

Meeting Minutes

PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR TRAINING BOARD

October 24, 10:00am
ILEA, Room 201/Zoom
7105 NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, Iowa 50131

A meeting of the Public Safety Telecommunicator Training Board was held as a hybrid of in-person and online attendance.

Members present: Blake DeRouchey, Iowa Dept of Homeland Security/EM Judy Flores, Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association
Pete Roth, Iowa Police Chiefs Association
Mike McKelvey, Iowa Peace Officers Association
Angela Dobyns, Iowa Assoc of Public-Safety Communications Officials
Rhonda Braudis, Iowa EMS Association
Chris Jasper, Iowa Chapter National Emergency Number Association
Jessica Klinker (Chair), Iowa State Police Association

Members absent: Jared Ogbourne, Joint Council of Iowa Fire Service Organizations
Margot McComas, Iowa Department of Public Health
Chad Roberts, Iowa Department of Public Safety

Staff present: Brady Carney, Director, ILEA
Sherry Poole, Assistant Director, ILEA
Kristi Traynor, Attorney for ILEA
Anna Voss, Telecommunicator Instructor, ILEA

Guests present: Caitlan Reineke, Marshall County Communications

Meeting commenced at 10:02 am.

Motion to approve agenda by Flores, second by Roth. All ayes, no nays, motion passed.

Motion to approve January 22nd, 2024 meeting by Jasper, second by Dobyns. All ayes, no nays, motion passed.

A discussion was held on the topic of the ILEA 40-hr training locations. Presented by Anna Voss. Locations are as follows:

January 13th– 17th, ILEA

March 17th– 21st, Pottawattamie County Sheriff's Office

May 12th– 16th, Scott County Emergency Management Center

July 14th– 18th, ILEA

September 16th– 20th, Iowa State Patrol, P7, Ford Dodge

November 17th– 21st, Oelwein Police Department

A discussion took place about whether the locations were final. Voss advised that these are final dates and locations. She has reached out to agencies across the state and has tried to have locations across the state. Chair Klinker asked if ILEA will continue to have 6 classes instead of 4, as was the previous practice. Director Carney indicated that is currently the plan for the future to help meet the need. Dobyms expressed the possible need for another location on the east side of the state. Voss advised that she had just hosted a class in Buena Vista County and had an attendance of 18 people. DeRouchey advised that Oelwein PD is no longer a PSAP and has consolidated with Fayette County. Flores volunteered for Black Hawk County to host in the future. Braudis also volunteered for Marshall County to host in the future.

A question was asked by Chair Klinker about the expectation for the 1-year timeframe for someone to complete the 40-hr class. She asked with the classes being regional, if someone gets hired right after a class in their area, would they have to fill out the waiver if they are unable to attend due to other locations being outside of the area. Voss advised that they would. Klinker asked if a longer timeframe could be looked at for the future. Director Carney advised that it could be considered. Carney gave an example of a recently submitted waiver. The employee was hired, but did not attend a class and then asked for an extension. The extension was denied. Klinker asked for the reason of the denial. Carney advised that there were 6-8 classes that the individual could have attended during that time and Council denied the waiver. That is the only one that has been recently denied. Dobyms asked if the Council takes any other considerations into account when approving or denying extensions. Traynor advised that other things are considered when making a decision. The person requesting the waiver has to prove that there is an undue hardship, which is included in the four-factor standard that the Council considers.

Jasper advised that the east region meeting has not occurred yet and there is nothing to discuss. Dobyms did not have anything from the west region. There was a question on if Braudis or Roberts was the representative for the central region. Jasper advised that he thought it was Roberts. No updates were given for central. DeRouchey discussed statewide updates and the department bill for 911 and 34A and that there could possibly be changes with the surcharge. Director Carney asked if this has been introduced or discussed before. DeRouchey advised that there has been work on it for the last year and the proposal would be to raise the surcharge and that the state is seeking access to the wireline revenue as well as wireless.

