



MNICS Task Force and Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

Date and location

Jan. 20, 2017 9:30 a.m.
Red Lake Dispatch Center

Attendees

Kurt Fogelberg* (NPS), Blake Freking* (USFS), Seth Grimm (FWS), Roy Holmes (HSEM), Rebekah Luedtke (DNR), Tom Kaase* (DNR), Robert LaPlant* (USFS-CPF), Chase Marshall* (USFS-SUP), Todd Manley* (DNR), Greg Peterson (BIA), Christi Powers (DNR), Ron Stoffel (DNR), Tasha Woodwick (BIA) (*by phone)

Welcome

Greg Peterson gave a tour of the new Red Lake Dispatch Center that was completed in August 2015. MNICS Task Force Chair Seth Grimm welcomed the group.

HVAC/Building update

The upstairs of the MIFC HVAC installation is nearly complete. The electrical wiring is done and all variable air volume boxes (VAVs) are installed. Ceiling grids and LED fixtures have been replaced, for the most part. There is still some work to be done in the U.S. Forest Service initial attack center and over a couple of desks in MIFC Dispatch. LED light controls now have motion sensors. Three out of five Cache heaters have been installed. New roof units will be fired up soon. The contractors will start on the downstairs offices next week. The MIFC training room will be done last. Project completion date is scheduled on or before Feb. 24, 2017.

There have been approximately five modifications to the existing plan for a total cost of \$572,586. The old rooftop air handling unit (RTU) has been replaced for approximately \$10,000. Four other modifications include joist work, increasing wall height near MIFC conference room 3 and replacing old, corroded valves. Those modifications total approximately \$4106. Blake does not foresee further modifications and anticipates a surplus of at least \$37,000 of the encumbered funds when the project is done.

Budget update

Tom Kaase said MNICS 2016 annual meeting costs were \$4900. Funds from fiscal year 2016 (\$216,574.51) added to FY-17 funds (\$171,698) amount to \$388,272.51 currently in the MIFC operating account. Tom inquired about receiving invoices for the HVAC project. Brian Wise said that initial bills are being paid through the USFS account. Once their portion of HVAC project contribution has been used, then invoices will be generated to the MIFC co-op account.

With a \$37,000 surplus in the MIFC operating account left over from the HVAC project, Rebekah Luedtke inquired about mnics.org website redesign and whether to move forward with contracting a web designer. Greg Peterson seconded the motion and the MNICS Task Force unanimously approved website redesign costs up to \$10,000. Christi Powers will work with Tom Kaase on the Request for Proposal (RFP) bid process that is required for professional service contracts over \$5,000.

MNICS Annual Meeting

Tom Kaase distributed about 20 MNICS 2016 annual meeting evaluations. Feedback was favorable. Approximately 140 people attended the Dec. 6-8, 2016 event at the Duluth Holiday Inn. There is interest in bringing Dr. Harvey Goldstein back in the future for additional critical incident stress management (CISM) training. Seth Grimm indicated he would like to see NASF Fire Director Dan Smith come back each year to provide national wildfire policy highlights. Other speaker possibilities for next year include Dr. Mark Seeley, state climatologist, and Bill Gabbert, editor of *Wildfire Today*.

Annual meeting award recipients did not have adequate notification in order to attend the meeting and receive their awards in person. From now on, the process will be for Rebekah Luedtke to notify supervisors to determine if there is approval for the recipient to attend the meeting. It was also decided that more award nomination reminders should be sent out so that MNICS members have ample notification.

Incident Management Team Meeting

The agenda for February 14-16 incident management team (IMT) meeting was reviewed and the panel presentation was discussed. Clay Templin and Joe Kelly are unable to attend. Forrest Boe and Tom Remus confirmed availability. Chase Marshall indicated that Connie Cummins and Darla Lenz should be invited to participate. Panel topic: Wildfire and all-risk incident management team operations in Minnesota and the eastern geographic area.

Training

Todd Manley said he is waiting to hear from USFS-Region 9/Eastern Area Coordination Center (EACC) about the S-490 class in Michigan. Mike Locke is not available to participate in the cadre. The Minnesota S-490 class was canceled due to lack of enrollment.

