

MISSISSIPPI WIRELESS COMMUNICATION COMMISSION
February 2, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Place: MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks – Commission Conference Room, 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

Commission Members Present:	
MS Department of Public Safety	Magee, Ken (Chairman)
MS Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks	Bolden, Michael
MS Municipal League	Brown, Johnathan
MS Association of Supervisors	Gray, Steve
MS Department of Information Technology Services	Johnson, David
MS Association of Fire Chiefs	Lariviere, Tom
MS Highway Safety Patrol	Loper, Don
MS Department of Corrections	McAfee, Audrey
MS Office of Homeland Security	McKee, Mark
MS Department of Environmental Quality	Sanders, Chris
MS Department of Health	Vaughn, Wayne
MS Police Chiefs	Waggenger, Perry
Advisory Members Present:	
House of Representatives Ways & Means Committee	Carpenter, Representative Lester

Chairman Ken Magee called the meeting to order at 1:47 PM and welcomed everyone. Chairman Magee recognized Representative Lester Carpenter and Representative Michael T. Evans. Chairman Magee also thanked them for their continued support as well as their contributions to public safety. Chairman Magee then provided time for the review of the minutes from the previous meeting on January 5, 2017, after which he entertained a motion to approve the minutes, as they were transmitted. Mr. Michael Bolden made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Donald Loper, and motion carried with none opposed.

Ms. Vicki Helfrich gave the MSWIN Project Update for January 2017. She provided information on MOUs, radios loaned out, and activities the WCC staff participated in during the month which included: issued special event talkgroups for multi-jurisdictional interoperability to Monroe County for search and rescue incident; MS Task Force 2 for swift water training; MS Task Force 2 for Patriot South Exercise at Camp Shelby; Rankin County for search and rescue incident; Warren County/City of Vicksburg for an active shooter drill; Forrest County/Hattiesburg for tornado response; MS Task Force 2 for tornado response; and to MEMA for winter weather event. Staff also provided support to agencies responding to the tornado outbreak on January 21, 2017; assisted with end user training for Hinds County and the City of Jackson; worked with UMMC to develop grant provided training to first responders; worked daily with subscriber requests for interoperability solutions; provided daily oversight for all MSWIN system/site maintenance and repairs; worked with various entities to determine their future MSWIN related data needs; and, continued work on the DeSoto, Hinds, and Warren County projects. Ms. Helfrich also provided information on the number of current MSWIN users, the number of users projected for the 1st Quarter, the top twenty (20) MSWIN users, and MSWIN top ten (10) talkgroups by airtime. Ms. Helfrich then noted during the severe weather event between the morning of January 21, 2017, and the morning of January 23, 2017, there were a total of 300,865 PTTs (Push-to-Talks) during this (48) forty-eight hour period, with no incident.

Mr. Bill Buffington gave an update on the MSWIN build-out status. Mr. Buffington reported the Camp Shelby MSWIN site design engineering is under way, while staff is in the process of procuring the structural tower components. Staff made the decision to install temporary Metro East Circuit in order to link the Hinds County sites in order to enhance coverage between Hinds County and the City of Jackson, supporting the many subscribers until Warren County resolves its delays, most likely the Fall of 2017. Mr. Buffington noted that MSWIN System was tested early on by Hurricane Isaac, tornadoes, and other weather events with the deployment of SOWs in Smithville, Yazoo City, Winston County, Lee County, and the past weekend in Forrest County. Mr. Buffington commented that he is really proud of our team and for the way this network has been designed. Throughout each major event, the MSWIN Network has not experienced an outage nor complaint. The tornado was very near to the Master Site in Hattiesburg, which is the brain for South MS and the generators were ready to deploy for emergency power back up to the electric power resources. A system such as MSWIN is hard to design and to plan for a network with such resiliency, along with the capacity of such to work as designed when needed. Mr. Buffington then noted that due diligence is continuing for North MS and Parchman Sites.

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Ms. Helfrich then gave an updated contract status report. Ms. Helfrich reported no changes to contract status. Staff is still working with ITS on both the LMR 3429 and the BTOP 3639 contract modifications. These two items were previously approved by the Commission and subsequently approved by the ITS Board.

Ms. Helfrich then informed the Commission of another budget reduction received in January 2017 for \$131,972 dollars. The WCC deficit request is now at \$1,630,154 of which the majority of funds are to cover system repairs and maintenance. The system will not remain operational through July 1, 2017, if the requested deficit appropriation is not received for FY17.

