Southern Regional Healthcare Executive Committee Minutes

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March 23, 2021

2021

**Attendance:**

* Greg Coleman
* Rob Farnum
* Charlie Hanson
* Bill Hodges
* Birgen Knoff
* Jason Mahoney
* Kevin O’loughlin
* Scott Rainey
* Jennifer Staton
* Kyrsten Brinkley
* Casey Driscoll
* Robbie Kavon
* Cindee McKee
* Don McGiboney
* Kitty Songer

**Guests Present:**

* None

**Absent Members:**

* Jillian Acosta
* Sue Woods
* Stephen Schmid

**Attendance Tracker:**

* We are now able to track attendance of meetings over the fiscal year
* Jillian Acosta, Madison Valley Medical Center in Ennis, is no longer able to commit time to the Committee so has withdrawn
* Bill suggested a LTCF representative that he knows
* We should make extra effort to find engagement opportunities for all provider types

**Old Business**

* Meeting Minutes, February 16, 2021
  + Motion to approve “as is” by Rob
  + Seconded by Bill
  + All in favor
* Budget
  + COVID19 Mini-Grants
    - Recap
      * Funding available $117,746.25
      * Initial award period funding awarded $31,387.17
      * Amount remaining $85,859.08
    - 4 PAPRs per hospital in the region
      * 15 responses have been received. Billings Clinic and Rehab Hospital of MT declined
      * Request total $67,056.60
      * Amount remaining $28,602.48
        + We could purchase additional filters and batteries
    - Motion to purchase additional filters and batteries for each facility by Rob
    - Seconded by Jason
    - All approved
      * + The remaining balance of $3,436.08 could be held to cover any incidentals, allocate the money to purchase additional PPE for the Southern Coalition cache, or purchase additional hoods for the PAPRs. The committee will wait to determine how to use the remaining funds until purchases are finalized.
  + HCC/HPP Primary Budget
    - Some funds have been budgeted for trainings and travel that have not been used and may want to have them allocated to HPP grants or regional projects
    - Recap
      * Unspent funds $60,882.18
      * Funds must be allocated by June 30, 2021
* Amateur Radio Project (HAM Radio)
  + 5 survey responses received in the affirmative to receive radios
  + One additional if Bozeman counted
  + One no response from Advanced Care hospital since they already have one
  + Request total $5,471.15
  + Amount remaining $55,351.03
  + Ideas presented by Charlie (see the attached one-pager)
    - New model radio is slightly cheaper than the proposed option
    - The laptop option provides internet-assisted communication
    - The MRLA repeaters are dated and the custodian does not have funds to maintain them in the future. Pompey’s Pillar is down with no estimated repair date. Are repeaters necessary? Discussion held to remove the repeaters from the project.
    - Are there installation costs? Big Horn and Pioneer hospitals will donate costs for installation. Kevin suggested that all locations should shoulder some of the costs, such as installation costs.
    - Casey will follow up with the missing hospitals
    - Rob suggested we assume that 17 hospitals will ultimately want them
* Motion to move forward with the equipment listed on the proposal for those that want to participate made by Charlie.
* Seconded by Bill
* All in favor

**New Business**

* None

**Round Table**

* Pioneer Medical Center, Rob – Moving forward with vaccinations. Any help needed for a HCC vendor table at the MEMSA in Lewistown in October? We should discuss at next meeting
* Big Horn Hospital, Bill – Same. Also meeting with stakeholders tomorrow for next major movement to include schools.
* DES District Field Officer, Charlie – (some additional comments regarding amateur radios)
* Vitalant Blood Supply, Scott – They will being reducing efforts to collect plasma
* AMR/EMSC, Jason – No comment
* Riverstone Health, Jen - Opening clinics to include the general population. 2 sites currently
* Park County DES, Greg – Same issues as others mentioned. With the addition of remote clinics near Yellowstone Park
* Bozeman Health, Birgen – Vaccines are moving forward
* DPHHS PHEP, Kevin – Test kits and other supplies are still available. PHEP Preparedness grant is submitted and he is reviewing new Operational Readiness Review (ORR) guidance from CDC
* DPHHS HPP, Don – No grant yet
* MHA HCC Director, Cindee – met with Colin, new Grant/Training Coordinator on objectives for this past year. All Regional Coordinators, Don, and herself met in Great Falls recently to review progress and projects
* Southern Regional Coordinator, Casey – Recently in Great Falls for progress and projects. Accomplished the CAT, HVA, workplan, training and exercise needs, and made changes to the Highly Infectious Disease Prep Plan Annex, COVID19 data reporting continues, and the Newsletter continues weekly
* Central Regional Coordinator, Kitty - No comment
* Western Regional Coordinator, Kyrsten - No comment
* Eastern Regional Coordinator, Robbie - No comment

