

MINUTES

S.A.R.L. HAMNET

Minutes of Teleconference held on Thursday 26th January 2006.

The meeting commenced at 19:00 local time.
Chairperson - Francois Botha - ZS6BUU.

Apologies.

Martin Harper - ZS6MSG.

In Attendance – On Line:-

Graham Hartlett ZS6GJH; Francois Botha ZS6BUU; Jan Schubart ZS6ARV;
Steve Baynes ZS6XU; Johan de Bruyn ZS6JHB; Chris Willigenburg ZS6VB;
Sid Tyler ZS6AYC; Chris Viljoen ZS6BYQ; Dave Reece ZS1DFR;
Pierre Tromp ZS1HF; Keith Lowes ZS5WFD; Al Akers ZS2U;
Dennis Green ZS5 BS and Jannie Minny ZSRJR.

Welcome and Opening.

Francois and Graham welcomed the delegates to our first Teleconference.
The attendance on line was excellent. Graham emphasized the importance of
HAMNET development now that we have a grant allocation.

The procedures of meeting were briefly outlined by Francois and a few items
were added to item 16 – General for later discussion.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

**PLEASE NOTE: AT THE END OF EACH HEADING – THERE WILL BE A
SUMMARY AND THE NAMES/CALL SIGNS OF ACTION TO BE TAKEN.**

BUDGET

Francois opened with the issue of setting up budgets around the country and
what had transpired in discussions on this issue with Graham in the
meantime. A separate bank account will have to be opened as the
Department of Transport (DoT) want an annual audit report.

The weighted average per Province (membership count) was briefly
discussed.

Petrol vouchers for needy volunteers were mentioned and I will approach
some petrol companies for discount vouchers. Compiling of budgets around
the country should be left to the Provincial Directors (PD's) and submitted to
Graham and myself so we can compile a general budget. Overspending on
paper must not be regarded as an issue as a general budget will be submitted
to the DoT in due course.

All expenditures will be done via the main account in Johannesburg. The item was then opened for general discussion.

Johan ZS6JHB felt that the funds should be used for emergency communication expenditure only. Equipment and advertising should be the main expenditure areas. Banners etc. should be looked at.

Francois then suggested that after all the delegates had had a chance to air their opinions, Graham should be asked to lead us in compiling the Budget as he has had much experience in setting up budgets.

Chris ZS6VB has a committee meeting planned when the budget and other items will be discussed. Sid, ZS6AYC suggested that we should standardize our emergency equipment, banners, safety (reflective) vests etc.

Jan ZS6ARV agreed that Bib's, banners etc should be the same around the country.

May I at this point suggest that all of us look at the "wording" and layout of suitable banners as well as suggestions as to how the vests should look? I still have one of the original vests going back about 15 or 20 years. I will explain how it looks at the end of the minutes. Let's look at a suitable look and get quotes for manufacture.

Jan also suggested that money donated to specific areas for services rendered, should be allocated to that area alone and not for general use. This is easy to do in the general bank account. We all agreed that this is acceptable. This was acceptable to Keith ZS5WFD who also suggested a standardised "look" across the country.

Francois then asked Graham to explain how a budget should be established; Graham indicated that there is another issue he has established whilst listening to us and that is the need for a "vision statement".

Graham suggested that Francois establish a vision statement (for approval around the country) and then to make use of this whenever we promote ourselves.

Graham then suggested that we start with what is known as a zero based budget. In other words, a blank piece of paper showing basically no limitations on income and expenses. We need to look at where money is coming from namely the grant and donations as well as what it costs to render our services. We need to look at equipment, travelling and accommodation expenses etc. So each Province or region must firstly compile a budget of Income and Expenses in a set format which will be added to the minutes.

Francois needs to look at the costs of the teleconferences, visits around the country etc.

Graham further suggests a main Hamnet Budget comprising all the regional budgets put together which are all the same in format. All the various expenditures and incomes are summarised and from there a main budget can be established.

From this budget we will then know where we stand with regard fixed income (the grant) other income and expenses. This gives us a profit or a loss.

Should we find ourselves short, then we need to look at other areas of raising funds to run the organisation effectively.

There may be discrepancies in setting up budgets where a province sets itself targets they know is going to be difficult to meet. Arrangements between Provinces to “fund” shortfalls can then be arranged.

Money or income derived by various provinces can be deposited into the main account but as mentioned earlier, this can be kept separate in a general ledger from the main budget and can be used whenever needed by that specific province.

This was never mentioned during any of the discussions, but let me again emphasize the point that we may not “charge” an organisation for services rendered. We could find ourselves at loggerheads with both ICASA and the SARS.

A call out kit was mentioned by Graham. This kit should be standardised within each Province. We now have money to purchase such equipment from the grant. This kit is in the training modules which will be discussed later.

Francois then asked Graham to please send him a format of compiling a budget which can be attached to the minutes and distributed around the various Provinces. The benefit is that we are all compiling “the same” format.