Director Carney introduced the possible opportunity for suggestions for the rules rewrite of chapter 501. Some ILEA staff members have already began looking in the rewrite of chapter 501. Carney asked if anyone had any suggestions for changes regarding telecommunicators. The three main topics include the basic training requirements, in-service requirements, and out of state reciprocity. Dobyms asked for clarification on if it was "rules" or Code that lists the requirements for telecommunicators. Carney stated that it was the "rules", not Code.

Jasper expressed the need for the section on the approval of a 40-hr telecommunicator training approval to be more defined. Currently the rule is that the course is approved by ILEA through the telecommunicator training board. Jasper expressed confusion with the wording as currently the telecommunicator board is an advisory board only. Dobyms stated that she liked the idea that the board is more than just advisory. Jasper agreed, but cited conflict with how it is currently written.

DeRouchey questioned section 13.3(2) about submitting information to the academy on "prescribed

forms” and asked if there was any definition or if there is a form. DeRouchy also asked if this review process could be a redlined version for everyone to look at. Traynor explained that was the goal. This meeting would serve as a “think tank”. Ideas could also be submitted to her by email for her to compile and she would bring a redline version to the next meeting for review by everyone.

Chair Klinker expressed continued confusion as to what the Telecommunicator Boards function actually is and that there would be value in taking the time to define what the committee is responsible for. DeRouchy suggested have a section dedicated to the functions of the committee.

Roth asked, “My question is for the Director, has the Council briefly even talked about do they still want to have telecommunicators underneath their responsibilities or is there another agency like Homeland Security or Emergency Management that would be a better fit for public safety communications? Law enforcement is still just one slice of telecommunicators morphed duties now as we go forward in the future. I still dislike the fact that they have no voice on the Council and it’s all law enforcement. I am not sure if fire, EMS, or EMA is represented on the board either.”

Roth asked if that had been talked about in any of the ILEA Council discussions. Director Carney advised that topic had not come up in any of the Council meetings. Dobyms agreed with Roth and said, “If the Council is overseeing law enforcement, jail, and telecommunicators then all of those entities should have a voice at the Academy Council.” Dobyms suggested possibly rewriting the definition of who is on the ILEA Council. Traynor explained that the makeup of the Council is mandated by the legislature in code. Dobyms said, “Then that makes the argument for this board itself to more than just an advisory board. If we are not going to have a voice on the overall Council, telecommunicators don’t, I feel that then they should have a voice here as far as approving training and those kinds of things.” Klinker agreed with Dobyms and also said, “just from the standpoint of it is a very law enforcement centered and most of our dispatch centers also dispatch fire. I know that the 40-hr has started to do some fire stuff but they’re still not represented on the committee that’s making all of these decisions for them. Dispatch back in the day was probably much more law enforcement heavy, however, now its evolved and it’s really its own separate career path and profession. I think having separate committees would be beneficial so they have that voice.” Jasper agreed with both Dobyms and Klinker.

Director Carney advised that he agreed with Roth’s comment on the morphed and intertwined responsibilities of telecommunicators, but stated that he didn’t know what an appropriate “home” would look like. Carney also indicated that this topic had been brought up in an emergency management meeting just as a discussion, but that nothing has taken place at the ILEA Council. Dobyms said, “It seems like the best place would be under HSEMD because they are under the 911 program manager.” Carney advised that might be a change in code, but that there are not “real robust parts of the code” that talk about telecommunicators as they relate to ILEA. Carney explained that it is a good conversation to have in the future. Roth made the point, “most of the people on the Council don’t even have PSAPs, a lot of them are run by EMAs or a joint. I think if for example our group was housed under the fire department and they were dictating to us what to do as law enforcement, we would have a lot of complaints about that because they don’t operate in our world and we don’t operate in theirs.” Jasper suggested that it fall under the 911 Council. DeRouchey stated that while he agreed with the points made, the undertaking would be not be an easy one. Dobyms expressed the need to have multiple entities (ILEA, HSEMD, etc) on board with a possible change before a bill is drafted. Carney will take the change idea to the next ILEA Council meeting and get feedback for the next meeting.

