

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 2017-2 Meeting

May 31, 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. Kevin Cooley, NOAA/NWS
Mr. John Murphy, NOAA/NWS
Mr. Joseph Pica, NOAA/NWS
Mr. Mark Miller, NOAA/NWS
Mr. Barrett Smith, NOAA/NWS
Mr. Terry Clark, NOAA/NWS (dial-in)
DoD: Lt Col Steve Davis, HQ USAF/A3W
Mr. John Vogel, 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 third NEXRAD Program Council meeting in the “modern era.” Dr. Schulz reviewed the agenda, noting that after updating the status of the action items from previous meetings, this meeting would focus on the Radar Operations Center (ROC) manpower review and establishing the council in a more permanent status by adopting a charter.

2. STATUS OF WORK ON ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Schulz reviewed the action items (Atch 1) from the two previous meetings. Action Item 2016-1.1 called for the Air Force to fill vacant positions at the ROC, and two of the five vacancies had been filled by the last PC meeting. Mr. Stoffler reported that the two position that

were “in the pipeline” in January did not get filled before the hiring freeze, and hiring action has been restarted for them. The status of the other position (deputy) is TBD. Action Item 2013-1.2, directing the ROC manpower review would be addressed later in the meeting. Action Item 2017-1.5, requesting that the FAA provide the Air Force information on FAA’s airfield instrumentation requirements, remained open, as the Air Force member did not recall receiving the FAA response. OFCM took an action (#2017-2.1) to provide a copy of that response to the Air Force member, effectively closing this action item. Action Item 2017-1.6 called for the NEXRAD Business Case Steering Group to proceed with developing the business case. That action item remains open, and the Steering Group meeting will conduct its organizational meeting on June 2, 2017. Action Items 2016-1.3, 2017-1.1, 2017-1.2, 2017-1.3, 2017-1.4, and 2017-1.7 have been closed.

3. AGENCY UPDATES

Before launching into the remainder of the agenda, members provided updates on their program status.

- a. NWS reported that technology refresh portion of the WSR-88D service life extension program (SLEP) would be completed this year under budget. The transmitter replacement project is underway, and is projected to take three years. The request for information for the pedestal replacement received a good response from industry, but the award will be delayed slightly into FY 2018. The pedestal from the decommissioned Air Force system at Lajes, which is in transit to the US, will put four spares into the rotation. The project to refurbish the shelters is expected to start in next year (a year ahead of schedule). The SLEP is fully funded, and FY17 is the peak funding year.
- b. The Air Force reported that they will be meeting in Korea in September to discuss removing the 88Ds from that theater, and were expecting to broach the topic with Japanese authorities later in the year. NWS pointed out that any additional pedestals that would be made available by decommissioning overseas systems would make important contributions to reducing risk in the pedestal replacement project.

4. RADAR OPERATIONS CENTER (ROC) MANPOWER REVIEW

Mr. Clark, ROC director, briefed the preliminary results of the manpower review, starting with purpose, methodology, participants, and organizational chart. The review used a 2004 manpower study as a baseline. Since then, contracting support was added to support the SLEP, but otherwise workload has increased without increasing the staffing. The workload is not expected to decrease after the SLEP, as the diversion of resources to support the SLEP has created a backlog of deferred work that must be completed later on an accelerated schedule. The situation has been exacerbated by persistent vacancies. Of particular concern is the removal of a branch manager billet, which could require restructuring after the incumbent departs in October. Other manpower changes that could impact ROC manpower are being proposed in an upcoming MOA review.

Discussion centered on the Air Force engagement of a manpower expert, a subsequent recommendation for the Air Force to perform a formal manpower study, and the status of MOA reviews in the interim. The Air Force took an action to formally request the study (#2017-2.2). The Air Force had been working internally, for purposes of simplification, to combine the two existing MOAs into one. However the consensus of the council was to keep the two MOAs (general management and cost allocation) separate, so the Air Force agreed to break their draft

out into two documents as before and provide them for review (#2017-2.3). They will include ROC manpower numbers adjusted for change in the number of radars after the Lajes transfer. The Air Force agreed to use those numbers to man the ROC pending the results of the formal manpower study. Considering that a formal ROC manpower study is planned, it was deemed unnecessary to wrap up the internal review, and Action Item 2016-1.2 was closed.

