



CUYAHOGA COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Communications Committee Meeting Minutes (Regular)

DATE / TIME: May 13, 2026 – 10:00AM
LOCATION: Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District – Meeting Room A
4747 E. 49th Street, Cuyahoga Heights., Ohio 44125

VOTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NAME	Present	ASSOCIATION	ALTERNATE	Present
A/C Jim Health	X	Chairman		
Lisa Raffurty	X	Vice Chair		
Randy Kimbro		Southwest Radio COG	Tom Sullivan	X
Brad Handke	X	City of Cleveland	Courtney Newman	
Anthony Luke		City of Cleveland	Brad Englehart	
Cmdr. Schramm	X	City of Cleveland	Phil DaVila	
Jacquelynn Costa	X	CECOMS	Stephen Kasik	
Mark Christie		Cuyahoga County EMA	Kevin Friis	X
Jill Smialek		Cuyahoga County PSJS	Nancy Kolcan	X
Chief Papesh		Fire	Chief Rega	X
Chief Ledwell	X	Fire	Chief Bender	
Chief Dietz		LE – Municipal	VACANT	
Sgt. Keeper	X	LE – Non-Municipal	Lt. Brady	
Lt. Pat Devlin		LE – Sheriff	Sgt. Dave Perez	
Chief Elliott	X	MARCS User Group	Chief Carroll	
Dillon Crouse		MARCS User Group	Jesse Phan	
George Balasko	X	City of Parma	Lt. Nathan Savetski	
Chief Lasky		City of Parma	T.J. Martin	
Nick DiCicco		Regional Dispatch	VACANT	
Ron Barlow		Regional Dispatch	Kristina Eich	
Mike Dever		Public Works	VACANT	

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kyle Jamison, Dave Kemps, Henry Tafe, Christene Jones, Craig Bollinger, Dale Merchant, Ted Ledwell, Phil Davila

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AGENDA ITEMS

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / QUORUM DETERMINATION

- Chairman Jim Heath called the meeting to order at 10:12 A.M. Vice-Chairperson Lisa Raffurty conducted roll call. A quorum was met. During the roll, George Balasko reported that Chief Lasky is retiring on May 21st. He also reported that T.J. Martin has resigned and the now vacant position of Communications Center Manager is posted on the Parma City website.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Kevin Friis motioned to approve the March 11th meeting minutes with correction of Kyle Jamison listed twice. Jacquelynn Costa seconded. The minutes were approved.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

- None.

4. MAIN CCESAB MEETING REVIEW

- Vice-Chairperson Lisa Raffurty reported that the last Main CCESAB meeting was cancelled.

5. GRANTS UPDATE

- Larry Tafe reported that usually during this time of year UASI 2026 is being worked on. He stated that there has been no word on UASI 2026 from either the state of Ohio or the Federal government and if there are projects, agencies should be in the process of getting them prepared. Specifications should not look for a specific model or manufacturer. Tafe reported that UASI 2025 has been delayed for close to a year due to the government shutdown. Since the government has come back from the shutdown, he expects at some point to hear from the State that the awards from 2025 have been made for the projects that were approved last year. UASI 2024 radio project was completed. The Tri-C police radio purchase order is now with the vendor. It is anticipated that the radios will be received in the next week or so, and then programmed and provided to Tri-C.
- Chairman Heath asked what the issues were with the two different styles of radios. Kevin Friis responded that the international radio model covers additional frequencies, that Cleveland used to use. No one is supposed to be using these because everybody was pushed into the lower bands. Technically, the international model should not be sold in the U.S. because it does not meet the restriction criteria. Chairman Heath asked, what were they getting? Larry Tafe responded that they were getting the standard model Harris XL185 that was previously provided.
- Chairman Heath asked about the Ham radio project that was on the UASI 2023. Larry Tafe reported that the Ham Radio project was put to the reallocation. He stated that there was an issue with the vendor who didn't want to register with the county. He will have to obtain a third quote, so that there are three quotes. Larry Tafe commented that hopefully this is not an issue around the timing with any of that equipment. It was reported that the Dayton Ham Radio festival was happening this coming weekend and that it may be difficult to get in contact with someone.
- Chairman Heath reported that the only other project that is in the bucket is the redundant satellite backup for dispatch. T.J. Martin was spearheading this project. He stated that the committee might need someone to step in. He would like to get this as a shelf ready project.

6. RADIO REQUEST APPLICATION REVIEW

- No new radio request applications were received.

