

Verdugo Fire Communications Center
TASK FORCE MEETING
January 13, 2009 Minutes

Persons Present: Tom Phelps, Dave Haney, Bob Gattas, Ryan Weddle, Brent Bartlett, Ryan Phillips, Eric Zantesson, Ray Krakowski, Jim Frawley, Richard Beckman, Joe Parrino, Corey Creasey, Don Wise, Jason Pfau, Lenia Scanlon
(Not represented: Pasadena)

I. New Business

- A. Budget Considerations** – As we begin work on our FY09-10 budgets, please keep in mind that some radio labor will be needed for the TICP reprogramming when it comes out late spring/early summer. Those who wish to add the mobile map to their MCT's will want to budget at least a half-hour per rig for their radio techs to do that installation as well. Each agency will also need to budget for just the installation of the new station alerting interface board being manufactured and provided by Verdugo, but that will probably fall within the current budget year. It is estimated that work will require an hour or less per station and that it will occur in May.
- B. AVL Hardware** – Verdugo has finished the initial implementation of AVL, so each city will now need to budget for its own replacement GPS devices, just as currently is done for their own mobile computers and other on-board equipment. The Garmin's Verdugo has been purchasing for the initial roll-out run about \$70 apiece and should last several years, and the USGlobal device Pasadena, Monrovia and Montebello are using is about the same cost.
- C. VRMs from GPD for Area C Stockpile** – Several dozen VRMs (mostly VRM650's, some 850's) will be passed to Glendale Radio Shop in mid-February. Verdugo will make a request for some of these on behalf of the 11 cities. It is very rare for a VRM to fail, but each agency will want to keep at least one or two on hand for the next several years until the existing data system is replaced. The Verdugo Technical Committee representative will be approached to help identify inventory need for each agency.
- D. Radio Trouble Reporting Forms** – Please include details in the narrative area for all relevant sections when filling out these forms, to assist radio personnel with troubleshooting. The form is at http://www.unified-response.org/publications_minutes_forms.html.
- E. RF Problem at County-USC Hospital** – The recently moved Emergency Department has the same radio transmission issues as the old location. Paramedics report that they lose the ability to communicate via radio just after entering the building.

II. Updates on Continued Issues

- A. Records Destruction** – Letters were sent to the Fire Chiefs August 5 with notification of intent to destroy existing records for anything prior to July 1, 2006. The letter requested an authorization letter be signed by each Fire Chief and City Attorney authorizing Verdugo to destroy records over two years old in perpetuity, barring any ongoing legal action or police investigations or objection by the individual agency. Letters have been received so far from:

ALH ARC BRK GLN MRV MPK PAS SGB SMD SNM SPS
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

- B. TICP Pocket Booklets** – Booklets were distributed after the meeting, according to the numbers requested several months ago (ALH-5; ARC-60; BRK-145; GLN-220; MPK-18; MRV-40; SGB-18; SMD-20; SNM-30; SPS-21), except that Steve Page was unable to get enough for Burbank and Glendale. Those will be ready in a few days. Pasadena will be receiving a somewhat different version separately. A big thank-you to Steve Page of the Pasadena Radio Shop for preparing these booklets.

C. Montebello – Verdugo will be welcoming Montebello to the Verdugo System on Feb. 26. Preparations are actively in progress, including additional shift coverage and new dispatchers, related CAD programming done, mapping updates, transfer of phone lines, VPN setup, developing an Operating Plan between Montebello and the Verdugo Board of Directors, and much more.

D. Mobile Computer Applications

- 1. Hospital Status Button on MCT's** – The new CAD.exe file for this function was distributed to the radio shops and radio vendors in November. About half of the fire departments have installed it on their RA's or on all their frontline equipment, and Verdugo is now seeing a distinct decrease in requests for hospital status over the radio. A system-wide policy will be forthcoming in an update to the Radio Policy & Procedures manual.
- 2. Mobile Map** – As soon as Verdugo receives the latest version of the map application that includes two important bug fixes, a new mobile map can be prepared. However, the current data is now three years old and does not include all of Montebello; we're waiting a little longer until a full update has been completed. The map's appearance and functionality should be as high quality as possible when we introduce it to the line personnel.
- 3. CAD Changes** – Verdugo had to make some programming changes, both in CAD and in the mobile application used in the rigs, because Montebello will be using the numbers 55, 56 and 57 for their stations and these numbers currently refer to hospitals. When your radio personnel install the new mobile version in your units, your personnel will notice the hospitals are now referred to by their three-letter abbreviation instead of a number and they're green instead of yellow. This updated version of the CAD.exe mobile application also supplies the most recent version of the AVL files as well as the hospital status button, which can be installed in any unit.

