

NORTHERN ROCKIES COORDINATING GROUP
FIRE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

October 31-Nov 1, 2007

DNRC Southwest Area Land Office, Missoula

In Attendance:

Pam Okon: MT-DNRC, Fire Business Tech Specialist and New Chair.

Eric Heyn: Resource Forester, Kootenai NF, Logistics Rep.

Jim Newton: IDL, North Idaho Zone Rep

Jeanne Robertson: Kootenai NF, Contracting Tech Spec

Ann Vogt: BLM, Equipment Tech Spec

Tim Murphy: NR Contractor's Rep

Jay Windy Boy: BIA Contracting Office, Billings

Debby Wesselius, NR Buying Team Coordinator

Terry Vaughn, MT-DNRC, Anaconda, SWMT Zone Rep

Joyce Anderson, LNF Budget Officer, Central MT Zone Rep

Jane Haker, R-1 Incident Business Specialist, USFS

Biddy Simet, Glacier Park, Fire Program Asst. NWMT Zone Rep

Scott Waldron, Fire Chief, Frenchtown, Local Government Rep.

Mary Fields, Admin Asst USFS R1-RO, Logs Trainee

Frank Preite, USFS Staff Officer, South Central Zone Rep

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Reviewed charter:

Reviewed all positions. Need an Operations Liaison to Business Committee. Need to get Jane added to the Equipment Committee's mailing list so she can liaison with them. Otherwise all positions are identified.

Charter Updates:

Move Logistics Technical Rep to the Technical Specialist section

Purpose, #4 needs to be reworded. Jane will work on this.

Purpose, #5a: add "Northern Rockies" to the technical specialist pay rates

Purpose, #5b: change to "for other than best value contracts"

Last paragraph: the chairperson responsibilities – change from training to mentoring.

Next Chairperson: Pam Okon

Vice Chair: Biddy Simet

Second Vice Chair: Lily Huskey

Reviewed 2007 Plan of work and accomplishments

1. (no change) Review and revise NRCG supplements to the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook and coordinate with NWCG updates.
2. (no change) Assist with Fire Procurement/Buying Team Workshop

3. (no change) Interaction and coordination with NWCG Business Practices Working team.
4. (no change) Interaction with other NRCG Committees
5. Fire Business education at meetings.
 - Dispatcher’s workshop. (March 11-13, Butte)
 - NR Type 1 and 2 meetings. (April 7-10, Missoula)
 - Regional Training Academy
6. (changed) Work with Equipment Committee to develop specs and rates for specialized equipment.
7. (changed) Review/update Northern Rockies AD/EFF technical specialist rates, coordinate with state partners.
8. (no change) Establish NR Buying Teams for 2008 with interagency participation.
9. (change for 2008): Support the following training:
 - Finance/Logs workshop (biennial)
 - Cost Share Agreement - Methodologies for Agency Administrators
 - Incident Business Advisor
 - S260 and S-261
 - S-360
 - I-Suite
 - Equipment Inspector Workshop
10. delete – it’s added to #9
11. delete – it’s incorporated in #4
12. delete – it’s covered #6.

Unoperated equipment:

In order to alleviate problems with hiring and paying in the future:

- Create a subcommittee to review solicitations before they are finalized.
- For unsolicited equipment, develop an SOP for future procurement and payment processing.
- Provide some direction on business practices for IMTs for equipment payments from fire camp.
- Type 1 teams may have folks to review final payment packages, but Type 2 teams may not. Need host unit support.
- Encourage forests/home units to designate a “lead administrative representative” as the go-to person for the team.

Best Value Update: Tim Murphy

Synopsis of Power Point presentation:

2007: 3-year agreement for water handling and super skidgines. Will check to see if BLM wants to reopen potable water. At least 6 other pieces of equipment not signed up.

Best Value Numbers: 2006 2007

Engines	174	217
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Water Tenders	100	136
Heavy	45	65

2007 was the first year that NRCG directed equipment committee to hold inspections with minimal government costs. Set up 5 MOUs for inspections during a 6-week period. Saved \$135,000 estimated.

The Inspection MOU provider's statistics:

- 138 inspection days offered
- 78 actual inspection days
- 57% of days offered
- Utilized:
- Trueline 24 days
- RTS 26 days
- Feniz 18 days
- NWSA 8 days
- Northwest 2 days
- For a total of 485 pieces inspected.

OIG – WA (Office of Inspector General – Washington) thinks contracting inspections is an “augmentation” issue. USFS should be paying for the inspections. However, local OIG in Portland agrees with what NR is doing. If it's a problem, maybe IDL or DNRC can take over the MOUs and USFS can utilize the service.

Cost to vendor per piece of equipment roughly: \$250-300 plus verification of training records in EaTIS: \$25-30. Depending on vendor. Overall, contractor response was favorable toward the inspections.