The Advanced Leadership for Command & General Staff (L-481) class at Camp Ripley in January was well-received with high evaluations. Seth Grimm attended the course and said it was an 'eye-opening' experience. Todd will share the After Action Review (AAR) results with the Task Force next month.

The 2017 Wildfire Academy brochure has been drafted. Advanced Minnesota will post on its website and brochures will be printed in February. An RT-130/Hand-off class and RX-410 course will coincide with the IMT meeting. Todd plans to have the class videotaped. Ron Stoffel suggested having a master calendar so that classes, meetings and workshop schedules do not conflict. Seth asked about the S-258 Incident Communications Technician class in April. Currently there are eight registrants. Todd said he will do more outreach to promote the class, which was opened up nationwide. Another Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact (GLFFC) Section Chiefs Academy is scheduled for Jan. 22-26, 2018.

Response to Region 9 Letter

The letter dated Jan. 20, 2017 is addressed to Joe Kelly, chair of the MNICS Board of Directors, c/o MIFC from Larry Himanga, 2017 Eastern Area Coordinating Group (EACG) chair. The letter outlines interoperability requests and recommendations. Specifically, EACG is requesting that:

- 1) A member of the Eastern Area Operations Working Team be embedded in the MNICS IMT selection process from now on.
- 2) When a MNICS IMT is ordered for an in-state assignment, ensure that the request is pushed up to Eastern Area Coordinating Center (EACC). This is requested in order to track personnel used on incidents in the region.
- 3) MNICS IMTs be added to the EACG rotation to provide relief for the EA-IMT. This would be incorporated into the EACG MOB Guide as a procedure going forward.

Points related to the letter:

- 1) Greg Vollhaber was a part of the MNICS IMT vetting and selection this year, so that request has already been fulfilled.
- 2) There was discussion about how this would work and whether there would be a delay in processing requests. Right now in ROSS, EACC can see an order but they can't control it. Chase Marshall mentioned that the national standard is for all Type-2 team requests to come through the GACC. Task Force members see this as a potentially unnecessary step (especially on in-state incidents) and there was confusion when this happened last spring (Foss Lake). Trust needs to be established in order for this to work. Ron Stoffel pointed to a lack of communication between the forests and EACC. Chase said that MNICS IMTS need to be federally-qualified in order to ensure standards of national compliance. There is concern that resources will be delayed by implementing this extra step. Numbers 1 and 3 in the Region 9 letter will be addressed but more discussion is needed on the second request. Robert LaPlant indicated he would like the "Task Force's help" in sorting out the real intentions of that point contained within the letter.
- 3) In the past, not all IMT members had supervisory approval for out-state assignments. The proportionality of EA-IMT on for three weeks and MNICS IMTs on rotation every fourth week was discussed. Greg Peterson asked if these changes will promote using the closest resources available in the region. Chase mentioned that Connie and Darla may need to be more involved in more of this type of decision-making. Greg Peterson indicated that a response should be drafted and coordinated through Seth Grimm and Rebekah Luedtke with help from Tasha Woodwick. Terms within the letter need to be clearly defined and reviewed by both the MNICS Task Force and Board of Directors. It may take a separate teleconference to accomplish this so that all parties have a clear understanding of the far-reaching implications that would occur with these changes.

There was discussion about whether these changes could be incorporated in the EACC MOB Guide in time for spring fire season. Chase and Robert are very invested in sorting out operational capability within the forests. Seth indicated that the Easter Area Operations Working Team is also invested in how these proposed changes would affect IMTs throughout the region.

[IMT rosters](#)

Brian Pisarek*, Brian Jenkins*, Greg Peterson, Mike Aultman* participated in this discussion. The incident commanders met earlier in January to go over team member applications. Individuals discussed included Division-SUP (Jason Wickizer) and IMET (Amanda Graning). Right now GISS positions are filled mainly by DNR members. Matt Judd (USFS-SPF) is interested in becoming a GISS-trainee. Brian Jenkins asked about having multiple trainees on teams. There are gaps in finance, time recorder and procurement; also there is a need to align IC-trainees and Operations section needs. This continues to be a challenge due to a shortage of qualified members or trainees.

