CUYAHOGA COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Communications Committee Meeting Minutes (Regular)

DATE / TIME: September 9, 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	
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	X	**Fire**		Chief Rega	
Chief Ledwell	X	**Fire**		Chief Bender	X
Chief Dietz	X	**LE – Municipal**		VACANT	
Sgt. Keeper	X	**LE – Non-Municipal**		Lt. Brady	
Lt. Pat Devlin		**LE – Sheriff**		Sgt. Dave Perez	X
Chief Elliott		**MARCS User Group**		Chief Carroll	
Dillon Crouse	X	**MARCS User Group**		Jesse Phan	
George Balasko	X	**City of Parma**		Capt. Nathan Savetski	
Chief Davis	X	**City of Parma**			
Nick DiCicco	X	**Regional Dispatch**		VACANT	
Ron Barlow		**Regional Dispatch**		Kristina Eich	
Mike Dever		**Public Works**		VACANT	

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Carol Haddon, Rich Stone, Chief Rega, Henry Tafe, Christene Jones, Craig Bollinger, Lezlie White, Matt Reinke, Michael Herb, Kyle Jamison

AGENDA ITEMS

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / QUORUM DETERMINATION

Chairman Jim Heath called the meeting to order at 10:05A.M. Vice-Chairperson Lisa Raffurty conducted roll call. A quorum was met.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

George Balasko motioned to approve the July 8h meeting minutes. Kevin Friis seconded. The minutes were approved.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

4. MAIN CCESAB MEETING REVIEW

Vice-Chairperson Lisa Raffurty reported that 21 of 22 projects were prioritized and funded. The only project not funded was the Parma ALPR. Project requests totaled just over $2.7 million dollars. The most significant projects were four from the Sheriff's Department; these projects totaled $1.4 million dollars. The Fusion Center had eight, which was just under $500,000 and HAZMAT's project was $222,000. Vice-Chairperson Raffurty further reported that $760,000 in funding remains. She stated that any reallocations will possibly be discussed at the next Main CCESAB Meeting in October. Lezlie White stated that the state is looking at some of the projects that have been submitted as possible reallocations. Chairman Heath stated that the CCESAB Communications committee had missed the project deadline which pushed that project to reallocation.

5. GRANTS UPDATE

Lezlie White reported that FY23 UASI closed at the end of July. There is balance of $139.80. State. She stated that she was pleased with how the state was able to spend that funding down. This was out of an award of $1.6 million dollars. She further reported that Larry Tafe is mostly finished with procurements for FY24 UASI. The Haz Mat projects still need around $85,000 in procurements. There is some fusion travel. The FY25 UASI grant award has been received and has been sent back to the Ohio EMA, which has the projects loaded but not the cost lines. Larry is working on giving the Ohio EMA all details that they will need to put into their grant management system. The only one that is being held is the Board of Elections project on FY25 UASI. She stated that if anyone has a project on this grant and has their specs of their projects gets working first.

6. RADIO REQUEST APPLICATION REVIEW

Chairman Heath reported that no new radio request applications were received.

7. COUNTY INTEROP TEMPLATE

Brad Handke reported that there was nothing new for the template. Kevin Friis reported that Omari from the OEM team is working with the everybody to get every talk-group utilized. He has received responses from half the agencies. Omari will be doing drop-ins to get the rest of the talk groups. Jackie Costa asked Brad Handke if Regionals two through five were used by CPD; Brad responded yes. A question was asked if there was something that could be put on the radio panel that would show whether a channel is in use. Brad Handke responded that it would be difficult because the regionals have been out there for some time and there are so many people grabbing channels. He stated it is difficult to police the original sixteen. These have been 'utilized' for so many events that don't exist. The CCMI group, for example, has reserves. Brad stated that if channels 5 through 9 or 13, 14, 15 are used then everything should be okay. Kevin Friis asked if it would be better to start to assign channels from the second zone; Brad responded no because those are turned off. The original rollout was always to give out the original 16 zones.

Matt Reinke reported that he had an issue at the Burke Lakefront full-scale exercise; Westshore could not communicate using the assigned zone. Matt thinks it may be a radio ID issue. Kyle Jamison stated that Westshore was part of the original MARCS when the system came up in Cuyahoga County. Everybody's programming was not available then. Kyle stated that in the last couple of years his department has been rectifying this. He stated that he tries to convince all agencies to do the county template.

He stated that agencies should contact the City of Cleveland to turn on their radio IDs. This step rarely gets done.