Training Provider MOUs:

Central Zone: 12	Eastern Zone: 8
SW Zone: 8	North Idaho Zone: 3
ND Zone: 0	Total: 39
NW Zone: 5	Pending: 0
SC Zone: 3	Denied/cancelled: 0

EaTIS: second year.

Significant issue: security breach. EaTIS is not robust enough to take on all that we need. It'll be used next year, but a new system, called “Viper,” will come online for FY2009. Should be ready for the SW to use for solicitation and awards by Feb.

DNRC Contracts:

There was a significant increase in providers for sack lunches, porta potties and rental cars from the DNRC solicitation from 2006 to 2007

Contracts in 2007:

- Only 2% of privately-owned engines used were on EERAs rather than BV contracts.
- 67% on severity were from the private sector.
- Water tenders: 55% on severity were private.

- Less than 12 EERA engines were signed up and half of those were from S&K on a BIA EERA for tribal preference.

Dispatching BV Resources

Each zone has a priority list (In zone)

Out of zone list is the next level.

Cost Comparison:

Under the old system of standard rates, for the amount of days paid:

- For engines: the BV system saved over \$57,000 and contractors earned \$18 million.
- For water tenders: the savings was \$1.1 million for a local income to 217 contractors of \$6.3 million.
- Cost for Heavy Equipment: Total: \$3.6 million on 65 pieces of equipment.
- Skidgines and Pumper cats were more expensive on BV reflecting that previous rates were probably too low for the market.

2007 Contractor Issues:

- Out of GACC resources are not being released first as they should be.
- EERA vs. competitive process
- Heavy Equipment Transport. Bid “haul in and haul out” but could negotiate a separate EERA to keep the low boy in camp. Going back to the drawing board for the transports for all heavy equipment for 2008.
- Agency, contractors and IMT lack of understanding of the agreement
- Perception is that some agencies and dispatch centers not using the competitive resources
- CO, CORs and CATS – need more. Maybe establish on a zone basis folks who can go out and help troubleshoot issues in the field.

NR 2008 Solicitation Plan

Tim handed out a table showing the plan. Hope to have new specs developed by November 10 and solicitations finalized by mid-December.

- Caterer Type 3 – specs will not look like national contract specs. May look more like what the state has – more on service, less on the equipment
- Shower Type 3 – (4-11 head) solicited through FedBizOps. Presently no outreach plan through existing vendors, but the task group can consider it. Outreach could go through dispatch and AQM to find potential vendors.
- Faller Module
- GIS Units
- Office Trailers
- Tents/Canopies/Yurts
- Helicopter Support Trailers
- Communication Trailers
- CFR Engines

- Grey Water Trucks
- Service / Shop Trucks

End of Murphy's presentation.

Future Training Needs:

Fire Procurement Training: conducted by NPI – National Procurement Institute

- Four day intro course.
- Appropriate for micro-purchasers for support to Type 3-4-5 incidents.
- Used to be a required training for Buying Teams. Considered entry level to get new folks into the system.
- Jeanne will look into NPI's schedule and will follow up with the committee to check available dates and find a venue. Target for March or April.

Finance/Logistics Workshop: We skipped last year, should provide one this year. Eric Heyn and Joyce Anderson will look into putting this together. Target for May.

Training for non-finance IMT positions to support financial operations (anyone who completes and/or signs shift tickets & CTRs).

- Suggestion: some business information could become part of the DIVS or other operations training sessions.
- Specifically contract information, work/rest, assignment extensions and other issues. Suggestion to discuss some contracting topics during the Operations breakout at the IMT meetings.
- Bidy will find out what Operations training is planned for this year and how we can best integrate some finance information into a session.
- Mary Fields will look into how to get electronic delivery via "e-conference" set up and the cost involved.

I-Suite: Jane went to NRCG Training Committee.

- Need some skill-based training for IMT finance sections, but also need to understand how to input resources to meet FS accrual needs as there are inconsistencies among IMTs.
- Need folks on local units who are able to function in I-Suite for Type 3-4-5 units.
- Joyce will head up designing a 2 or 3 day training for the local units and companion it with S-261.
- Jane will help coordinate the dates needed for the local training and will coordinate the IMT sessions.

Three opportunities: Regular I-Suite (probably not offered this year)

I-Suite for local folks at the home unit

I-Suite for IMTs

IBA: FS relies heavily on retirees for IBA. Because there are no more AOs on the forests, there are few IBAs.

- Need to look at a different pool from the organization like District Rangers.

- The course has been updated and needs to be offered in the Northern Rockies this year.
- Frank and Jane will look into the skills base needed to be successful as IBAs before individuals take the course and enter the training process.

