

Metro Region ARMER Standards

Section 6 – Mero 6.6.0 Aid and Grants to Local Units of Govt

Date Established

5-15-03

Date Revised/Reviewed

6-30-03

1. Purpose or Objective

The purpose of this standard is to define a set of rules and procedures for carrying out the intent of the statutes governing the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board (MESB) insofar as they affect the Board's powers to provide aid to local units of government and to provide a portion of the financing of the capital costs for local units of government opting to participate in the Second Phase.

2. Background

The 2002 Minnesota Legislature amended the statutes relating to the MESB, allowing the Board to use its general fund money to provide "aid to local units of government for sites and equipment in support of mutual aid and emergency medical communications services."

The 2003 legislature further amended the law and defined the Second Phase of the regional system as "the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board providing assistance to local government units building subsystems in the metropolitan area that did not build their own subsystems in the first phase."

A third new provision increased the revenue bonding authority of the Board by an additional \$18 million, using a 1.5 cent per month increase in the amount of the 9-1-1 surcharge on telephone wire and wireless lines effective July 1, 2004 as the revenue source for the new bonds. Further, the statute restricted the Board's ability to provide funding for the Second Phase by stating that "The proceeds of bonds issued under this paragraph must be used to pay up to 50 percent of the cost to a local government unit of building a subsystem and may not be used to finance portable or subscriber radio sets."

These statutory changes were contained in the Anti-terrorism legislation and were passed in response to the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center of September 11, 2001, as part of an effort to improve Minnesota's ability to respond to a potential attack here.

The original law passed in 1995 provides that a design plan for subsequent phases of the system be drafted and adopted by the Board. In keeping with that requirement, the Board has hired Vegemast Engineering, Inc. to update the original plan, and to provide detailed design specifications for those jurisdictions within the Metropolitan Area that did not opt to participate in the first phase. Under the provision allowing the Board to assist local units of government, the Board is underwriting the cost of these design plans.

3. Operational Context

The original law creating the Board and the region-wide system required that each county must complete a planning process on whether and how it would participate in the regional system. The plan and any updates or amendments to the plan will serve as the basis for participation.

4. Protocol/Standard

1. Local units of government within the metropolitan area are eligible for aid if:

- a. The governing body of the local unit approves, by resolution, a request for participation in the regional system or requests assistance for constructing capital facilities that the Board determines may be used at some future time as part of the regional system or a local subsystem of the regional system.
- b. Funding for the local entity's share of the costs is identified.
- c. A technical plan for implantation is consistent with the plan developed and approved by the county within which the entity is located and is approved by the governing body of the county.

2. Local units of government are eligible for up to a fifty percent reimbursement from the capital bond fund of the Board for the following classes of expenditures and follow the process and procedure outlined in paragraph 5 of this set of standards.

Reimbursable capital costs are generally limited to the following: material and personnel costs involved in civil design and construction at sites, such as site preparation, shelters, towers, roads, easements, and associated elements, including warranties; project management, design, construction and installation of microwave antennas and microwave radio equipment including training and warranties; project management, computer software, engineering, design and installation of equipment racks; radio, computer, and other associated equipment permanently mounted or housed in racks and/or in shelters, including training and warranties; antennas and cables; fixed or mobile network monitoring equipment; personnel and material costs of installation of equipment at the dispatch center or control center for the subsystem commonly known as the central electronics bank, equipment designed to facilitate in-building coverage, and associated civil construction at the control center. Not eligible are the costs of portable or mobile radio sets for use on the system nor are the costs of dispatch consoles, except upgrades or purchases that are required to interface with the new 800 MHz system.

3. In-building coverage, or any other enhancements, will not be eligible for matching funds for any entity that is a subscriber of a county subsystem unless it is an independent PSAP and recognized and approved as such in the county plan. The Board will consider funding in-building coverage and other enhancements for dependent subscribers of the county subsystem only if the application comes from the county. In such a circumstance, the project must be approved by the county as part of its plan and it will count against the county's reimbursement entitlement.

5. Procedure

1. The first step for a local unit of government or other eligible agency in applying for grant funds from the Board under the provisions outlined above is to pass enabling authorization in the form of a resolution by the governing body of the local unit or other eligible agency. If the unit is an entity other than a county, the authorization must be ratified by the governing body of the county.

2. A copy of the resolution(s) should be forwarded to the Board, together with a letter requesting participation and generally outlining the plan, its estimated cost and a projected timetable. The resolution(s) should include a request for financial assistance and should

provide detail as to the overall plan to finance the project. The Board is authorized to provide up to 50 percent of eligible capital costs. Documents should be forwarded to the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board c/o:

Executive Director
Metropolitan Emergency Services Board
Metropolitan Counties Government Center
2099 University Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104

3. A hearing will be scheduled with the Board's Radio Technical Operations Committee (TOC), at which time a technical review of the local unit's preliminary plans shall be conducted. The Radio TOC shall determine whether the request is consistent with the approved county plan as established under the 1995 law and as subsequently updated or amended. It shall also determine whether the request is consistent with the detailed system design, including authorized changes. The Radio TOC shall make a recommendation to the full Board.

4. The Board will act on the application at its next regular meeting. If the Board approves of the plan, the local unit may proceed with implementation. If the Board does not approve, it shall provide the reasons for denial in writing, together with a list of changes it requires.

5. When detailed design plans are complete, a copy of the design plan, including any changes in cost estimates and construction schedules must be submitted to the Board for Radio TOC and staff review. The Board shall approve a total amount of the project that is eligible for payment by the Board and shall identify a funding source within in the Five Year Capital Improvements Plan. This amount shall not exceed 50 percent of the approved plan cost. The Board is limited by law to a 50 percent reimbursement.

6. During construction, the local unit, the Board and, if applicable, MnDOT shall negotiate a cooperative agreement. The agreement must contain a provision that the funds expended by the Board shall be used only for capital costs related to participation in the metropolitan region portion of the ARMER system. The agreement also must include a provision allowing for complete disclosure and audit of the financial records of the local unit associated with the Second Phase construction.

7. As capital expenditures are incurred; copies of invoices should be submitted to the Board at least quarterly. If the invoices and supporting documentation are consistent with the approved plans, the Board shall reimburse the local unit as specified in paragraph 5 above within 90 days of submittal and approval of the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board.

6. Management

The Executive Director of the Board is responsible for managing this procedure.