8. EXERCISES/DRILLS FOR COM-L PARTICIPATION

A question was asked if any upcoming COM-T training classes. Kevin Friis responded that he was not aware of any. Kevin will check with Serena to see if any COM-T classes are scheduled for next year. He reported that there is Hopkins International Airport tabletop exercise at the end of September. NASA is doing a full-scale exercise Friday, September 18th; Ohio EOC is sending evaluators to that exercise. Parma Snow branch is having a National Preparedness Month event on Saturday, September 19th. Training wise, there is a 1301 Continuity of Operations Planning Course on September 22nd and 23rd. There is also an Integrated Response to Mass Casualties exercise on October 8th and 9th. There is another RTF integrated response class on October 22nd. Kevin reported that the National Disaster Medical System exercise at Hopkins went well.

Jackie Costa reported that CECOMS will be hosting the Northeast Ohio Amber Alert Symposium on November 18th. Gabby Petito's family will be the keynote speaker. Jackie will be presenting on Amber Alert Activation Best Practices. There will also be a LEADS presentation on how to enter information into LEADS.

Kevin Friis reported that Cuyahoga Emergency Management will be having their summit on October 28th at the Independence Civic Center. A question was asked on where the after-action reports to the NDMS should go. Kevin responded that this is being worked on.

9. OLD BUSINESS

George Balasko reported that ARES, the amateur radio group, wanted him to thank the people from Cleveland, the County and everybody else that was involved in obtaining grant funded equipment despite the issues trying to get the vendors to cooperate because of the dollar amount. All the equipment has been ordered.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEW BUSINESS

Kyle Jameson reported that the expansion of channels for the Cuyahoga County Simulcast is progressing. His department is taking that from 21 to 30 channels; It will take some time because there are so many sites. This will alleviate some of the busies that occur when there are big storms or large events. Kyle also stated the radio authentication process has been difficult because there are so many radios and it is hard to motivate people that don't pay a bill to do anything. He asked if an agency that has XTS's, would they be eligible for the radio grant program. Chairman Heath responded that CCESAB does not replace radios. If the agency got their radios from the committee originally, they would not be eligible for renewal. Brad Handke stated that he knew of some agencies that have XTSs, XTLs from CCESAB, but were given to them by other cities when the others upgraded. Brad further stated that it will be difficult to fund upgrades. He asked if the radios were bought by the committee and are gone or not able to be fixed anymore, why couldn't the committee start opening new radio project grants. Chairman Heath stated that the temperature at the Main CCESAB is that they are done with purchasing radios. Heath further stated that he thought it was a justifiable question and worth bringing up at the next meeting; He will make a note for the next meeting.

Kyle advised that he would be sending out emails, trying to ascertain what agencies have done with the radios. He further commented that for good reasons they are concerned about shutting off active radios. Chairman Heath asked what the answer would be if CCESAB asked for special dispensation for those old radios to leave them on. Kyle responded that the switch is system-wide, not per radio. Brad commented that if an agency is using an XTS as their primary radio, they are probably not considering

officer safety. He further commented that realistically they should be taken out of service.

Matt Reinke asked if T-Mobile had responded back to the County. He stated that he was asking due to most people are probably on FirstNet and there are known bandwidth issues in our area with FirstNet.

George Balasko reported that PRDC Dispatcher Jeff Lipp passed away, Jeff was also one of his auxiliary officers for 16 years. To memorialize him, Parma is selling memorial coins for Jeff, all the proceeds will go to the Lipp family. If anybody wants information on that, they can contact George or just call the PRDC and they can set you up. One side of the coin is dedicated to his auxiliary service; the other side is dedicated to his dispatch service.

Chairman Heath announced that he will be retiring in 2027; He would like to get somebody in the Chair position by January. It is also time for Vice-Chair nominations. The committee will open nominations for both positions at the next meeting: Chair and Vice-Chair. Nominations will close at the January meeting when both elections will take place.

A question was asked regarding the PSAP satellite project application. Vice-Chairperson Lisa Raffurty reported that she corrected an error on the front page. It showed four, which is correct for the mobile units, but it did not list everyone that will get a mobile. She also corrected the budget worksheet which she will send to Lezlie White and Larry Tafe today.

Lezlie White commented that Nick had submitted a ham radio continuity of operations application. There was also a satellite failover. Larry Tafe commented that Nick's second application was submitted on the right form. The original application was sent in after the deadline, so it should be reviewed by the committee. Nick DiCicco stated his department will soon have their own building to include an EOC and JIC. His department is looking for two HAM ops positions. Chairman Heath asked what the committee was looking at equipment and cost-wise; Kevin Friis responded that the cost will be approx. $10,062. Nick stated his department will do all the labor at no cost; they will just need the equipment. Chairman Heath asked if anyone wanted to make a motion. George Balasko motioned to approve the request. Kevin Friis seconded. A vote was conducted; the application was approved.

Kevin Friis reported that Brian Kloss' position has been posted. Lezlie White reported that a Senior Grants Coordinator position has been posted as well.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

12. NEXT MEETING

November 4 – 10:00 A.M.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Lezlie White motioned to adjourn, seconded by Costa. The meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.