



# Notes

## December 3, 2024, MNICS Task Force Meeting with the Board of Directors

**Task Force:** Greg Carlson, Cory Berg, William Glesener, Darrin Franco, Kelvin McCuskey, Nick Petrack

**Board of Directors:** Tom Hall, Paul Lundgren, Michael Stansberry, Seth Grimm, Tom Remus, Bob DeGross, Joe Neuberger, Mike Consie

**Non-Task Force Attendees:** Ryan Kingsley, Leanne Langeberg (Notes), Brian Wise, Kevin Carlisle, Shelly Greniger

**Guest:** Caleb Schreiber

DISCUSSION TOPIC	NOTES
<p><b>MNICS Budget Update</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Board of Directors (Board) and Task Force reviewed the current MNICS coop funding spreadsheet, including the pending expenses for the MNICS meeting guest speakers, standard MNICS retirement gift, upgrades for the MNICS Type 3 IMT trailers, and the funding set aside for MNCC radio and infrastructure improvements to support current interagency dispatching services. The expected amount of uncommitted funds for the fiscal year is \$72,000.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MIFC Building Update</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The building committee distributed a copy of the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center (MIFC) building report and reviewed the 2024 projects completed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vertical Lift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The committee discussed the pending vertical lift system replacement project, noting the lift is fully funded by the USDA Forest Service. The original project was redesigned after the contract was awarded and will use a lower-level office space that will allow one lift to stop on all three levels.</li> </ul> <p><b>Training Room</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Task Force shared the MIFC training room upgrade proposal, noting two scenarios were combined into one estimate. The initial phase proposal is to install smart boards, Promethean boards, a new projector and speakers. The second phase proposal includes new tables and chairs and updated flooring in the training room and foyer area.</li> <li>- The Task Force requested each agency contribute an additional \$5000 this fiscal year (\$25,000) toward the first phase proposal to lessen the impact on the uncommitted funds set aside for unexpected facility maintenance and repair costs. Traditionally the Task Force tries to maintain \$20,000 - \$25,000 uncommitted funds annually through June 30.</li> <li>- Agencies expect budget cuts to be more severe in the next few years, making it harder to find additional funding sources. The Board acknowledges MNICS must prioritize critical service needs first. They recommend the Task Force determine which upgrades are absolutely necessary to maintain critical services, and not be hesitant to tap into the uncommitted funds during these shortfall times.</li> </ul> <p><b>MIFC Office Space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Board of Directors will likely sign a Memorandum of Understanding stating their approval for MNICS agencies to work together to find available workspace at MIFC. It will determine if the MOU is an addendum to the master agreement or a clause at the end of the financial plan.</li> </ul>



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<b>MIFC Building Update Cont. Scalpel</b>	Radio Shop Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Task Force briefed the Board on a potential proposal to replace the current Radio Shop trailer with the Hibbing Tanker Base building scheduled to be replaced by fall 2025. The USDA Forest Service engineer has visited the facility and reviewed the specs and feels the building is in good shape. The building fits in the current radio shop's location but will be a tight fit. The estimated moving cost is \$100,000 and does not account for retrofitting the plumbing and electrical. The Radio shop trailer is on the USDA Forest Service proposed project list for a new structure.</li> </ul>
<b>FDOP Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Minnesota Fire Danger Operating Plan is due for a review. The Task Force has assigned the task to the MNICS Prescribed Fire and Fuels Working Team to review and revise the plan, including adding the current burning restrictions language after the Board signs the final burning restrictions draft.</li> <li>- Glesener will distribute the final signature page through the DocuSign program to all BOD members.</li> </ul>
<b>MNCC Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The current MNCC center manager reviewed the 2025 MNCC Center Manager Delegation of Authority (DOA) with the Board, noting the DOA written to redelegate once the new center manager is in place. The DOA references the new Master Agreement.</li> <li>- The MNCC center manager position will be vacated on January 12, 2025, and there are no other MNCC vacancies projected. However, there is potential for ladder movement that could lead to vacancies.</li> <li>- The Forest Service plans to advertise the position during the next round of fire hire in December. It is working with Minnesota DNR to co-advertise the position to expand the potential candidate pool. Mid-March is the soonest the position may be filled.</li> <li>- The MNCC assistant center manager, logistics, and the lead logistics dispatcher plan to retire in August 2025. These retirements will result in significant voids to fill for MNCC services MNICS-wide.</li> <li>- The BOD recommends completing a workload audit to determine the fair share of the agreement for funding these positions.</li> </ul>
<b>Dispatch Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Task Force plans to present to the large group during the Thursday general session about the proposed future of dispatching plans.</li> </ul>
<b>Master Cooperative Agreement Border Agreement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Master Cooperative Agreement</b> - Caleb Schreiber provided an update on the current state of the MNICS Master Cooperative Agreement. The current agreement was extended through 2025, expiring June 17, 2026. The agreement is ready to send through agency-level review and could be wrapped up as soon as mid-summer 2025.</li> <li>- <b>Border Agreement</b> – The current border agreement was approved in 2023 and was written with a five-year agreement that will expire in 2028.</li> </ul>
<b>MNICS Type 3 Incident Management Teams and CIMT Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Task Force provided the Board with 2025 MNICS Type 3 Incident Management Team updates. Three ICs have been named to fill Team A, B and C next year. The Type 3 Incident Management Working Team is currently working on building the remaining team rosters and has noted there are several voids for key team position.</li> <li>- The Task Force shared that they are looking into all options, including consolidating to two teams or opening the teams up to compact-wide support. They recognize compact-wide support may affect availability for Minnesota incidents. They also acknowledged that the current trends project the MNICS Teams will likely reduce to one team within the next five</li> </ul>