**Public Comment**

* None present

**Next Meeting**

* April 20, 2021 @0930

**Adjournment**

* Motion to adjourn made by Bill
* Seconded by Bill
* All in favor

ATTACHMENTS  
1. Amateur Radio Project by Charlie Hanson

2. Amateur Radio Project Amendment by Charlie Hanson

Southern Rural Health Care Coalition

Amateur Radio Project Proposal to SRHCC

Purpose of Project: The purpose of this project is to provide redundant and emergency communications to the seventeen hospitals in the Southern Rural Health Care Coalition area of Montana. The proposal is to put a dual band amateur radio, power supply, coaxial cable and antenna into each of the hospitals that can use the existing Montana Repeater Link Association (MRLA) series of repeaters (with permission from the MRLA Board of Directors), and expand the coverage of the MRLA as funding permits, to provide alternative communications to the hospitals in the SRHCC area, in the event of a failure of the usual communications systems in the area.

Proposed costs:

Yaesu FTM-400XDR Dual Band Radio $569.95

Astron RS-35M-AP Power Supply $224.95

Antenna, Diamond or Comet brand $129.95

Mounting hardware for radio and antenna $75.00

Coaxial cable- bulk per foot- $.89- 100 feet $89.00

Coaxial cable connectors (2 per installation) $5.38

Total per hospital $1,094.23

**Total for 17 hospitals $18,601.91**

MRLA Repeater System:

MRLA currently has linked repeaters in the following locations: Pompeys Pillar, Billings, Greycliff, Bozeman, Three Forks, Townsend, Helena, Great Falls, Sweetgrass. It is theoretically possible to talk from Pompeys Pillar to Sweetgrass when the system is activated. However the Pompeys Pillar repeater is not working currently. Most of the I90 corridor in the SRHCC area is in the coverage area. Additional repeater installations on existing towers in Hardin/Crow Agency, Lewistown, and Ennis/Sheridan could potentially extend coverage of MRLA to nearly all of the SRHCC, and also provide links into the Central RHCC. However the cost of the equipment, including repeater, controller, duplexers, coax and antenna could go beyond $5,000 per site.

If MRLA is not used as the repeater system, the fall back position is to locate other existing amateur radio tower sites that would allow the repeater installations into that site, but the expense rises dramatically with this option because each site would have to have a repeater, controller, duplexer, coax and antenna at a price tag of $5,000+ per site for each of seven or more sites.

Caveats:

1. I do not have permission to utilize the MRLA system and this needs to come from the MRLA Board of Directors.
2. Hospitals have not been approached concerning installing radios and equipment in their facilities.
3. The radios must be operated by licensed amateurs, per FCC regulations.
4. The time frame on this project is very short because the funding goes away at the end of the fiscal year- June 30, 2021.
5. If the hospitals are not willing to have the radio, power supply and antenna installed in their facility, an alternative plan would be to have a local licensed amateur install the radio as a mobile in a vehicle and set it up when needed outside the hospital and cross-band to a handheld radio in the facility. That would eliminate the need for a power supply and antenna installation for that facility. But keeping track of the radio bought with grant monies might also be a concern.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlie Hanson, N7ERG and SRHCC Executive Committee member

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Southern Rural Health Care Coalition

Possible changes to Amateur Radio Project proposal

For Executive Committee Consideration at March 23, 2021 meeting

Proposal for each of 18 facilities approved at February 16, 2021 meeting;

Yaesu FTM-400XDR Dual Band Radio $569.95

Powerwerx SS-30DV Power Supply $119.99

Antenna, Diamond or Comet $129.95

Mounting hardware for radio and antenna $75.00

Coaxial cable- bulk- radio to antenna $89.00

Coaxial cable connectors $5.38

PolyPhaser (lightning protection) $82.95

SWR/Power meter- cross needle $149.95

Laptop Computer- 14” screen MS Windows $299.99

Grounding strap $24.95

Connecting cables, assorted connecting stuff $150.00

Two Handheld Transceivers- dual band ($250 ea.) $500.00

Total- per facility $2,197.11

**Total for 18 facilities $39,547.98**