

## May 2020 MNICS Task Force Meeting

5/7/2020 - 0930 – 15:00

Notes prepared by: Leanne Langeberg

**Task Force:** Chase Marshall, William Glesener, Cory Berg, Seth Grimm, Kurt Fogelberg, Roy Holmes, Mike Mackey - MNCC, Leanne Langeberg – Notes

**Guests:** Brian Wise, Kevin Carlisle, Shelly Serich, Ernie Schmitt, Tom Roach, Nick Petrack, Todd Manley, Meadow Kouffeld-Hansen

### AGENDA ITEM

### NOTES

AGENDA ITEM	NOTES
<p><b>Building / Budget Update</b></p>	<p><b>Completed projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locking door handles have been installed at the pump shop.</li> <li>• The electrical grounding issue in dispatch has been addressed.</li> <li>• The defective light in break room has been replaced.</li> </ul> <p><b>New projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacing the floor drain in the cache.</li> <li>• Back parking lot project is waiting for contracting bid.</li> <li>• Training door card reader installation will be covered under a state contract.</li> </ul> <p><b>Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COOP funds used for the fire danger forecasting expenses. William will contact DNR St. Paul to investigate.</li> <li>• COVID-19 cleaning supplies included in the budget spreadsheet.</li> <li>• Each agency consider making increasing their yearly contribution to bring the COOP balance to \$20,000. Each agency will look at the possibility and report back at the June Task Force meeting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Type 3 Team – COVID 19 response &amp; SOG's with IC's</b></p>	<p><b>Additional Pre-order – MEDL &amp; SOFL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MNCC is receiving requests from the Type 3 Incident Management Team (IMT) Incident Commanders (IC) for Medical Unit Leaders (MEDL) and Safety Officers (SOFR) to screen and plan for potential COVID-19 cases showing up during an incident. It has been difficult to roster these positions for each rotation.</li> <li>• A full medical compliment for the IMT is not realistic. Per FMB guidance a medical unit leader is preferred but is not require for screening individuals.</li> <li>• Modifications to the Delegation of Authority to establish unified command with local health unit responsibility for any potential incident outbreak are being considered.</li> <li>• Monitoring complexity for the IMT with consideration of how and when COVID-19 raises complexity to a type 2 level is a priority this year. There is a type 2 liaison pool, but many are committed to type 2 teams.</li> <li>• Dispatch is capable of filling MEDL orders within one shift and does not feel there is a need for an IMT to pre-identify a MEDL.</li> <li>• The IMT will supply MNCC with pre-order. The IMT will work on pre-identifying positions, if not pre-identified MNCC will reach out to fill those needs.</li> </ul>

**Type 3 Team – COVID 19 response & SOG's with IC's – cont.**

## **Health Screening Questionnaire**

- The health screening questionnaire (HSQ) presented by Jeremy Fauskee dated April 27, 2020 is approved for use. The HSQ will be modified to include the question: "Have you had a fever or cough in the last seven days, or cold symptoms in the last 24 hours?"
- People assigned to an incident will be asked to pre-screen using the HSQ before leaving the home unit, and teams will have HSQs at check-in.

## **COVID-19 PPE Requests**

- The Cache has received the following requested items: bath kits, bio hazard kits, disinfectant wipes, thermometers, bleach, gloves (small and XL), gallon size and four ounce size hand sanitizer. Cache is waiting on additional requested items.
- All non-cache items have been procured – buckets, clothes and sanitizer.
- N95 masks – available but only during an incident. If on the pre-order, the masks will be made available.

## **Camp Crew Requests**

- CCM crews are unavailable during the stay-at-home orders.
- Local units will need to consider how to provide camp crew support, and be clear up front whether or not the local unit can provide support the need.
- DNR has three wildlife crews of 4-6 people, available. Two or three of these crews will be called up to any type 3 incident to support mop-up.
- DNR has an addition 100 division staff who can step up to help, and DNR will stick with a module pod concept.

## **Type 2 IA Crew requests for IMT or other fire support in state**

- The Operations Working Team is identifying Type 2 Initial Attack Crew leadership, full crews will be identified at a later date.
- ICs support reducing the use of 20 person crews, and using local modules (five or less people), or an engine when possible.
- MNCC is expecting scaled down crews for both in-and-out of state requests. There is more flexibility this year to support modified orders (e.g., seven person module).

## **Food vendors**

- Tom Roach is researching potential to work with local food vendors/food trucks to support operations. He will coordinate with local forestry offices to add any local food vendors to the vendor list.