Thursday, November 1, 2007

Mary Jo Lommen, Missoula, AFD, IMS Program Manager
(Ph: 406-329-4930, cell: 406-544-4058)

EMS Personnel: what they can do on fires.

Mary Jo gave a presentation on the IMS program and, specifically, what medically-trained personnel can and can not do while serving outside of the state that holds their license.

IMS program was started in the 60s as a way to support fire camp with medical needs: minor injuries, assessments, and maybe eliminate transport to a clinic. In R-1 the IMS program is well developed. About 4 or 5 years ago there was a push to find a medical director. (per Jeff Scussel). A couple of doctors had a hard time of it based on their insurance. Dr. Upchurch (BIA-Hardin) has served as medical director. There is a NR protocol that says that we will use IMS on fires. IMS is in the Northern Rockies MOB guide, including the process. A medical kit should not be ordered without an IMS person on the order. In R-1 the cache has a small kit that requires an IMS manager.

- As a general rule Paramedics can only serve at the paramedic level if they are licensed in MT and have medical direction. If paramedics coming into MT do not have BOTH a MT license and medical direction, they can only function as EMT-Basics IF they get reciprocity for their license.
- Wilderness Medics (AZ) has a contract and they have a medical director in MT and 4 or 5 of their paramedics are licensed to practice in MT. Dr. Greg Moore is their medical director.
- An EMT functions under certain protocols, but that doesn't include OTC meds. IMS personnel train on OTC meds per medical direction. Since EMTs don't get trained on OTC, they can't make them available.
- Controversy: Are we jeopardizing EMT licenses by having them perform those medical functions?
- One example of when it may be proper for a paramedic order: spike camp that's really hard to get in or out of, may get a local paramedic or a Wilderness Medic that's already licensed to serve in MT. The need for ALS is so low that the cost for paramedics is rarely justified.
- Host agencies should follow the MOB guide to make sure the correct protocols are being followed for medical personnel needs. Need NR IMS personnel.
- Medical kits: If all of the cache kits are used up, a medic's kit can be utilized BUT it should be resupplied rather than signed up and rented.

- In Northern Idaho, our medical director is not licensed so advanced med endorsements do not carry over. Basic care, OTC is OK, as long as EMTs have reciprocity.
- IMS-A and IMS-T should be ordered on the Resource Order from the team. Per the 310-1 a MEDL doesn't need to be a current EMT, but per 5109.17 a MRDL does need to be current.

Suggestions:

- The IMS program protocols, which are currently in the R-1 MOB guide, and the “appropriate purchase list” should get put into the supplements so that they're accessible to incoming out-of-area teams.
- Guidelines for Rx drugs should be made available in the supplements too.
- Mary Jo can do a presentation at the Finance/Logistics workshop if available.
- IMS group training is February 4-8 at NRTC. Get any comments or suggestions to Mary Jo prior to that for presentation at the training.
- Debby asked Mary Jo to review the Chapter 20 language on signing up ambulances.

Buying Teams:

Update from Debby:

- This year, BTs were on a one-month rotation for individuals, without team commitment. Will probably be continued next year, with a “Blue Team” and “Green Team.”
- Most buying team members still supported fires even on their off-month.
- Has an alternate list – folks are responsible for finding their own alternates.
- No designated leaders for the 7-person teams, hopes to designate three leaders per group who can rotate. They will decide among themselves who will take the team. Need to have leaders identified for July-Sept timeframe.
- Goal this year is to stabilize leadership, establish trainees and get trainees attached to incidents. They will be responsible for statusing themselves and for determining the leader rotation.
- Need to build into the AQM protocol what a Buying Team role is and how they fit into the AQM organization.
- Sometimes they spend time filling orders off already-established EERAs, but that should be a dispatch function. Unoperated vehicle orders off EERAs were huge.
- Medical purchasing and payments can be a problem (no M-log). Every forest is supposed to set up their own protocols for medicals – APMC or OWCP. Buying Team can procure Rx meds when there is an M-log.
- On a national and regional level, this was an issue that Buying Teams faced: they were the go-to people for all things.
- The Buying Team should not be included in things that may be long-term or may have later implications for the home forest. Things that are billable should go back to the forest.

- Every host unit should have an administrative rep to be connected to long-term services that may be set up by the Buying Team so that services can be cancelled. (Utilities, phones, DSL, trash service).

Review of FY07 Issues: Jane Haker

Jane handed out a chart that she created based on issues sent to her, along with the IIBMh chapter that it reflected.

Committee members will review the list, and address each issue either with changes, FAQs or other information.

Goal: NR "Blue Page" Supplements issued no later than March 1. To achieve that:

- By November 18 review the issues in Jane's document and route to committee members for review. Answer the questions and route back to the committee with suggestions either for changes, FAQ or just informational. If it can be an FAQ: develop it and indicate the reference from the IIBMh.
- Final review of draft supplements in January meeting
- We need to have final supplement changes into Jane by Feb 8 so she can format for publication by March 1.