E. ICIS Update

- 1. Station Alerting** – The new interface boxes are ready and they will be tested in Pasadena, Montebello, Glendale and Burbank for a period of 90 days before they are mass-produced and distributed to the Area C fire stations for installation. Each department will be responsible for its own installations, but Verdugo will be supplying the interface.
- 2. Phantom Alerts** – Phantom Alerts are still being received occasionally. As we transition to StatAlert and implementation of the new station alerting interface, these will be rare occurrences, if at all.
- 3. LFD Has ICIS Radios** – All Verdugo Fire agencies can now communicate dependably with LFD during joint incidents as there is one ICIS trunked radio in each of their rigs. For day-to-day purposes, this will affect BRK, GLN, PAS, and SPS. Thirteen of LFD's sixteen Battalions have completed programming, with more to follow. LFD has expressed a strong interest in localized training utilizing ICIS. The training officers will be approached by Verdugo with this information as well.
- 4. Signal Strength Testing** – With the generous assistance of the Pasadena Radio Shop, Verdugo was able to have a drive-test performed in several areas of Monterey Park using special software that measures signal strength from one or more radio transmission sites. The resulting propagation maps showed that all portable and mobile radios in MPK should be set to "prefer" the Montebello ICIS site instead of (or in addition to) the Glendale one. Further testing is in progress with Ryan Weddle's help to further define which settings are needed before they decide whether to do another reprogramming of their radios. A similar test has been proposed for Montebello because there is uncertainty about whether the Glendale data system has a large enough footprint to cover that entire city reliably.

F. Data System Task Force – A committee comprised of ICIS Tech Group members has been formed and will meet the first Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. to discuss how soon Glendale's data system must be replaced, what it should be replaced with, and the possibility of a regional data system similar to the ICIS voice system.

III. Roundtable

GLN

- ◆ Chief Creasey is pleased to have been assigned to Verdugo. His other administrative duties will include the Mechanical Maintenance Shop, grants, and various other projects. Tom Propst is being promoted to BC and will be taking over command of the B Platoon. Greg Godfrey will also be promoted to BC. His assignments will be EMS, Public Education, Public Information, and Emergency Services.
- ◆ The new Air & Lights Utility is now in service from Station 28 and for those incidents where it has been used so far, the lights and air bottle filling have been a great help. This unit is available to all the Area C cities.
- ◆ Three new Engines will be on line shortly, and there will be nine reserve Engines.

MTB

- ◆ Okay for Joe Parrino to use the radio designation Comm534?

BRK

- ◆ First-In, a company that installs station alerting systems, will be in Burbank for a demo Feb. 4-5 at their Training Center. Steve Briggs is the contact, if you need specifics.
- ◆ Response times: What does everyone think about pulling out the code-2 runs so these times only include the code-3 ones when time is of the essence? A type code list is attached so everyone can evaluate which ones they suggest considering code-2 for statistics purposes. Please have this information for next Task Force.
- ◆ LA RICS Grand Jury query: Did everyone respond? This was related to emergency preparedness communications interoperability. Burbank responded that they are aware of the issues and will continue to watch them.
- ◆ Tom Lenahan will soon be taking over as TF representative for BRK. Their new Executive Assistant will be Robina, and their Administrative Officer will be Sana Ford, taking over for Jennifer Kaplan, who has been promoted to Deputy Finance Director.

ARC

- ◆ Engineer promotion coming up next month.
- ◆ New Suburban being outfitted, will be ready end of Feb./early March.
- ◆ City departments are examining revenue sources and attempting to make financial predictions in these tough budget times.

MRV

- ◆ Six new employees in the next few months.
- ◆ New pumper in the next couple of weeks, replacing E101.
- ◆ New Type 6 Patrol will soon be typed. It's a 4-wheel drive Chevy. One member shared that his department had learned it's best to provide formal training when adding a 4-wheel drive vehicle due to potential liability issues.