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	<p>years based on current interest and the competition to fill type 3 and national CIMTs from a limited pool of qualified folks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Task Force recognizes the great work happening despite shortfalls, including MNICS developing minimum rostering standards adopted by the Eastern Area Coordinating Group.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prevention WT Status</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mike Palmer emailed the Minnesota DNR Task Force rep and shared he is the only Prevention Working Team member planning to attend the meeting this year.</li> <li>- The Task Force proposed merging the Prevention Working Team with the Information Management Team for a public outreach working team. The working teams will meet on Thursday, and if they choose to merge, they will update the MNICS working team charter to reflect the changes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agency Updates</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>BIA</b> – The BIA is working under a continuing resolution. The training position has been filled but will be announced later. The agency has some potential funding available to fill an aviation management position, but no official plan has been determined. At the Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) level, more conversations are focusing on the expansive drought across the U.S. and the potential for an active spring fire season.</li> <li>- <b>DNR</b> – Minnesota DNR has developed an unpersoned aircraft system (UAS) coordinator position that will be flown department-wide, operated under the Division of Enforcement chief pilot, and supervised by the Division of Forestry. The position will be based out of MIFC and will serve as DNR’s UAS pilot as well as manage contracts. Mike Warnke accepted the Wildfire Administration position and has been in the role for approximately six months. The St. Lukes medical director is resigning and MNICS will need to search for a new medical director. The division has completed its work on Project Viceroy, which set out to review all division position base minimum hiring requirements, including adding some minimum fire qualifications.</li> <li>- <b>FWS</b> – The agency has transitioned to the GS-0456 firefighter series. Locally, the region has picked up a couple of GS-11 fire management officers. The transition creates a lot of opportunities but will also create some challenges. The National Leadership meeting was recently held, focusing mainly on agency-wide budget concerns. Infrastructure law bill-funded projects will now be more prescribed burn-centric project proposals. The Bureau has made Interagency Fire Program Management recommendations for position descriptions, including run classifications required for posting. The recommendations are with the Bureau’s fire directors, and human resources is on board with working off the templates.</li> <li>- <b>HSEM</b> – Jacob Beauregard accepted a new position with another state agency, and services will likely be reduced during the interim. Kelvin McCuskey will fill some of the duties, and Kara Behr will pick up many EMAC responsibilities. The new State EOC, located in Blane, Minnesota, has a training facility that comfortably seats 50 people and will allow 20 hotel spaces for transient workers. Mesa Vang was promoted to the state training officer position. The Web EOC is officially up and running.</li> </ul>



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<b>Agency Updates cont.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>NPS</b> – The park boats are stored for the winter, and the fire season has ended. The seasonal hiring certificates have arrived, and the park will be working on filling those positions, possibly adding a GS-06. Rod Skalsky has accepted a fire management officer position and is leaving the zone. The park acquired a new boat this summer that will be used to help with IA response. The Department of Interior Aviation Management has requested a pilot be staffed at Voyageurs National Park. The position would be certified to do certification for floats and skis for the lower 48 U.S.</li><li>- <b>USFS</b> – The Superior National Forest has two Beaver pilots on staff. The agency went through the latest round of fire hires, and 15 internal positions have shuffled around locally. The National Symbols Cache and NEK Cache positions have been filled. The agency’s budget shortfalls are resulting in many cuts to personnel and equipment. The Superior National Forest is awaiting the final Fry Fire review. Between the two national forests, there are 16 retirements within fire coming up in the next two years.</li></ul>