Who's addressing the chapters:

Chapter 10: Biddy Simet and Eric Heyn

Chapter 20: Ann Vogt, Peg Geiger, Jay Windy Boy and Debby Wesselius

Chapter 50: Pam Okon and Scott Waldron

Chapter 80: Joyce Anderson

Issues identified as "All:" Frank Preite and Jane Haker

Issues identified as "FS:" Jane Haker

Any other committee member who has a comment can do so on any issue.

Government to Government Rates: Pam will take the lead until a new lead can be established

- Goal: MT, ND, ID use the same rates.
- Need to reconvene the group to look at rate changes for next year.
- Check with SAC about procuring local government equipment during times of natural disaster and clarify reimbursement procedures.
- Will have a rewrite of the rate book to add more fire service equipment. May not be done in time for MT and ND to use. May be ID only for this year, but could be brought forward this time next year for MT and ND future use.
- Need to add something to Chapter 20 so that other states and agencies know how to deal with local government engines. We need to define what the methodology is to develop the rates so that there's no question where the rates come from and what they reflect.

Additional rates for equipment not currently in Chapter 20

How do we obtain rates for hired equipment not currently listed:

- Some pieces of equipment, like Comm Trailers, may be solicited competitively.
- Other equipment, like forwarders, can be found in the “Blue Book.”
- Rates can also be determined by calling about 5 companies and obtaining their rates. Kevin Erickson can help with rate determination too.
- Need a method to communicate among agencies what rates were developed on fire-specific EERAs for equipment so that they can be used by others.
- Need to determine a repository for this information. Post to NRCG or NRCC websites.
- Could possibly get some information from Operations about other equipment that they’re now interested in using. Bidy will bring this question forward to Ops.

Fire Billing Process Between Cooperators:

- A lot of bills come in after the end of the next fiscal year.
- The vendors have a right to be paid, but the bills come in so late that they go against current year fire funds.
- State to state billing would be preferred rather than states billing through the USFS. Need appropriate signatures on interagency agreements to allow direct state to state billing. Jane can take this forward nationally through the USFS to see how to handle this – maybe through the EMAC.

Cost Share Methodologies:

Jane handed out a white paper draft with cost share options.

- The committee is to review the methodologies and report back with comments or suggestions.
- Goal is to give line officers a suite of methods that they can apply as needed which can use the I-Suite Cost Module to capture the data.

Issues with Cost Share:

- Agencies at the field level may not understand the offset agreements between state and federal agencies for fire protection.
- Local government is included in the offset agreements.
- Structure protection roles and responsibilities have been added into a cost share template and decision document that was routed around via email about July 31st.
- Suppression rehab: Discussions between agency administrators should be addressed in the cost share, but should be made clear up front what the agreed upon fire rehab standards are.

Mutual Aid:

- When teams are delayed, local government responds and requests mutual aid through their compacts.
- The “mutual aid period” needs to be more clearly defined to identify when the mutual aid period ends and the pay process begins.
- Presently runs form 4 to 24 hours in various agreements and annual operating plans. Needs to be made consistent.

- Scott would like to get Montana Mutual Aid parties to agree with what's in the Mobilization Guide to standardize mutual aid period. If a fire department can stay on the fire, they should get an E number, but they need to have an existing state EERA to do that.
- Put all local government information into Chapter 50, rather than referring some items to Chapter 20.

Incident Signs:

- When we order signs, some may be in stock, otherwise orders seem to go through a sole-source vendor but there are more available sources.
- Need to get the ordering and paying protocols clarified.
- Orders should go through ordering, obtain an S# then go through the Buying Team who can utilize various vendors.
- After the fire, the signs should go back to the host agency that paid for them.
- Jane will get Carl and Donna together with Pam to work up protocols. Eric will join the conversation as a logistics person.
- Have this process defined by March 1 prior to the IMT meetings so that Donna can present any revised information.

APMC:

- Need a subcommittee to review how we're utilizing APMC on each fire and how we're documenting the incidents to allow for appropriate later payment.
- Standards for payment should be defined in home unit Operating Guides and Service and Supply Plans.
- Develop a form to be left in the fire file along with the M-log. Frank, Pam and Jim Newton (or another person from IDL) will look at this.

Time under Hire vs. Hourly:

- Folks are having a difficult time with Time under Hire for the first and last day on daily rate contracts.
- Suggestion: change the first and last day to an hourly rate rather than try to apply the half-day rate.
- Best Value contracts are 3-year, so changes are not likely. Nor are changes to EERAs.
- Need to continue educating finance folks on the application of the half-day rate.

Next Meeting:

January 29-31. (Noon 1/29 through Noon 1/31)