## **3-day self sufficiency**

- Extra effort will be made notify all available resources, including contractors, about the NMAC memo dated 4/23/2020 requesting all resources be self-sufficient for 3-days (more than a credit card).
- Logistics Dispatch advised the resource order to contractors and VIPER orders includes the self-sufficiency language.

## **Mobilization of resources and off-unit availability lists**

- MNCC requested guidance for handling the possibility of resources turning down assignments when requests are received from another GACC due to COVID-19 concerns. Should resources remain high on the availability list or drop to the bottom if an assignment is turned down?
- Task Force recognizes that everyone on a crew must be comfortable going to a location and that their local unit supports the travel assignment.
- BIA recognizes the complexity of tribal resources and whether or not a tribe will allow resources to mobilize if there is a known COVID-19 hotspot.
- There are many reasons to consider this year for a turn down – personal and family health obligations, and access to PPE.

*Task Force will revisit the topic at the June Task Force Meeting.*

<p><b>MNCC Staffing Plans</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Forest Service is hiring 1900 new hire positions in aviation and dispatch, of which an additional Initial Attack position has been added to MNCC. The Forest Service will now staff three GS-07 and one GS-09 full time dispatchers at MNCC. The Forest Service has also advertised the GS-11 Coordinator position. Chase is working on a new org chart for the Forest Service.</li> <li>• DNR looking advertise the logistics dispatcher position June 1, 2020.</li> <li>• Mike Mackey inquired about cross-training dispatch positions.</li> <li>• The MNCC org chart - all of the MNCC dispatchers and intelligence officer fall under the MNCC Coordinator. The MNICS PIO falls under the Task Force through the MN DNR but often coordinates directly with the MNCC coordinator.</li> <li>• Task Force approves during the interim that the newly hired GS-07 will fill the logistics void until the DNR has filled the position.</li> <li>• Smoke chasers are on 40-hour work week schedule, and can be assigned to a fire p-code only as an AD.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Statewide Available Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task Force agrees all agencies can continue to support each other during large incidents in-state with current resources.</li> <li>• DNR has staff available to move around the state, and doesn't feel we need to bring in any additional support from out-of-state. The state won't fully pull all resources away from south of Interstate 94 line as conditions are still dry despite green-up. DNR is ready to support any initial attack.</li> <li>• The Forest Service has four to five engines available in the regions if needed – and two hot shot crews available.</li> <li>• There has been some discussion at the Department of Agriculture level about lifting the suspension on prescribed burning.</li> <li>• US Fish and Wildlife Service continue to staff individually and are willing to help partners out with initial attack support and suppression.</li> <li>• National Park Service seasonal employees haven't yet returned. The engine is down waiting on parts, the park can send individual support.</li> <li>• The Forest Service is available to help as long as they are within one day travel.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2020 Academy Course Costs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Task Force invited Todd Manley and Itasca Community College (ICC) Members Meadow Kouffeld-Hanson and Lee Kessler to discuss the rise in tuition fees that were identified for the 2020 Academy.</li> <li>• Meadow provided a cost analysis spread sheet that broke down per student expenses (including snacks) per course, and built in tolerance that helped to make better decisions when to cancel a course.</li> <li>• The past two academies have not covered all expenses, deficits ranged from \$10,000 to \$14000, which included materials and support staff (Meadow's ICC salary).</li> <li>• Task Force was unaware there were deficits, and expressed appreciation to view the spreadsheet to better understand the rise in tuition fees.</li> <li>• The 2019 Food Unit course was not well attended and resulted in \$7000 deficit.</li> <li>• Todd and Meadow recognize the academy has not charged enough to make up for snack and lunches, and must make considerations for hiring instructors when MNICS does not have cadre that can lead the courses (e.g., Incident Within and Incident).</li> <li>• Courses added at the last minute added courses must be appropriate, and should require financial plans from the region or GACC for any additions request to add last minute courses.</li> <li>• The Task Force will ask for future academy cost spreadsheets to be made available to the training working team.</li> <li>• William will ask Jeb to include the spreadsheet and discuss at the June meeting.</li> </ul>