ALH

- ◆ Finished testing for Communications Tech, just need to have the Chief's interview. Thanks to all who assisted with the testing process.
- ◆ City Attorney drafted and sent out a hold-harmless agreement for those who use their Training Center.
- ◆ Training Center props funded by UASI will be completed by March and installed this Fall.
- ◆ The Training Center is also being expanded, thanks to a donation of land by the city.

SPS

- ◆ Received a FEMA grant for a new RA. Thanks to Verdugo for providing the statistics that supported the grant application.

SMD

- ◆ New Engine this year. Bidding process will be this Summer.

SNM

- ◆ New RA coming this Thursday.
- ◆ New Engine was due from Pierce in early November but motor quit so it has been stranded in Ontario. Pierce

has now agreed to prepare a new Engine. It's a Detroit Diesel Series 60.

- ◆ Trying to hire a Firefighter.
- ◆ BC coverage: DC Mayhew has 40-hour availability and DC Frawley lives in town so his is 24/7/365. As of 1/15/09, SPS will no longer be providing after-hours BC coverage. An agreement is in progress with SGB to replace this backup assistance on the rare occasion (about once a month) that it's needed after hours.
- ◆ Question about AVRR. Verdugo has placed that on the back burner until certain other projects are completed like adding MTB, updating the 12 year old Policy & Procedure manual, generating a five-year Technology Plan, and implementing the mobile map. AVRR is likely to only apply to Fire incidents because RA's and Trucks must remain in their own cities most of the time – Unified Response does not extend to Medical and other categories of incidents, so an AVRR-based recommendation line can only be used for Engines, and then only for Fire incidents. There is also an issue regarding the GIS data in that overpasses and underpasses are not yet included so routing assumes a road that passes under or over a freeway is a freeway access point. The data will need to be updated with the elevation factor before AVRR can be relied upon for accurate internal routing calculations to recommend the best units.

SGB

- ◆ Chief Garstang and Dave Lancet have retired. A new BC test was held recently and results will be announced in 1-2 weeks. This will create an opening at the Captain rank. There are also openings for an Engineer and three Firefighters.
- ◆ Measure SG passed in November, a utility tax.
- ◆ Joint training involving SGB, ALH and MPK often occurs. Some effort was made to create a training location feature in CAD, but it ran into glitches. A "conditional availability" modification would be helpful to designate availability status of units in training. Verdugo will research this for future consideration.
- ◆ RIC policies regarding radios and SCBA need to be updated in relation to ICIS and the new radios. Have an excellent video on the emergency trigger.
- ◆ Ventilation drill coming up in July, Area C-wide, including both ground school and manipulative. Will use a 25% draw-down model to maximize coverage of the cities on those days.

MPK

- ◆ Four new Firefighters hired.

TICP

- ◆ Bob Gattas mentioned that there will be a few changes in the UHF TICP when it comes out this Spring, mainly name changes for some channels. In the VHF spectrum there will also be some name changes, like the WHITE series. Unfortunately, the plan may nearly double in size because it must include both wide and narrow band frequencies. Some radios are not compatible with the proposed plan, so that still needs to be worked out. There will be a meeting at Station 106 in mid-February to work all this out. ETA on the new TICP plan for 2009 is late April.

Verdugo

- ◆ A new 10 am - 10 pm shift may be created for the additional Fire Communications Operator position that is being added with Montebello coming into the Verdugo System. Two FCO's will be hired to fill that one position. An open Fire Communications Shift Supervisor position has been posted to agencies/magazines.
- ◆ The monthly bulletin that Don Wise sends out is now being prepared on a quarterly instead of monthly basis.
- ◆ Excellent progress is being made on the Policy & Procedure manual.
- ◆ Deadline for the Winter issue of the Unified Response newsletter is 1/15/09.
- ◆ Verdugo is undergoing an internal audit and the results will be shared with those who oversee Verdugo in mid-February, several weeks before the annual Verdugo meeting with the Tri-city City Managers, Fire Chiefs and Finance Directors.

Next Task Force Meeting: Tuesday, Feb. 10, 9 a.m.