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7. COUNTY INTEROP TEMPLATE

- Brad Handke reported there are no changes. Kevin Friis reported that Omari, from Cuyahoga County EMA, will be reaching out to every agency to confirm that the talk group information Brad provided is still current. Omari will also be checking to see if there are any additions or changes that need to be made to what the agencies are using and how they are using it. This will produce a comprehensive talk group list of everything in use in the county on all three systems.
- Chairman Heath stated that with CVD opening up one facility in October and they are already starting to meet about economizing talk groups. There will probably be changes by the end of the year.
- Brad Handke commented that there will be drastic changes in the near future. He stated that it would be good to get something started. He tracked on a spreadsheet, whether they were running encrypted. It would be good for everybody to have, so that they know that if you are going to XYZ city, and they're using this talk group, that you are not going to be able to do it because you have encryption or you don't have or not. It is a good thing to have on a general basis. This would be helpful from a programmer standpoint because they don't know what half the people use. He stated that he has to call an agency to see what they are using when he is going to program something. He stated that this will be a big thing to have a guide to know what each agency is using.
- George Balasko reported that there has been more discussion on encryption. SEB is talking about encrypting talk groups. It is still very preliminary because there are a lot of technical things to be concerned about. He reported that during the Valley Forge incident, things were being live tweeted because people were picking up transmission from the internet. Chief Green has already reached out to him about their main dispatch channel going to encryption.
- Brad Handke commented that if you are a small suburb, you can get away with encryption. If you are a big city, encryption may result in ending up in court. Radio waves are free. You get them free from the federal government. Another thing is that a lot of agencies in this area are going to over the air encryption. He stated this should be kept in mind when radios are purchased. If you want to be talking to Cleveland or any of the southwestern suburbs or those going to OTAR, which means over the air rekeying, keys will be changing every 90 days or so. If you don't have OTAR your radio won't work when changes are made.
- A question was asked where the document would be located, is it part of the TIC-P the regional template or is it a stand-alone document? Kevin Friis responded that it will likely be a separated document that will be referenced in the TIC-P. This is separate from the county template which is on the website.
- Chairman Heath asked if there was an update on where everybody is at with the Ohio Marcs and getting their radios updated. Kyle Jamison responded that for radio authentication, there are just a lot of radios that no one has any intention of adding radio authentication to. Chairman Heath asked if there was any news on shutting these radios off. Kyle responded that they were planning to add fees if radios don't comply but this got a lot of push back; he has not heard any further. Jason Kirby is going to each individual agency to walk them through getting it done.

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8. EXERCISES/DRILLS FOR COM-L PARTICIPATION

- Kevin Friis reported that the Cleveland EOC is activating on Saturday for the USS Cleveland and the Cleveland Marathon. Pepper Pike is having a large drill on May 30th. The Brazil versus Egypt soccer game is on June 6th, which is also the day of Pride in CLE. Span has a full-scale exercise on June 16th. Westlake and Bay Village have a full-scale exercise on June 8th. Solon has a full-scale exercise on June 25th. The NDMS tri-annual exercise is August 11th. Burke Lake Front Airport is having a tri-annual water-based exercise on August 19th. There will be a national preparedness event on September 19th.
- There is a G-358 reentry planning class on June 1st and June 2nd. Hazmat officer training class is on June 24th and June 25th. The HC exercise design class is on August 20th and August 21st. A question was asked if anyone knew of any Comm-L or Comm-T classes in Cuyahoga County or surrounding counties? Chairman Heath responded that there are none in Cuyahoga County. Kevin Friis responded that he was not aware of what is going on in surrounding counties. Kevin commented that he received an odd ask about a com-n class. He could not find anything about it.

9. OLD BUSINESS

- None.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEW BUSINESS

- Jacque Costa reported that the Bi-Annual AMBER Alert Conference will be taking place on November 18th. It will be at the Independence Holiday Inn. Chairman Heath asked who should attend the conference? Jacque responded that the conference is geared towards dispatch and law enforcement. However, it is just as important to be attended by fire and EMS because sometimes they will talk about human trafficking and other related subjects. The keynote speaker will be the Gabbie Petito family. The U.S Marshals Missing Persons Unit has committed to attending as well, they will do a presentation on their missing child programs. They will also be discussing what they do with human trafficking. The conference is free of charge. Jacque also reported that there is a working group established to develop everything for the conference which is virtual.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- None.

12. NEXT MEETING

- July 8th – 10:00 A.M.

13. ADJOURNMENT

- Jacque Costa motioned to adjourn. Kevin Friis seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.