Chairman Magee called for the report of the Procurement Review Committee. Chairman Perry Waggener reported two (2) procurement requests were brought before the Committee, neither requiring full Commission approval. At the request of the LPR Committee at the February 1st meeting, Chairman Waggener presented Kemper County's procurement request to the full Commission. Kemper County requested the purchase of an analog system upgrade for \$167,615.30. Chairman Waggener asked Mr. Buffington to restate why Kemper County's procurement request cannot be recommended by the staff. Mr. Buffington shared the following: (1) the procurement request does not consist of P-25 compliancy and is not public safety grade (2) it does not provide a migration path to MSWIN, and (3) does not afford any interoperability with the MSWIN Network. Mr. Buffington addressed his and Chief Tom Lariviere's visit to Kemper County conducting ground testing and speaking with local officials to find a way to recommend and accommodate their request. The MSWIN Network has very good coverage in the area. Kemper County has expressed the need to talk with Neshoba County as they are dependent on them for 911 dispatch services. The MSWIN Network has good coverage in Neshoba County as well.

There have been discussions of different entities in Kemper County joining MSWIN, such as the Sheriff Office, School District and local plant. Mr. Buffington noted that in cases where other counties have made the decision to upgrade from analog to digital, in observations they have in fact lost coverage in doing so. Mr. Ben Dudley commented in contrast to what Mr. Buffington said, that he knew of a county that upgraded from analog to digital and had improved coverage and that the issue in losing coverage is not a fact. He then stated that a big issue to Kemper County is the money, which another \$90,000 would be to go to the MSWIN System. Mr. Dudley stated that their primary jurisdictions that they operate with are in Neshoba County. If they are forced to go to MSWIN, then they will lose interoperability with their close neighbor and the county that actually does do their 911 dispatching. Kemper County would prefer, since they own towers, to upgrade the analog system to digital. Mr. Dudley stated that he realizes the interoperability issues that have been discussed but Kemper County does have MSWIN capability with the Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management. Mr. Dudley then noted that they heard the money issues stated a few moments ago, that the State is broke and the issue of the user fee comes back into play since it is still in the statute and is another consideration for Kemper County going forward if they will have to pay a user fee.

Mr. Dudley asked if the Commission had any questions. Chairman Magee asked if the Sheriff Office was on the MSWIN System. Mr. Dudley replied that they are not, they are using a 450 MHz UHF System. Chairman Magee then asked what the Sheriff's Office capability is since it was stated they had MSWIN capability. Mr. Dudley responded that the Sheriff has a MSWIN radio, just as he (Mr. Dudley) has a MSWIN radio. Every Sheriff's Deputy does not have a MSWIN radio. Chairman Magee thanked Mr. Dudley. Mr. Vaughn then commented that Mr. Dudley stated there is \$90,000 more to spend for MSWIN and then asked how they figured the amount. Mr. Dudley stated that he requested a cost estimate on site with the radios when he requested for the digital upgrade system. Mr. Vaughn asked if the cost of the upgrade of towers included in \$167,615.30, or is it just the radios and not the upgrade of the towers. Mr. Dudley responded that it does include all. He also commented that all of Kemper County towers and equipment are owned. The licenses will need to be upgraded. Chairman Waggener asked if there were any further questions. Representative Evans commented that Kemper County has a private ambulance service with a county radio and he is not sure that they will even consider paying the user fee to use a MSWIN radio, and if they do then interoperability is lost.

Chairman Waggener then thanked Representative Evans for his input. The WCC has been given the responsibility by the Legislature to review all purchases for public safety equipment throughout the State and in that the WCC is instructed to ensure that all are interoperable. Representative Lester Carpenter asked if the Commission's recommendation would be to not purchase upgrades but rather go to the MSWIN System. Mr. Buffington responded the Commission would rather the \$167,615.30 be spent on MSWIN radios. Chairman Magee asked if Kemper County saved the money on tower upgrades by backing those out of the project, would that then give the amount of funding needed for the purchase of the radios. Mr. Dudley stated

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that there would be a difference, but why not spend the money on upgrading what they have now since there are no additional towers that they would have to expend money on. Chairman Waggener then entertained a motion based on the information provided thus far. Mr. Steve Gray made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Vaughn. Chairman Waggener asked for a show of Commission Member hands first for all those in favor of the motion to indicate by raising hands, "aye", as there were two (2); then asked for all those opposed to the motion to indicate by raising hands, "nay", as there were nine (9). Chairman Waggener then surrendered Chairmanship to Chairman Magee. Chairman Magee then stated that the Commission comes to a recommendation to not approve the procurement request from Kemper County. Representative Evans asked what is Kemper County's next step and what can they do now. Chairman Magee responded that he was not aware of an appeal process, rather the Commission would entertain another proposal if Kemper County would like to come back with a revised request. Mr. Lariviere stated that he understood the dilemma that they are in and offered to take a couple of days to come back to meet with Mr. Dudley, as he understands also the need for Kemper County to be interoperable with Neshoba County on a digital hi-band. He noted they would need a plan to map over to MSWIN for long term.

