



METCOM 9-1-1

Governing Board Meeting Minutes

September 3rd, 2025

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jay Alley
Sherry Bensema
Mike Corless
Mark Daniel
Jordan Donat
Levi Eckhardt
Todd Engstrom
Damian Flowers
Rob Garrison
Brandon Hamilton
Alan Hume
Leslie Jackson
Gwen Johns
Michael Kahrmann
Bill Miles
Jason Millican

Dan Mullen
Fred Patterson
Don Parise
Don Taylor
Jim Trierweiler
Keith Veit

METCOM:

Wendy Patterson
John Thompson

Others in Attendance:

Danny Freitag, Santiam Hospital
Christ Tate, Day Wireless
James Montgomery, Day Wireless
Brian Nicholas, MCPW
Patrick Hoover

METCOM regular Governing Board meeting called to order at 10:02 AM by Jay Alley.

The May 28th, 2025, Board meeting minutes were provided to Board members via email and available in hard copy form or by request at the meeting. Board Chair, Mark Daniel, asked members if there were any changes to the minutes provided. None were voiced. The motion to accept the minutes was made as follows:

- Motion to accept the May 28th, 2025, Board Meeting minutes; Brandon Hamilton
- Second by Levi Eckhardt
- Discussion: None. Motion passed all in favor, no opposition.

Marion County Radio Project:

Brian Nicholas with MCPW provided a handout (see attached) to the METCOM board members present outlining the Marion County Radio Program User Fees Schedule.

Brian reported on the progress of the Marion County radio project, stating that the Tate design is close to completion with a review scheduled for the end of October. He noted that agreements for all radio sites are either finalized or in progress, and the project is on track for deployment around March or April. Funding for the project primarily comes from ARPA funds, which need to be utilized before they expire at the end of the next calendar year.

The project is currently facing a funding gap of about two million dollars necessary for acquiring radios for the communication system, despite having the funds for construction. Due to frequency limitations, the strategy to implement conventional channels has been abandoned, reverting to a five-channel trunk system. Brian is working on solutions to close the funding gap and is optimistic about the potential of other state-level grants.

Brian provided the METCOM board members with an outlined a new fee structure (see attached Marion County Radio Program User Fees Schedule handout) for radio services, emphasizing affordability and equity between fire departments and law enforcement. A flat fee model was proposed, with two tiers reflecting the different usage rates of fire and law enforcement agencies. The plan aims to provide cost certainty, with a maximum annual increase capped at 3%.

The system will initially operate as a single band but can be upgraded to dual-band functionality. There are significant interoperability challenges for agencies still using legacy VHF systems, as these will not seamlessly connect with the new digital infrastructure. The county is also testing vehicles for various agencies to ensure compatibility with surrounding systems.

Subscriber fees for agencies will start when they receive their radios, with the sheriff's agency leading the migration process. The system currently has a five-channel trunk design, but it is being expanded to seven channels to accommodate more agencies. There is confidence in the system's capacity.

The conversation addressed the purchase of new portable radios, highlighting their durability and the importance of avoiding obsolescence. The sheriff's department is repurposing existing radios for public works, and there are considerations regarding the compatibility of different vendor radios. Additionally, the strategy for user fees was discussed, aiming to cover operational costs and potentially increase revenue by adding new users.

The meeting addressed the installation of mobile radios in vehicles at no cost, with a focus on warranty repairs handled by a dedicated radio shop. Spare radios will be available for immediate replacement, while non-warranty repairs will incur costs. Users will be responsible for purchasing additional radios and custom accessories after the initial rollout.

The meeting addressed the management of user fees and the budgeting process for the upcoming fiscal year. A technical advisory committee will play a key role in finalizing the budget, which will be based on user fees from different groups, including commercial users and fire services. Brian emphasized the importance of transparency in the budget, which is projected to be around 1.1 million, and the need for agencies to communicate their intentions regarding participation in the budget.

Some general questions were as follows:

- Q: Beyond year 5 of the radio project, is the annual increase capped at 3%?
- A: Brian said, "Yes, I see no reason we cant extend the cap at 3%."
- Q: Is it the intent of the County to still provide radios?
- A: Yes. Radios will be programed as a single band. Agencies can convert the radio programming to dual band at the agency expense.
- Q: Can dispatch provide a radio "patch" if necessary?
- A: Yes, but not one that will work well.
- Q: Will 700mh be used for the primary operational channel?
- A: 700/800 is covered. I would suggest leaving VHS in the rigs.
- Q: If funding to cover the current "funding gap" is not found to purchase the radios, will agencies end up having to purchase their own radios?
- A: No. The county will ensure the radios will be paid for somehow.
- Q: When will agencies start paying the county the project fees?
- A: The month the agency receives their radios.
- Q: What is the projected end of life for the Tate radios?
- A: The average life expectancy is 7 years. As a note: Kenwood radios will work with the Tate system.
- Q: Will base/station radios be billed at the same rate?
- A: They are not currently included in the fee model. MC will need to obtain updated number of radios from participating agencies.

- Q: Is METCOM still to anticipate receiving dispatch consoles as part of the MC radio project?
A: Yes.

In closing, Brian reminded the METCOM board that the user fees outlined in the handout and collected through the project are intended to cover the cost of the system. The fees outlined do not include future costs of system maintenance or work outside of the system warranty. Brian will need to within two (2) months, which METCOM agencies are "in" or "out" of the project and the verification of the number of radios for these agencies.

PSAP Consolidation Discussion:

The Marion County Sheriff's Office and the City of Salem are revisiting discussions on consolidating emergency services, with the next meeting planned for October. The METCOM Executive Board will attend the October consolidation meeting. Marion County and City of Salem raised concerns about their current facility's safety and security, as it has become inadequate since its establishment in 2003. The potential for a new dispatch center and other facilities was discussed, but funding remains a significant concern.

General discussion:

WVCC has outgrown their building and need to move. This is what prompted the discussion between Marion County Sheriff and the City of Salem. Mark Daniel highlighted the uncertainty surrounding the proposed dispatch center project, noting that discussions are still in the early stages without clear direction. He mentioned the upcoming financial funding meeting on October 20th, where stakeholders can gain more insights. Concerns were raised about the potential costs associated with consolidation and the need for further evaluation of governance changes.

The CAD to CAD between WVCC and METCOM is ready for implementation but is currently pending legal approval from the City of Salem.

Staffing:

As of today, METCOM is fully staffed. We still have employees who are working through the training phases but anticipate being fully trained by spring.

Open Agenda:

None presented

Chair Mark Daniel closed the meeting and adjourned at 11:12 am.

Future Meeting Dates:

To be scheduled.