



Notes

June 2, 2022, MNICS Task Force Meeting

Attendance:

Task Force: Greg Carlson, Kurt Fogelberg, Chase Marshall, Cory Berg, Jacob Beauregard, Mike Hill

Non-Task Force Attendees: Mike Mackey - MNCC, Leanne Langeberg – Notes, Brian Wise, Kevin Carlisle, Tom Remus, MNICS Board of Directors Rep

DISCUSSION ITEM	NOTES
<p>Building and Budget Update</p>	<p>Building Update –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The MIFC sprinkler system was inspected May 19, and the inspector recommends replacing the J-hook. The system has passed its life expectancy, replacement parts are becoming more difficult to find, and a full replacement is imminent. - The MIFC rubber roof membrane has been replaced and faired through the Memorial Day storms with no signs of leaks. - The fire alarm replacement panel bid was awarded for \$14,420 and is expected to be completed by the end of September. - The Annual MIFC facility safety inspection was completed April 29. MIFC facility managers propose decommissioning the power poles along the back fence in the cache parking area and maintaining the main power pole that runs the power washer. Task Force approved. - Additional MIFC facility maintenance recommendations – replace the entryway heater with an efficient system and replace the LED emergency light fixtures in the walkways. <p>Budget Update –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewed the monthly expense report and uncommitted funds. - Coop funds have been allocated for the fire alarm system, and the MNICS Teams copier and scanners have been purchased. - The MNICS Type 3 IMT has requested two shared speakers be purchased for use during assignments and included in the push pallet. Task Force approved. - MNCC requests \$1000 to \$1200 of coop funds to purchase two additional headsets and mobile microphones for the C-Soft consoles. Ashley Johnson is working to obtain a quote. Task Force approved.
<p>MNCC Operations – Protection Zones and agreements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The MNCC center manager shared that he is fielding many questions about shared protection agreement changes between the Forest Service and other MNICS agencies and what impacts it may have on initial attack response and the infrastructure future for MNCC dispatching. - The DNR and Forest Service plan to meet in July to decide on the current protection agreements and will consider including the U.S. Forest Service Northeast State and Private and the Eastern Area Coordination Center in the discussion as subject matter experts. - Tom Remus advised the MNICS Task Force that the MNICS Board of Directors will be looking to them as the technical subject matter experts on the best way to move forward with these changes.



Notes

DISCUSSION ITEM	NOTES
<p>MNCC Operations – Protection Zones and agreements cont.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mike Mackey acknowledged that the recommendations from the MNCC operations review completed in 2016 haven't been fully acted on, and with the shared protection agreement changes establishing a workable model for consistent interagency dispatching is the highest priority. - Interagency dispatching changes implemented for the air desk and the TARO card may provide a starting point for implementing the necessary changes. - Considerations for moving toward a Tier 4 center for state operations and Tier 3 for all federal were discussed; however, Tom Remus advised that MNICS must assure any changes implemented will not deviate from established policy nor compromise safety. - All agencies agreed they need more time to process the topic, look at current policy and staffing concerns, and talk with their agency staff. - The Task Force will revisit the topic.
<p>MNCC Operations – Planning for long-term infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNCC manager requested the Task Force review the recommendations from the MNCC operations review completed in 2016, identify the top three or four recommendations they would like to see implemented, and work with MNCC to develop an implementation plan. - MNCC manager acknowledged the substantial effort made in integrating the three dispatch nodes that have allowed MNCC to reach a greater interagency dispatch delivery service. - The plan to complete training and leadership and cohesiveness components are on track and will be carried out when the assistant center manager for operations is in place. - Task Force will revisit the topic at the August or September Task Force Meeting.
<p>Fire Academy Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Todd Manley is pursuing grant funding opportunities through the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE), which can be used to cost-share up to 50 percent of the L-481 and L-580 courses offered through MNICS and cover guest speaker fees – including speakers at the MNICS annual meeting. - Todd will report to the Task Force in August with an update. <p>Wildfire Academy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 550 total students have enrolled in classes, and some people may be taking one or more classes. The minimum enrollment threshold to host the Academy was set at 496 students - Mask will not be required for COVID mitigations at the Academy, as the Academy will follow Itasca Community College (ICC) COVID guidance as the host agency. Students will be expected to follow their agency guidance if more restrictive. Masks and hand sanitizer will be available, and the health screening questionnaire will be posted.