<p><b>2020 MNICS Annual Meeting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task Force discussed the need to make considerations for alternative venues for the 2020 MNICS meeting and what the meeting could look like this year.</li> <li>• The Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact fall meeting has been moved to an online format, and William Glesener recommended looking into similar options for the MNICS Meeting.</li> <li>• Nelda St. Clair is willing to be a keynote speaker. Cory Berg advised that she did host a presentation over the phone, and it was well presented.</li> <li>• Alternative formats to consider - FireNet 365 is operational provides the TEAMS webinar/virtual townhouse platform.</li> <li>• Kevin Carlisle has not pushed out the bids, but is looking at the Duluth area again. He is waiting for five Working Team chairs to respond with their room and space requirements.</li> <li>• Kevin will work with the DNR's large bid contractor and ask what dates are recommended for cancellation possibilities to include in the bid process along with any special built-in clauses. Kevin will update the Task Force by May 19.</li> <li>• Depending on COVID-19 and the economic downturn, bids may require a down payment, which can affect our decision to proceed.</li> <li>• A web meeting will change our approach as web meetings are generally much shorter. One possibility is a two day session – Monday team meetings, Tuesday keynote with questions and answers.</li> <li>• Task Force recommends Joel Perrington be involved with seeking alternative web-based options.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agency Updates</b></p>	<p><b>NPS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor centers will remain closed this year. Camping in the park closed through May 18, 2020 following the Governor's order.</li> <li>• Continue to follow CDC guidelines and best practices.</li> <li>• Seasonal staff starting end of May or early June, required to quarantine for two weeks.</li> </ul> <p><b>USFS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department of Agriculture is pushing to target timber to get people back to work.</li> <li>• All Forest Service regions are prioritizing putting fires out.</li> <li>• There have been many instances of COVID-19 in the Forest Service across the nation. Region 9 has reported COVID-19 cases and is still enforcing one-day travel restrictions.</li> <li>• Locally keeping people engaged in fire suppression.</li> <li>• Chase is on-call 08:00-17:00 daily.</li> </ul> <p><b>BIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping tribes procure supplies.</li> <li>• Agency has no immediate plans to bring people back into office. Nationally, BIA is looking at a per-state basis when to bring people back with limitations.</li> <li>• The new building is nearing completion. The next step will be to move offices.</li> <li>• The BIA is assuring tribes are comfortable with bringing in outside resources to support tribal needs.</li> <li>• The May 1<sup>st</sup> moratorium on prescribed burns was lifted, and some burns have been completed, including 9,000 ac at Red Lake.</li> <li>• Increasing patrols along Red Lake Boundary as the agency is starting see some fire sets.</li> <li>• FOSS position ready to go</li> </ul> <p><b>FWS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will focus more on supporting local and regional initial and extended attack.</li> <li>• We do have some people on the priority trainee list and may send them out of GACC.</li> <li>• As early as Monday engine crews will be made available in certain locations</li> <li>• COVID-19 Midwest Regional Manager has detailed into the Regional Chief's position.</li> <li>• Ryan Williams from BLM accepted the GS-7 at MN Valley, starting next pay period.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Agency Updates – cont.</b></p>	<p><b>DNR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continuing to move through COVID-19 and working to push through lifting burning restrictions.</li><li>• Distributed some PPE within the agency.</li><li>• Most people continue teleworking through the Governor’s orders.</li><li>• The number of fires we have had is 90 percent of average the 60 percent from 2012. It would have been higher if not for the cooler weather and late spring.</li></ul> <p><b>HSEM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No report.</li></ul> <p><b>MNCC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EA moved to a Planning Level 3 – limited resources available across the region.</li><li>• There is some in depth discussion at the nation level to pull the plug on IROC.</li><li>• Two more fire bosses have been brought in and stationed in Michigan.</li><li>• Getting by with recent MNCC COOP plan – logistics, information and intel are still teleworking. Operations we have the capability to move dispatchers out to Forest Service locations. Aviation is a little more challenging. May be putting out request for additional dispatcher. Second trailer is getting set up and ready with network capability. Initial attack dispatchers have been moved down into Mike and Ben’s office.</li><li>• Email will be sent to IC’s to notify the communications trailers are no longer available.</li></ul> <p><b>PIO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Established MN DNR talking points for fire response during COVID-19 pending approval from commissioner’s office.</li><li>• Media interview this afternoon with MPR – response during COVID-19 – will stay at the 30,000 foot level of ready to respond, following CDC guidelines.</li></ul> <p>MNICS IMT 3 PIOs meet Tuesday via conference call to discuss PIO COVID-19 strategies for incidents.</p>
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*Next meeting: June 4, 2020 – WebEx beginning at 9:30 am.*