SUMMARY:

Expenses relate to genuine Hamnet items/activities only

Standardise all items country wide i.e. budget format, bibs, banners etc. – any contributions to National Director will be circulated for discussion.

Individual voluntary donations to kitty to be kept to related provinces. – Francois to ensure conformity.

Creation of a “Vision Statement” – Francois to attend to.

Graham to submit a pro-forma budget as a guide. – Graham ZS6GJH.

QUARTERLY REPORTS FROM PROVINCIAL DIRECTORS

During previous discussions with Graham, the point was made that we need to make more “noise” about Hamnet activities – especially via Radio ZS. Although Radio ZS is read by hams only, it still is publicity.

Francois suggested that the various PD’s submit articles on Hamnet activities in their areas. These notes could be directed to me so I can compile an article for publication in Radio ZS. The idea also is that the various PD’s “talk” to each other so we can see what is happening around the country.

Jan suggested that we make use of what we did before namely news from the Provinces. Allow PD’s to do their own articles but send a copy to Francois who could then compile a larger article. This article can then be used to inform the DoT and SASAR of our activities as well as distribute to all PD’s for their perusal.

This combined article can then also be used to promote Hamnet to key people in Disaster Management and Emergency Units and other NGO’s as a PRO exercise.

Pierre ZS1HF briefly mentioned his experience with other organisations during the Double Barrel exercises and that they were impressed with what they saw.

Sid agreed that a consolidated report may be very effective to promote Hamnet. Keith discussed the re-introduction of their weekly Indaba and mentioned that they distribute articles to their Disaster Management bodies. He also mentioned the S.A. Emergency Services Institute bi-monthly publication where we could possibly insert an article to promote our activities.

Chris ZS6BYQ is concerned at the lack of interaction between him and his members. There is good communication with his Disaster Management group in Potchefstroom and although they find Hamnet interesting, they rarely make use of us.

Francois indicated that he needs to redistribute the Database to all PD's so they can establish closer contact with their members.

SUMMARY:

Provincial Directors to do their own reports on a quarterly basis and to submit copies to National Director for a composite publication. – All PD's and Francois.

DISPLAY UNITS TO PROMOTE HAMNET

Francois asked all the PD's to look at the possibility of each Province developing a collapsible display stand to promote Hamnet activities. This could now be purchased from grant funds and incorporated in the budget.

This could be done by one of a PD's committee members. Francois then briefly mentioned that more emphasis should be placed by delegating certain responsibilities to committee members to ease the workload of a PD.

You can develop your own set of pictures for display and in that way, when the opportunity presents itself, you can set up a display to promote Hamnet.

SUMMARY:

All PD's or their appointed committee members to look into this matter.

TRAINING MODULES

Francois indicated that he would like Pierre to handle this item on the agenda.

Pierre gave credit to Glen ZS5GD and Keith ZS5WFD who assisted in compiling the modules. Much of it is common knowledge. In each province there should be a person appointed to handle the training notes to members in that specific area. This person should handle the training of the various members. Again, it depends on the size of the province how each PD will handle the training.

Francois asked how we are going to handle people in outlying areas! Pierre suggested we make the modules available in print format or via e-mail. Small groups can work together and is necessary phone or e-mail him for advice on a point not fully understood.

Francois was concerned that the members may want to get themselves acquainted with the modules, but how are we going to test them.

Pierre suggested a telephone call to test his level of competency. Keith indicated courses done by Glen via the internet. This was an on line examination. You can download the test paper and is an open book examination. One paper had as much as 50 questions.

Francois indicated that the training team come together and compile an evaluation form to test competency from those who have done the modules. Maybe the modules should be released in batches and tested at the end of each batch.

Graham wanted more info on the training. It applies to all current and new members – bar none!

Graham felt that there should be some official test applied to all to ensure that we studied all the modules – especially that we are now sponsored. We need to ensure that when that when that emergency arises, we are all fully trained and know what to do. We could be held liable if things go wrong! It should be a more formal type of examination.

Jan suggested, from his own current experience, that a more “open” type of evaluation is quite acceptable which includes the “open book” scenario and that we should not over emphasise a “classroom” type evaluation or style.

Indaba over the air is a great way of training! (Francois personal comment) “Unfortunately, going on what Jan said and I accept his comments (and I say this with reservation) nobody “fails” these days. However, I go along with what Graham said and that is that we should rise just slightly above the “norm” as lives could be at stake!”

I am sure we can overcome the problem of the chap out in the sticks – so to speak. Keith also emphasised that the emphasis should be on the RSU (Radio Support Unit) people to ensure that they are up the task!

Graham then said that he felt that no matter how we do it, we must be able to ensure and prove competence and deliver that competence – no matter how it was evaluated!

Training modules are available from Francois or from Pierre via e-mail. They will eventually be on the SARL website. We are waiting for Richard to get on ADSL.

SUMMARY:

Training team to look at conformity on evaluating each candidate – Training team comprising Pierre, Glen and Keith – report back to ND.

All PD's to appoint a person in his team so supervise all training programs.

