



To: Franklin County Legislators, Select Boards, First Responders

From: FRCOG and FCECS Oversight Committee

Date: April 26, 2019

Subject: Status Updates Regarding the Possible Migration of Franklin County First Responders to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Interoperable Radio System (CoMIRS)

The last few months have seen significant progress towards the possible migration of Franklin County public safety agencies to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Interoperable Radio System (CoMIRS). These efforts have gotten us to the point where definitive answers to the questions of cost and schedule are within sight. As you will surmise, the FRCOG believes migration to CoMIRS is the best long-term option for Franklin County and it is the course of action that we are dedicating our efforts.

New Secretariat, Same Faces:

We were told by our state contact, Matt Moran, that the CoMIRS project is going to be administered by a different secretariat. It is being moved from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) to the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS). Matt Moran's new title will be Assistant Secretary and Chief Engagement Officer at EOTSS and is still in charge of the CoMIRS project. He will be working under Secretary Curt Wood who was the originator of the CoMIRS project.

Making Franklin County a Priority:

On March 14, 2019, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments received word that EOPSS/EOTSS had finalized the statement of work for the CoMIRS project with its vendor, Mission Critical Partners. The revised statement of work now includes language instructing the vendor to include engineering the migration of Franklin County emergency response entities into the CoMIRS system. The statement of work also included language making it possible for EOPSS/EOTSS to instruct Mission Critical Partners to accelerate the work needed to migrate Franklin County.

Franklin County Infrastructure Contribution:

As part of ongoing discussions with EOPSS/EOTSS they asked if it would be possible for them to leverage the FCECS infrastructure to improve the CoMIRS system. They asked for a complete listing of our equipment, which was emailed to Matt Moran on March 20, 2019. This list will allow Mission Critical Partners to include our tower sites and equipment into their engineering study. The expectation is that if Franklin County migrates to the CoMIRS, the FCECS/FRCOG would transfer ownership of the infrastructure to the State.

Radio (Subscriber Unit) Count:

In an attempt to understand the potential cost of subscriber units for Franklin County, EOPSS/EOTSS requested a list of how many radios the County emergency response entities need if they were to migrate. The methodology utilized for this task was:

1. Chairs of Franklin County Fire Chiefs Association, Franklin County Police Chiefs Association, and Franklin County EMS Association contacted all their respective chiefs/directors in Franklin County and asked them to fill out a form that asked for information about their department focusing on the number of employees and vehicles each has. In the case of fire apparatus, we also asked for the number of seated

positions in an effort to consider NFPA guidelines. (NFPA was not strictly adhered to when a department had far more vehicle seats than actual personnel.)

2. Once the forms were completed and submitted, the representative from those three associations reviewed the submissions. When a department’s number seemed unusually high or low, the chief of the department was contacted to discuss the numbers. The chief either gave a rational explanation for the stated quantity, or the numbers were revised.
3. All forms were reviewed by a subcommittee of the FCECS Oversight Committee for one final check.
4. We added a regional cache of 18 portables to be available for three purposes:
 - a. Some departments started with high numbers because of once a year needs, e.g. annual parade, festival, or fair. We reduced a department’s numbers in this case.
 - b. A department’s estimate turns out to be too low.
 - c. To have a supply of immediate replacements in the event of equipment failure.

On April 5, 2019, FRCOG sent the following request for subscriber units. Please note that the current number of subscriber units registered to the FCECS is approximately 1,900. The total number of radios being requested is 1,315.

	Base Station	Mobile units	Portable units	Pagers
Fire	52	220	517	620
Police	31	115	275	
EMS	4	25	58	74
Regional Cache			18	
Total	87	360	868	694

On April 16, 2019, FRCOG met with Assistant Secretary Matt Moran and Mike Saltzman of EOPSS. Together we reviewed the submitted subscriber unit counts. Both Matt and Mike asked if due diligence was applied to the process in which these figures were determined. FROCG explained the process and Matt and Mike agreed that the process and numbers seemed reasonable.

During that conversation, we also had a lengthy discussion about where the cost floor would be on a per radio basis. While there are many radios capable of working on the CoMIRS, some of them are not as sturdy or do not meet the particular needs of public safety. FRCOG wanted to make sure the dollar amount being used for financial planning assumed the purchase of a radio that would meet the expected use. We were verbally assured the dollar amount being used for estimating purposes was for a radio that Franklin County stakeholders have used for testing and of which the FCECS Oversight Committee approved.

Migration and Cost:

With Matt and Mike, we then discussed how a migration might happen. Matt asked that Franklin County submit a draft migration plan by May 1, 2019. He, purposely, did not include specifications or his thoughts so we have the opportunity to apply local knowledge to this important task. The total dollar amount that EOTSS can use towards purchasing subscriber units for Franklin County is still undecided; this draft



migration plan will allow Matt to work towards a funding plan for Franklin County subscriber units that is in line with the larger CoMIRS project.

The draft migration plan will consider both a discipline-based and regionally-based rollout. It has been rumored that police will migrate first and then priority for the rest of the region/other disciplines will wane. This is not true. The FRCOG and EOTSS understand the critical importance of migration of all first responders. That said, we also believe fire needs, especially paging and in-building service, must be assessed and well tested before full migration.

Because time to create the draft migration plan is short, it is our plan to submit a draft rollout plan before full public discussion and agreement. Since this draft is primarily for EOTSS to assess potential timing of expenditure for radios, it can be tweaked and adjusted. Our plan is to bring the draft rollout to a public regional meeting in June or July.

Paging:

EOTSS technicians who oversee and repair/maintain the CoMIRS are working on a recommendation on how to proceed for the paging of fire and EMS. They will either determine a solution, or ask that it be handed off to Mission Critical Partners for a full engineering evaluation.

Outreach and Updates:

FRCOG and the FCECS Oversight Committee are in the initial planning stages of another county-wide meeting for late June or early July. EOTSS will be asked to attend that meeting and answer questions from our communities and first responders.

Additionally, FRCOG will be posting updates to the FCECS website as they become available. You can locate that page here: <https://frcog.org/boards-committees/franklin-county-emergency-communications-system-oversight-committee/>.

For questions about this project please contact Dan Nietsche at 413-7743167x105 or via email at dnietsche@frcog.org.