Chairman Waggener then stated the second procurement request was from Alcorn County, in the amount of \$202,806.55, for the purchase of updated console equipment was approved by the LPR Committee.

Chairman Magee called for the report of the Governance/Interoperability Committee. In Chairman Willie Huff's absence, Ms. Helfrich had nothing to report.

Chairman Magee called for approval of expenditures. Mr. David Johnson reported the expenditures for the month of January 2017 which included a budget reduction in the amount of \$131,972, and in addition to the previous reduction in total budget cuts for FY17 equal to \$279,472; reducing the FY17 appropriation to \$8,793,535. Mr. Johnson noted that there were \$1,177,000 expenditures through the month of January 2017 and program income of \$12,729.50 for the month. Regarding expenditures, a milestone payment for Change Order #10 in the amount of \$150,000 was paid from the MCG Grant and the LMR Maintenance of \$639,799.50 was paid from Operating Funds. Chairman Magee asked if there were further questions. Chairman Magee called for a motion to approve the monthly expenditures. Chief Waggener made a motion to approve the monthly expenditures, the motion was seconded by Mr. Lariviere, and the motion carried with none opposed.

Chairman Magee asked for any other business. Chairman Magee discussed he had the privilege to attend the ALPR (Automatic License Plate Readers) Meeting at the MS Department of Homeland Security, the Board of which is in charge of the license plate readers throughout the state, which is a critical public safety tool that we are very fortunate to have. One of the challenges for this Board is the connectivity for these cameras in the different areas of the State. Currently they are using wireless modems. Chairman Magee offered the Board to consider testing and using the robust microwave backbone that the WCC has in the MSWIN System of which the Board agreed to beta test one of their cameras from a site chosen on the system using a wireless modem. Chairman Magee asked for Mr. Don Loper to expand on the specifics of the type of modem they will use. Mr. Loper discussed that currently cellular modems are being used and depending on what part of the State, the coverage is not as ample as it should be. Chairman Magee then proposed testing on a limited basis and limited time to see if this option will work and if it proves successful, he feels this will open up a chance to utilize the data network connection in the backbone of the MSWIN Network to generate funds. Mr. Wayne Vaughn asked if they were going to test the mobile sites or just the fixed sites. Chairman Magee responded that they were to test only the fixed sites. Mr. Loper replied that there are nineteen (19) fixed sites throughout the state. Chairman Magee noted that the beta testing will pave the way for a project that UMMC through the ambulance/AVL solutions wants to try on the backbone, as well. This provides a great opportunity to test the ability of UMMC's upcoming AVL and soft projects with the MSWIN Network, which has been in discussion per BTOP funding.

Chairman Magee asked for any other business. Mr. Lariviere commented that he would like to see the Commission have a discussion on Rules Change on the procurement approval process. Chairman Waggener asked if he would like to see an appeal. Mr. Lariviere responded that an appeal should be discussed so that any procurement requests should be provided a solution. Mr. Buffington commented that in the matter of Kemper County's procurement request, the situation was unique and that generally in all cases there has been success in working to approve requests. Chairman Magee then commented that Mr. Buffington's experience with these systems is highly commendable and Chairman Magee also has experience as a deputy sheriff working with the Fire Service in Hinds County as an Arson Investigator, has been the end user in a County environment, and will not walk out of a Commission Meeting without doing everything that they can

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accomplish for everyone to be satisfied and on the MSWIN Network. He also stated that working in the County means that you are not always in your County; you may be transporting from one to another and having the capability of talking back to your Home Base when for example your car breaks down or there are tornados in your area, it is invaluable to have and to be able to get an outside resource. Chairman Magee disagrees with Mr. Dudley's statement that the end user does not need to talk to officials, other counties, and agencies. The ability to talk with others is invaluable. He then thanked the Committee for the work that they do. Mr. Buffington stated that staff works with end users on technical design, pricing, and compatibility with the MSWIN System; however, we cannot work with entities if they are not open to the discussion.

With no other business to discuss, the Chairman announced that the next meeting will be on Thursday, March 2, 2017, 1:30 PM, in Room 145 of the Woolfolk Building at 501 North West Street, Jackson, MS. Chairman Magee then thanked Mr. Michael Bolden for the use of the Commission Conference Room at MDWFP. The Chairman entertained for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Vaughn made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Chief Waggener, and the motion carried with none opposed. The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:41 PM.