Tasha Woodwick asked about short team configurations. The Operations section is stretched among the three teams requiring some jockeying. Asterisked names on the list still need their qualifications checked. Existing MNICS IMT members would like to remain in the alternate pool. However, Tasha Woodwick

indicated that alternates need to be ready to assume lead position for their section on any team. Short team configuration: 20 positions plus 6 trainees and a long team is 33 positions plus 11 trainees.

Bruce Giersdorf agreed to be an FBAN for MNICS IMT-A. Brian Pisarek will talk to Tom Fasteland. About 40 percent of members on MNICS IMT-C are trainees. With current rosters, MNICS could accommodate two long teams or two short teams at a time.

IMT rosters

Pat Coughlin* indicated that trailers were discussed by the Logistics and COMM Working Teams at the 2016 annual meeting. It was mentioned that propane was leaking from one trailer at the Skibo Fire. There needs to be a regular maintenance schedule to ensure the trailers are road-worthy before incidents. Pat also discussed availability of a \$30K bridge system where MIFC could create patch points for the VHF-800 system. In order to make this work, a \$6300 ACUM system and dedicated space at MIFC would be needed for the system (approximately three computers, and a server). Also, DNR would need to be able to connect to the MnDOT server. DPS is not willing to continue burning patches for MIFC.

Review MNICS Charter

The MNICS Board of Directors asked the Task Force to review the MNICS Charter which was last updated in 1994. NIMS was absorbed by FEMA with emergency response changes that occurred in 2004. It was recommended that referring to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HSEM) would be helpful in redrafting the initial portion of the MNICS Charter. Also, there was discussion about whether Northeast Area State & Private Forestry should be approached again as to membership. That organization has not attended a MNICS meeting for over 15 years. Rebekah will continue to make changes and bring another draft of the Charter to the February Task Force meeting.

Administratively Determined (AD) Staff

Northeastern State & Private Forestry is no longer willing to process AD paperwork. Chase Marshall is reviewing all National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) 310.1 guidelines against U.S. Forest Service 5109 regulations to determine how the qualifications connect, intersect or overlap. The Task Force talked about differences between permanent, temporary, intermittent, non-affiliated individuals and retirees and how this fits into the framework.

There was discussion about whether state smokechasers would need to have two cards (one for NWCG and one for USFS). Ron Stoffel asked how other GACCs are handling this. Chase Marshall asked the Task Force for help as this will amount to additional work to certify and process the paperwork now that State & Private will no longer be doing this. Chase is determining next steps and will talk to Debbie Hahn.

RSS training

Emily Ward will be making a presentation on the Minnesota's Strategic National Stockpile. Rebekah Luedtke asked if MNICS Command & General staff members would be available for a drill/training during the second week in June. The Task Force approved moving forward with these plans.

Rx Private Contractors

Ron and B.J. Glesener have worked on private 'burn boss' provisions to identify required training and scope of responsibility for private Rx vendors. They have developed Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL-based) certification criteria so the contractors could perform low to moderate complexity burns mostly in grassy areas. Certified Rx contractors would obtain variances through the electronic permitting system and Ron mentioned possible inclusion on MNICS weekly teleconference during fire season so they have situational

awareness. A Prescribed Fire Council will be formed to make executive decisions and oversee the implementation and coordination of the new program. DNR's primary role will involve permitting.

[Type-2 IA Guide](#)

A draft guide was distributed. It was prepared by the Operations Working Team. The Task Force is asked to review and provide comments/changes by the next meeting. Ron Stoffel indicated that he will have updates to the guide.

[Upcoming Meetings](#)

In addition to training and the IMT meeting at Breezy Point, Feb. 14-16, 2017 there is a Border Meeting scheduled for Feb. 16 in International Falls. It was suggested that the Border Meeting be changed, however, Roy Holmes and Ron Stoffel were not sure this was possible. There was also discussion about whether to have the MNICS February Task Force meeting immediately following the IMT meeting. Ron will check with Tom Kaase.

[Adjourn](#)

The MNICS Task Force meeting ended at approximately 3:30 p.m.