Vermont Communications (VCOMM)

Best Western, Waterbury, VT
March 2, 2006

Minutes

Present: Neil Fulton, Jim Colgan, Heather Gibbs, Steve Salengo, Roger Marcoux, Paul Duquette, Louise Calderwood, Vanessa Arms, Jake Elovirta, Douglas Lawrence, Doug Brent, Maureen Connolly, Connie Stanley- Little, Charlie Kremer, Robert White, Rob Schell, Scott Richardson, Tom Cheney, Ron Kumetz, Bill Burden, Paco Aumand, Mike Macarilla, Al Barber

Not present: Susan Bartlett, Nathan Borland, Phil Colby, Larry Eastman, Barb Farr, John Filipek, Jim Finger, Joe Flynn, Tom Hanley, Steve Hogan, Terry LaValley, Dan Manz, William McManis, George Moulton, Thomas Murray, Alec Portalupi, Scott Richardson, Dave Serra, Ken Valentine, Paul Valois

Start: 1003 hrs

Introductions and opening comments – Lt. Colgan

- Brief summary of project history
- Review of agencies that need to identify a VCOMM board member and alternate
- Fulton: Can we make room in today's agenda to discuss the FCC and radio communications protocol handouts?

Maureen Connolly – Update on North-Link

- Costs:
  - Have $3 million as a start from EDA to create telecommunications backbone for Vermont
  - Total build out cost $10 million – have identified $8 ½ - 9 million already
  - No cost structure for users right now, trying to make it debt free
  - Get money from partners upfront
- Opportunities:
  - Real-time video transfer opportunities – could include voice
    - Would bandwidth from camera to cruiser support video feed?
    - Would need wireless carrier from camera to car
  - Distance learning programs
  - Remote conferencing
  - Voice data transmission
- Public and private sector will have access
- Route: Rouses Point, come down through Islands to Williston, travel back up to Cambridge into St. Albans – another line along the border connecting the 16 border crossings and down through St. Johnsbury – will go east to west
- Cover three states, two countries and 8 counties in Vermont
- Looking for areas to lay conduit (e.g. any areas that will be laying down sidewalks, doing new construction, etc.) to reduce construction costs

- Open Access Network can be used as primary or back-up backhaul, does not interfere with other services and ISPs

Break: 1106 – 1118 hrs

Roger Marcoux – Executive Order

- Our mission is to create seamless communication between north and south and east and west
- We want a system that includes all users in the state
- Group review of executive order – to be further reviewed by the VCOMM Steering Committee

Lunch: 1158 – 1244 hrs

Roger Marcoux – Dispatch Summer Study (2004)

- Problems identified by study:
    - Default basic police dispatching
    - Inability to provide full dispatch service
    - Fair and equitable payment for dispatching
- Colgan: Can the dispatch study and radio communications upgrades be done simultaneously
- Aumand: Yes
- Marcoux: I disagree
- Dispatch Summer Study available on VCOMM website (www.dps.state.vt.us/need/)

Charlie Kremer – Update on Connect Vermont

- Four projects currently going on, while separate, they can connect to each other: North-Link, Broadband Initiative, VCOMM, Connect Vermont
- VCOMM will be able to tap into these other three projects (e.g. towers)
- Broadband grants targeted to towns with no service first
- Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISP) all trying to work with the towns on where to place antennas
- Already know where the holes are, can put an antenna in to make a filler site

Robert White

- Database created for tourism, federal dollars obtained to sustain, transportation later brought in as a component
- Proposing long haul provider to do entire corridor and pay for related equipment
- When at design phase, will ask all agencies where they need hookups
- Will then go out with RFI
- Build out schedule - 2008 to start building
- Both corridors can be done in one construction season
- Wifi/Wimax will be installed in each rest area and turn around

- Colgan: Goal to have seamless operation up and down interstate, thus cutting back on calls to dispatch and providing enhanced communications to first responders
- www.thinkvermont.com has maps showing broadband coverage
- Goal to connect all AOT garages
- Plan is to do interstates first, then go back and do secondary roads
- Security – by construction (fibers inside own individual conduit) and technology

Al Barber – RFI Summary

- Six vendors answered: two no pricing, two used 700 MHz which was not in original request
- Price ranges $150 - $300 million – these are lifecycle costs of 10 years
- Received some technological ideas from Macro

PowerPoint Presentation – Neil Fulton

- Suggest using LEPCs and RPCs for inventory of systems
- What information from inventory will be useful to vendors?
    - Looking for base stations – age, tower types, antenna sites – information that can be used in integrating systems

PowerPoint Presentation – Lt. Colgan

- Question 95/95 – the cost for this amount of coverage is not achievable
- We're learning as we go along

Open discussion

Burden: How do you deal with portable coverage?
Colgan: One way to do this is to allow for repeaters
Brent: If there is first responder buy in for a low-cost, practical approach they will tell their representatives that it is a great idea and they support it
Colgan: A lot of the problem can be handled with training, policy and procedure
Brent: Combine inventory research with field technical work
Colgan: If we do that, can we distribute equipment right then and there?
Richardson: Is FCC cooperative?
Kumetz: They can't do anything for us
Fulton: Frequency Coordinator must be familiar with the A line
Kumetz: One of issues is getting vendors to take us seriously – will not get the attention we need until we can show that we have money. RFP needs to show that serious funding has been identified
Colgan: RFP will not go out unless there is identified funding – June 1, 2006
Brent: Can we get a purchasing contract in case organizations want more radios than what we are supplying?
Who can get information out about contracts on laptops?
Aumand: Need to provide low-cost alternative to red phone system

End: 1525 hrs