

FEDERAL COMMITTEE FOR METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES AND  
SUPPORTING RESEARCH (FCMSSR)

NEXRAD PROGRAM COUNCIL

Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology (OFCM)  
1325 East-West Highway, Suite 7130  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Record of Actions 2017-1 Meeting

January 17, 2017

ATTENDEES

Members

DOC: Dr. Louis Uccellini NOAA/NWS  
DoD: Mr. Ralph Stoffler, HQ USAF/A3W  
DOT: Mr. Malcolm Andrews, FAA  
OFCM: Dr. William Schulz (Chairman)

Other Participants

DOC: Mr. Joseph Pica, NOAA/NWS  
DoD: Lt Col Steve Davis, HQ USAF/A3W  
DOT: Mr. Steven Kim, FAA  
Mr. Rick Heuwinkel, FAA  
OFCM: Mr. Jud Stailey (Executive Secretary)  
Mr. Mike Bonadonna

**1. OPENING REMARKS**

Dr. Bill Schulz, Federal Coordinator for Meteorology and NPC Chairman, opened the meeting with introductions and welcomed the participants. This is the second NEXRAD Program Council meeting in the “modern era.” The focus of this meeting will be on updating the status of the action items from the previous meeting.

**2. STATUS OF WORK ON ACTION ITEMS**

The first action item from the 2016-01 meeting was for the Air Force to fill the vacant DoD positions at the ROC with a target date of 1 September 2017. Mr. Stoffler reported that of the 5 vacancies, two have been filled, 2 are in the hiring pipeline and expect to be filled before any hiring freeze action takes place, and one (the deputy position) has not yet been advertised. National Weather Service emphasized the importance of the deputy position in the upcoming pedestal replacement phase of the SLEP. Mr. Stoffler informed the group that he is working changes in policy to put weather warning responsibility back into the base weather stations, so local radar information is expected to become more important. Dr. Uccellini commented that Air Force response times to radar outages have improved.

The second action item from the 2016 meeting was for National Weather Service, supported by DoD and FAA, to lead a review of current and future ROC manpower requirements. Mr. Pica briefed a few slides showing the purpose of the effort, the team, and the status of work.

Regarding the team, Mr. Stoffler suggested that the DoD focal point was from a logistics organization, and is probably not the right person for a staffing review. He agreed to provide a more appropriate manpower expert. Regarding the methodology, the team is starting from the 2004 manpower baseline and using a time-management system to perform a staff review. They have to fold in new requirements related to IT security and precipitation estimation. The review must take into account that to support the SLEP, the ROC is delaying work on some improvement activities, including new builds. In response to a question from Mr. Andrews, Mr. Pica stated that the study should be completed this summer in accordance with the target date on the action item (Exec Sec note: July 1, 2017). Mr. Stailey asked if the group had considered, for the lack of a better term, requirements. Mr. Pica responded that the group has looked at the ROC tasking and determined that nothing has gone away, but some things have been added. Dr. Uccellini suggested that a Gantt chart showing the study schedule be developed and provided to the group. Mr. Pica will follow up on that suggestion.

The third action item from the 2016 meeting was for OFCM to propose an approach to performing a business case analyses on NEXRAD scenarios related to transferring DoD WSR-88D assets to the NWS. Mr. Stailey reviewed the action item, which called for a business case analysis comparing the status quo with complete transfer of DoD assets. He then started by considering the costs, including quantifying current costs, costs of transition, costs available from DoD for transfer to NWS, total NWS costs post transfer, and impact on FAA costs. Mr. Pica pointed out that it may be necessary to include recapitalization costs, to which Mr. Stoffler responded that the current position in the Air Force is that recapitalization is no longer an issue. Mr. Stoffler also cautioned about ignoring new and proposed radar systems that will or may have weather capability. Mr. Stailey then touched on the benefits (and potential detriments) of the consolidation. That led to a discussion of the approach to such a study, including senior oversight, make-up of groups, processes, and roles and responsibilities both in the interagency and within agencies. One of the responsibilities suggested for the steering group was to agree on philosophy, assumptions, definitions, and processes. Dr. Uccellini stated that “philosophy” needs to include requirements. Views on requirements were expressed. Mr. Stoffler asked Mr. Andrews what requirements FAA had for radar data at an airfield. Mr. Andrews agreed to try to provide that information. The presentation closed with a schedule. The council agreed to proceed with the analysis based on the approach suggested, and agreed to appoint a steering group member from each agency to guide and manage the process.

### **3. OTHERS ISSUES.**

- a. Mr. Stoffler reported that as soon as the work on moving the Lajes radar back to the US is completed, the Air Force will begin work on removing the radars from Korea. There have been some administrative hold-ups related to transferring the Lajes radar from the Defense Logistics Agency to the Air Force so it can be transferred to the National Weather Service; those hurdles have been cleared, and the project is again moving forward. The Air Force has arranged to receive data from the Korean radars, which allows removal of the WSR-88Ds.
- b. Mr. Stoffler informed the group that he is working changes in policy to put weather warning responsibility back into the base weather stations, so local radar information is expected to become more important.
- c. Dr. Uccellini commented that Air Force response times to radar outages have improved.

#### **4. WRAP-UP**

Dr. Uccellini stated that he was pleased with the work of the Program Council in that it has already accomplished the goal of making NEXRAD deliberations more interactive and transparent as a tri-agency program. Dr. Schulz reviewed the new action items and, with concurrence of the members, adjourned the meeting.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

**Action Item 2017-1.1.** NWS will provide a Gantt chart illustrating the schedule for the Radar Operations Center manpower study.

**Due Date:** March 10, 2017

**Action Item 2017-1.2.** The Air Force will provide to NWS a manpower point of contact to participate in the Radar Operations Center manpower study.

**Due Date:** March 24, 2017

**Action Item 2017-1.3.** OFCM will modify the approach to performing the business case analyses on NEXRAD scenarios to insert the determination of requirements into the first element of the corporate responsibilities of the Steering Group

**Due Date:** March 10, 2017

**Action Item 2017-1.4.** Agencies will appoint a Steering Group member to guide the business case analyses on NEXRAD scenarios (status quo and transfer of Air Force assets to NWS) in accordance with the approach proposed by OFCM (as modified by Action Item 2017-1/3).

**Due Date:** March 24, 2017

**Action Item 2017-1.5.** Steering Group members will proceed with the business case development and analysis, convening an initial meeting by February 24, 2017.

**Due Date:** February March 31, 2017

**Action Item 2017-1.6.** FAA will provide information (summary/references, etc.) on mandated airfield instrumentation.

**Due Date:** March 31, 2017

**Action Item 2017-1.7.** OFCM will schedule the next Program Council meeting for April 2017.

**Due Date:** February 10, 2017