Jasper discussed the hiring of employees with prior telecommunicator experience in the other states. He stated that if they have previously taken a 40-hr course that covers all the required topics that Iowa should accept that training, provided they show a certificate of completion and an outline of what was covered in the course.

Dobyns discussed what minimum on the job training standards would look like outside of the 40-hr course and if minimum standards should be mandated. Carney questioned how that would be enforced and what documentation would be needed to enforce the requirements. The council agreed that they wanted to model training after the national standards.

Director Carney asked for our thoughts on the basic standards, stating, "It sounds like we want to model, resemble national standards, fair."

Braudis stated via chat, "In the spirit of that there are three entities that have come together to create best practices and training standards. APCO and NENA are the leaders, DALF has joined as well. So if we are looking at best training practices would it not be reasonable to consider reciprocity from those entities?"

DeRouchy explained the differences between the 911 Council and the Telecommunicator Board and the purposes of each. McKelvey asked if there was any overlap or conflict with any training between ILEA and the 911 Council. DeRouchy advised that there is some overlap in terms of training funds and how the funds are used.

McKelvey asked what other states are using to determine minimum training standards. Jasper advised that NENA sent info out to the state chapter leaders asking the same question. Jasper will share the information that is collected with the board. DeRouchy explained that every state's setup is different in terms of who is in charge of training and how many staff members programs have. Director Carney volunteered to reach out to other states that have telecommunicators under their LE academies and try to gather information.

Director Carney explained that when discussing/determining in-service requirements it is best to not get too specific and to use more generalized topics. Carney asked if the national standards mention anything about in-service requirements. Both Jasper and Klinker advised that they have not seen anything specific about in-service requirements in national standards. Chair Klinker explained that APCO and IAED require a certain number of hours of continuing education, but not specific classes required. Braudis communicated through chat the requirements for recertification through APCO. Carney asked for other thoughts on in-service training and Klinker expressed that if this is something that the board is not going to set approved topics on then it needs to be removed. Jasper agreed with Klinker and also brought up how the training would be documented and accounted for. Section 13.5 in the rules states that additional training forms should be submitted to the academy once training is completed. Traynor pointed out that there is contradictory language in section 13.4 which says that the training records are kept by each agency's administrator. If documentation is not going to be submitted or anything followed up on, the section should be removed. Carney stated, "no, people have not been sending us those records and we have not been contacting people to get those records." Both DeRouchy and Chair Klinker suggested that there should be wording added that each agency is responsible for maintaining records, but is also subject to audit of those records should there be any concerns.

Director Carney asked if there were any additional comments about out of state reciprocity. Chair Klinker stated that as long as their training meets the national standards that it should be accepted. The topic of lapse in service/employment was also discussed and how that would affect training requirements. McKelvey asked if there is a short class that the academy could set up a competency test/in-service to satisfy those requirements if there is a lapse. Voss suggested that she could build in a CDE short section into the 40-hr class for people to attend. Dobyms suggested that ILEA should offer that shortened section online to reduce cost to agencies. Both Director Carney and Voss said that could be possible to do.

A discussion commenced regarding if someone had a lapse in training, but kept up their certifications, Director Carney stated Angie brought up a good point and asked if you could renew your APCO certification by doing the training if not actively employed. Braudis through chat stated you could in fact do this, Dobyms confirmed you could do this through Priority Dispatch EMD as well as APCO. Carney commented if this was possible absent any Iowa specific items that would be required, Klinker agreed that it should be allowed.

No communication from the public.

Committee Member Announcements: Jasper advised that Caitlan Reineke with Marshall County Communications is working on her RPL project which involves comparing different training standards between NENA/APCO/ILEA. Braudis, confirmed.

DeRouchy explained that there have been local initiatives to reinvigorate Telecommunicator Emergency Response Teams (TERT), but there is nothing in code about that. There have been a few instances lately where a TERT team could have been activated in or out of state. A more formalized agreement is being developed that will give the authority if deployment is needed.

Next meeting has not been scheduled. Board members will submit dates that work for them and a meeting date will be sent in the future.

Jasper moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by DeRouchy. Meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.