collier is the Governor's State Point of Contact.

**New Business**

Mr. Murph asked to be recognized for New Business.

Mr. Murph explained the need for a new workgroup to deal with AFRWC Policies and Procedures. One such policy priority is the use of the National Interop Frequencies as part of a jurisdiction's daily dispatch operations. Another policy issue is how jurisdictions join and utilize existing P25 switches. This workgroup should be small, maybe two (2) state persons and two (2) local persons as

**Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission Meeting  
November 19, 2013  
Montgomery, AL**

appointed by the Chair. He asked if the Commission felt there was a need for the new workgroup.

Chief Jim Peterson asked whether or not there will be enough capacity on the existing switches to handle additional jurisdictions? Chuck Murph responded by stating that he has been informed that capacity will not be an issue.

J.T. Johnston further stated that he suggested that the P25 and Policy workgroups work closely together when policy is needed regarding switch connectivity. Those recommendations would then be brought before the AFRWC for consideration. He felt that if the AFRWC did adopt policy outlining the procedure for connecting to existing switches, it would allow local planners to effectively budget/request funds for additional infrastructure. Mr. Murph stated that the legislation does state that the AFRWC can adopt policy, but cannot mandate jurisdictions to purchase specific communications equipment.

Mr. Ernie Blair asked whether or not we foresee this Commission seeking funds to assist and facilitate connectivity to existing switches? Mr. Murph responded by stating that he envisions the Commission advocating for the connectivity of these systems and feels like state funding would give state agencies a stake in the success of the systems-of-systems approach.

J.T. Johnston further stated that he believes there needs to be a one stop action for a local agency to gain access to an existing switch. He also stated that there is no way his county could afford to pay for infrastructure and radio units and then also pay an annual fee to a switch owner. It would never work.

Mr. Ernie Blair asked whether or not the AFRWC would also need to adopt policy and provide funding to the switch owners to upgrade software at the same time. Mr. Murph responded by stating that the problem with that idea is that only a few switches are needed to run a statewide system. There is no way the AFRWC

**Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission Meeting**  
**November 19, 2013**  
**Montgomery, AL**

could afford to purchase upgrades for every single switch across the state. The AFRWC will have to decide on utilizing only the switches needed to run the entire state due to the high cost associated with upgrading these systems. So for example, if the state only needs four (4) switches, then only four (4) should be upgraded assuming policy is adopted outlining switch connectivity across the state.

Open discussion among Commission members regarding jurisdictions, who currently own switches, and those we know plan to purchase switches or add infrastructure. Captain James Patterson stated that everything we do should be for the "greater good" of all the interested parties. For example, it would benefit the Department of Public Safety to support Monroe County's build-out of infrastructure because they have a need for daily use in that jurisdiction as well. J.T. Johnston stated that his vision is to pool resources and build-out of the system. Mr. Murph stated that this is the primary purpose for creating the AFRWC so we all do work together and utilize resources. We must first adopt policy and that should be the priority in order to provide strong governance.

J.T. Johnston made a motion to create the Policies and Procedures Workgroup and allow that workgroup to work with the other workgroups to draft policy and procedure recommendations for consideration by the AFRWC. Chauncey Woods seconded the motion. A unanimous approval of the motion. Motion adopted.

The Policies and Procedures Committee members are Cpt. James Patterson, Chief Jim Peterson, Ernie Blair, and Col. Steve Thompson.

Chief Jim Peterson made a recommendation that the AFRWC look at how other states have addressed some of the same issues we are facing.

Shirrell Roberts said that this was a very good open discussion and he thinks this is exactly what needs to take place is that policy is drafted, adopted and

**Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission Meeting**  
**November 19, 2013**  
**Montgomery, AL**

implemented. This would give the AFRWC the proper roadmap to take to the Legislature to ask for funding.

Captain James Patterson thanked all the local and state agencies that have worked with the Department of Public Safety on their communication needs. The Department of Public Safety has installed P25 dual band radios in the Supervisor's cars in Special Operations.

Mr. Murph once again emphasized the need to fill out the broadband usage survey online. He asked all representatives go back and get the word out to get these surveys completed.

Shirrell Roberts announced the next meeting of the AFRWC would be March 4th in Huntsville, AL. Details on the meeting will be emailed out to the membership at a future date.

Mr. Murph gave an update as to why Mobile was not chosen to host the SAFECOM meeting. We will try again next year to host the meeting.

Mr. Murph said ALEA would pay per diem for those who needed it for the March 4, 2013, meeting in Huntsville.

Chris McGhee updated the Commission on their plans to install two P25 sites and utilize Baldwin County's existing switch. Santa Rosa County Florida is already using Baldwin County's switch and he was able to talk back to them from Montgomery this morning.

Chauncey Wood announced that Daphane Search and Rescue now has a horseback unit and is willing to go anywhere.

**Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission Meeting  
November 19, 2013  
Montgomery, AL**

Chauncey Woods made a motion to adjourn and Charles Murph seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 10:54 am.