Notes

DISCUSSION ITEM	NOTES
Agency Updates	<p>BIA – As of May 28, the agency transitioned into a hybrid in-office and telework structure, with staff reporting to the office two days per pay period; however, with concerns of rising case numbers, the agency has stepped back into maximum telework through July 11. Mike Manson started as the operations specialist on July 21. The last of the aircraft contracts are ending, and the Fire Boss and SEAT will be leaving soon. The region has sent some engines to support staffing shortages in the Southwest. BIA will start sending more resources to the Southwest after the academy. A Departmental OAS audit of the aviation program, including the national and regional offices, will be visiting MIFC in June. They plan to meet with Tom Remus and Cory Berg and possibly want to meet with the Air Desk, MNCC coordinator, and some of the other partners. Cory will send the schedule to Darren Neuman.</p> <p>DNR – The agency looks forward to participating in the after-action review with the Training Working Team and the Task Force. The agency is hopeful that they will be able to stand up and re-engage hand crews following the academy.</p> <p>NPS – Continuing with supporting the flood response. The river is expected to crest in mid-June, with a rise of ten inches. Kettle Falls has shut down due to flooding, and the Task Force will need to consider an alternate plan for the July Task Force meeting. Also, Kurt and Greg will be completing their pack test during the week of the MN Wildfire Academy week.</p> <p>FS – The agency has implemented an agency-wide prescribed burn hold for 90 days, and agency staff will not be assisting any other agency with prescribed fire. Agency remains in maximum telework status, and supervisors are coordinating COVID testing. The hiring process is ongoing. A critical incident response exercise focused on a line of duty death response will be conducted with leadership team members from the Chippewa and Superior National Forest. We will send more fire staff and resources out west after the academy. Amber Jackson has accepted a 120-day detail in the vice Foust support services position.</p> <p>FWS – Telework agreements for COVID response are tied to the community level map for all Fish and Wildlife staff. The agency has not released any business rules or funding allocations for the annual budget. All prescribed fire has been wrapped up for the season, though the Morris district plans to complete one or two more burns depending on favorable conditions. This year has been the second-lowest acreage burned for prescribed burns in Minnesota, with 18,000 acres. Usually, FWS completes closer to 29,000 acres annually in Minnesota. The GS-6/7 vacancies have been filled, and four GS-5 vacancies remain unfilled. There is one person assigned to severity out west. The UAS platform – M600 next generation that works with aerial ignitions – has been approved.</p>



Notes

DISCUSSION ITEM	NOTES
Agency Updates cont.	<p>HSEM – Participating in FEMA exercises. The flooding and severe weather damage response continues, and the National Guard is still activated and filling sandbags. The Governor is planning to visit the area on Saturday along with the National Guard. An acting representative is currently covering the regional program coordinator position.</p> <p>MNCC Coordinator – Continues to focus on staffing shortages and bringing detailers in to fill the void. MNCC coordination asked all Task Force members to share the detail opportunity with agency folks with dispatching qualifications. The assistant center manager posting has closed, but there isn't a lot of hope for significant changes to the candidate pool from previous announcements. Mike will be taking some leave in June and has asked the assistant center managers to cover with little response. Task Force recommends appointing one of the assistants. Mike Hill will also check with Dave Blatz to see if he is available. The Eastern Area Center Manager meeting is going on this week, and logistics is the primary focus of the topics.</p> <p>Public Information: Leanne will be supporting the Academy Incident Management Team throughout the duration of the academy. Planning to take leave end of June, and Mary Nordeen will back-fill during that time.</p> <p>Reminder! Please send agenda items to Kurt Fogelberg in advance of the next MNICS Task Force Meeting.</p>

Next Task Force Meeting will be July 7, 2022, hosted in-person at MIFC.