5. NEXRAD PROGRAM COUNCIL CHARTER

The chair presented a briefing covering the key points of the proposed charter, which had been provided earlier for review. The members agreed with most of the proposal, but decided to specify explicitly the provision for selecting a chair (the original version provide three options) and to change the signatories. OFCM was tasked to incorporate these changes (#2017-2.4) and provide the revised charter to the agencies for final review (#2017-2.5).

6. WRAP-UP

The chair reviewed the action items, and the meeting was adjourned.

ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS MEETING:

Action Item 2017-2.1: OFCM will provide FAA's response to Action Item 2017-1.6 to all members.

Due Date: June 2, 2017

Action Item 2017-2.2. The Air Force member will formally request a manpower analysis be performed by the Air Force Manpower Analysis Agency on the Radar Operations Center.

Due Date: June 30, 2017

Action Item 2017-2.3. The Air Force will draft updates to the two WSR-88D memoranda of agreement and provide those drafts to the NWS and FAA for coordination.

Due Date: June 30, 2017

Action Item 2017-2.4. OFCM will incorporate comments from the meeting into the draft NEXRAD Program Council charter and provide the draft to the agencies for coordination.

Due Date: June 2, 2017

Action Item 2017-2.5. Agencies will review the draft NEXRAD Program Council charter and provide comments to OFCM.

Due Date: June 16, 2017

ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Action Item 2016-1.1. DoD will fill the vacant DoD positions at the ROC.

Due Date: September 1, 2017

Status:

January 17, 2017: 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.

May 31, 2017: The two position that were “in the pipeline” in January did not get filled before the hiring freeze, and hiring action has been restarted for them. The status of the other position (deputy) is TBD.

Action Item 2016-1.2. National Weather Service, supported by DoD and FAA will lead a review of current and future ROCg manpower requirements.

Due Date: July 1, 2017

Status:

January 17, 2017: Work is underway and on target to be completed by the due date.

May 31, 2017: The team has been formed and will hold its first meeting June 2, 2017.

Action Item 2016-1.3. OFCM will propose an approach to performing business case analyses on NEXRAD scenarios going forward. Analyses should include, as a minimum, status quo and complete transfer of DoD assets, but other scenarios may be proposed.

Due Date: September 1, 2016

Status:

CLOSED: Provided to NPC on 11/28/2016.

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

Status:

CLOSED by OFCM email Fri 3/10/2017 4:17 PM, which included as an attachment a new brief on the ROC manpower including the requested Gantt chart.

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

Status:

CLOSED by USAF A3W by providing a contact point in April 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

Status:

CLOSED by OFCM email Fri 3/10/2017 4:17 PM, which included as an attachment a new brief on the business case approached with the requested modification.

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

Status:

CLOSED by OFCM on May 15, 2017 when all agencies had appointed steering group members.

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

Status:

May 31, 2017: The steering group will hold its first meeting June 2, 2017.

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

Due Date: March 31, 2017

Status:

February 23, 2017: FAA provided a paper entitled "FAA NEXRAD System Requirements" to the PC. However, while this is in context of the NPC, it may not be what was requested in the action item (information (summary/references, etc.) on mandated airfield instrumentation.). Discuss further at next PC meeting.

May 31, 2017: CLOSED: The response based on NEXRAD requirements is satisfactory. This action item was superseded by AI 2017-2.1 requesting that OFCM retransmit the response to the members.

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

Due Date: February 10, 2017

Status:

CLOSED. OFCM took action immediately following the January 17, 2017 PC meeting to schedule the next meeting in the latter half of April. The meeting was eventually scheduled for May 31, 2017, at the request of the agencies.