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Massachusetts Communications Supervisors Association
Meeting Minutes for November 19, 2003
Rutland, MA

To Order: 10:00 Leslie Carroll, Presiding

Attendance: Michael Befford, Chris Brunelle, Leslie Carroll, Stephen Cote, ,Tom Dunphy, Butch Garrity, Laurie Favreau, Sarah Latino, Bill Mullen, Donna Sans, Monna Wallace

Ms. Carroll brought the meeting to order.

The meeting was held in the comfortable meeting room at the Rutland Town Library, thanks to Sarah Latino for hosting us.
Greetings to new member, Mike Befford from the Spencer Police Department.

MINUTES
Read and amended by Mr. Cote, whose egregious error omitted Mr. James Lake from among the worthy recipients of Appreciation Awards at the Annual Meeting. Jim was, of course, one of our founders and our guiding light and *Jefe'* for the first two years of MCSA. Mr. Cote wishes to apologize for the omission and to reassure Mr. Lake that he is, in fact, not "chopped liver" now.

TREASURER'S REPORT
Treasurer's Report accepted.

ACADEMY AND TRAINING ISSUES
Ms. Wallace reports that 22 of 23 students will graduate the Public Safety Dispatch Academy on Friday November 21st. Graduation will take place at 10:00 AM at the Mass. State Police HQ in Framingham. All are invited but please call Dawn at SETB to let them know how big a crowd. There is no date yet set for the next Academy.

Ms. Wallace noted that the funding "pipeline" is beginning to gurgle and bang and that something should come out of it shortly. Therefore it is speculated that this latest Academy will be the last one with a tuition! She also reports that the accounting systems and standards for these funds, *vis a vis* Academy, are not yet complete. She was unable to go into detail as she is not involved in that process.

TRAINING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Ms. Wallace tells us she spoke with Mr. Fahey on the 18th re the TAC and setting up a time to meet with the TAC. That date is not set but is expected shortly. She will keep us advised.

There was a general and informal discussion of "Training Needs" of our members. These needs may or may not be met by the Academy as now structured. Indeed some of them cannot be resolved except within individual departments. Some of the topics discussed, in no special order:

- Promoting the Standardization of Operations for Public Safety Dispatch throughout state.
- More training in what goes on behind the console and what happens when these buttons are pushed. Members noted that, while there may be a phone number and contact person to call when something goes wrong, it is often difficult to describe the nature of the problem when the supervisor is hazy on the technicals of the system.

- "Refresher Training" for personnel already in the field; whether Academy grads or not.
    - The change from the theory of the Academy to the individual department policies may cause new people confusion which impacts performance.
    - Long experienced operators may have bad habits ingrained. Refresher Training, in another setting, may break those habits and impart fresh attitudes re their tasks.
    - We should begin to set on-going standards of performance across the industry and this is the place to "standardize" all our people.

Having talked about this, Ms. Carroll raised again her proposal to follow up on the very popular "Disaster Day" conference of earlier this year. She proposes that we put an educational conference for P/S Dispatch each year. Perhaps these concerns may be addressed in that venue. Ms. Favreau stepped to the fore and volunteered to put the conference together with a proposed date of **March 24, 2004**. Location will be Milford again, assuming availability of the hotel. Some of the classroom or breakout sessions suggested are:

- Large Scale Events And The Key Role Dispatch Plays In Them
    - Establishing SOP's for Major Events
    - Meshing with your town's alphabet: LEPC, CEMP, MEMA, FEMA, BBC, PDQ, ETC.
    - Resource Availability and How to Contact Them
- SETB 911 Operations Seminar, including
    - ANI/ALI Discrepancies
    - Loggers and How To Use Them
    - Troubleshooting Your Equipment…(Is it really broke? Or did we mess up?)
    - Dealing with the dreaded TTY!

We are looking for vendors who may be willing to underwrite portions of the event such as luncheon and vittles for breaks. The ticket price will probably be higher than the $25 of the last conference…since we lost a bundle on that one despite the great attendance.
Other ideas for speakers are welcome. Anyone who is willing to help should contact Laurie Favreau. There should be plenty to do.

It was also decided that we should plan a separate, more focused event on the theme of "Supervisor Training" to be held in May, date uncertain. This event will zero in on topics like:

- Supervisor Training
- Hiring Issues…and of course, How and When to Discipline or Terminate
- How to stay ahead of your people (what you need to know…first)
- Documentation (Proving you did whatever it was you did.)

RETIREMENT ISSUES

There was discussion on an issue that is close to many of our hearts….closer to some of us than others. (You all know who you are!) Ms. Carroll circulated a sheet asking that we all note down where we fit into the State Retirement plans. Initial results show that some of us are Retirement Group I; some are Group II, Group III. And some of us don't even figure in this at all.

One item that became clear is that each of us has a different place in the hearts and minds of our employers…or no place at all. Going around the table we find that we even have different titles for the same or similar responsibilities.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Mr. Fosque could not join us though he has been doing much research into the topic of retirement in PSD. (That's **P**ublic **S**afety **D**ispatch…but it sounds too much like PTSD so maybe we won't use that. Gives me "flashbacks") Ms. Carroll mentioned a Mr. Joseph Connarton who represents PERAC and will try to book him into the December meeting as a speaker.

NEXT MEETING: December 17 at 10:00AM
Location: Boston FD Alarm HQ 59 Fenway St, Boston

Adjourned: 12:20 S.J. Cote, Recorder