JAMLIN

Francois briefly explained that he has been dealing with Rob Byrne for a while – mainly to establish credibility. That has now been achieved.

Rob indicated that he is prepared to “mention our name” on air – either on TV or via SAFM or Classic FM.

We need to establish a “slogan” for Rob. It cannot be long as his time is also limited. Can I please get some slogans and if necessary we can list them all and vote on them.

The benefit is that both SARL and HAMNET will get their names mentioned on air – NATIONAL AIR!

SUMMARY:

We have an opportunity of the name HAMNET and The S.A.R.L. being aired over Radio & TV. – Francois to liaise with Rob Byrne in Cape Town.

CREATING OF RSU's (RADIO SUPPORT UNITS)

This is something that has been bandied about for a while. Francois needs to know for the benefit of (a) the database and (b) the various PD's, who are the people (in your immediate circle) you can depend on and rely on to be available at the drop of a hat, to set up a field station or at least a Radio Support Unit site until such time as we have more info on what is required of us!

I leave this to the various PD's to ascertain who is available and to let me know their names.

Pierre asked if we should change the name from Radio Support Unite to Rapid Response Unit. I indicated that it was just a lack of choosing the right wording and that Radio Support Unit should remain – to overcome having to change all the Training Modules already issued.

SUMMARY:

Provincial Directors to advise Francois in due course of who in their respective Provinces are the people who can be deployed as immediate mobile units in times of emergency – All Provincial Directors.

VACANCIES

There are a couple of vacancies of PD's at present. The Western Cape I am going to leave to Dave Reece and his team. Andrew Perrins ZR1SBM has not left the Cape yet, but will be relocating to the Eastern Free State. My thanks at this stage for all his hard work in the Western Cape over the years and I leave it to their W.P. team to appoint his successor.

Northern Cape – I suggest that we approach Carel ZS3OBE to take on this position. Amateurs in that part of the world are sparsely populated and he would be an asset to the team.

Free State – I leave to Dennis Green. He has a Bloemfontein Club meeting coming up soon and this is on the Agenda.

Lastly, Limpopo Province. I did think at one stage of splitting Limpopo in two but I will again via the SARL Sunday bulletin, promote HAMNET in the Limpopo Province.

SUMMARY:

Vacancies to be attended to by Pierre – N/Cape, Dennis – Free State, Dave – W/Province and Francois Limpopo Province.

DATABASE

Gentleman, I must be in a position to maintain a “healthy: and accurate Database. Please take it upon yourself to let me know of any changes that take place among your members. It is in the Hamnet Manual. The Provincial Director should keep track of his members and advise the National Director (ND) of any changes.

Even SASAR have a copy of the Database and it would be an embarrassment should they try and contact a person and find this person is not available due to an inaccurate Database.

Please let me know of any changes. I will contact Chris ZS6VB regarding some work he did on his members. Many of whom are no longer available on either cell phone or e-mail.

SUMMARY:

All PD's— Please keep me abreast of changes in your area.

EXERCISES

For some or other reason, I missed out on item 13. Can I leave it to Pierre to arrange the odd exercise during this coming year. Pierre – please feel free to approach me on this issue.

SUMMARY:

Pierre (and training team – or any other good suggestions via Pierre) – please have a look at arranging some exercises – maybe once a quarter.

GAREC

Francois mentioned the fact that he had again been invited to attend this years GAREC Conference in Tampere. Seppo Sisato, the Chairperson of the last conference visited me in November last year and indicated that he may suggest that I attend as a “special guest”.

That is very flattering. But unless somebody comes up with an airfare, I feel I would rather leave it till 2007 – and then as Graham suggested, maybe two of us (being my 2nd in command) should both attend. My 2nd in command is a person who I have not been able to contact for quite a while and will obviously have to be replaced with someone else. We could raise money to send two of us – Graham's suggestion!

Graham also suggested that we look at some of the suppliers of Amateur Radio Equipment so supply competition equipment at a reasonable price!

Pierre mentioned that many Disaster Management Groups are having another look at Hamnet as an alternative means of communication and equipping their operational rooms with cables for our use.

Graham mentioned that there is a lot of emergency equipment available for these emergency rooms.

SUMMARY:

We need to look at raising funds to send more people overseas on conferences.

GENERAL

Time was becoming a problem and we went to the general items.

Point (a) was raising money via competitions. Pierre ZS1HF suggested that we arrange a restricted ticket competition to raise money. First prize could be an Icom 752 pro or something similar. Good point. My personal problem with this is that many amateur radio operators will NOT participate simply because they even have problems in paying their annual subs to the SARL which is more than R200 per annum.

My suggestion is, make it a national competition but then make the first prize a choice. If you are an Amateur Radio Operator or "Ham", the first prize is such and such. However, if you are not an amateur radio operator and you win the first prize, the prize is a Sony Home Theatre system – or something in that line.

However, if you would like to become a radio ham, and would like the first prize, we will pay for your course, exam fees, membership of the SARL and so on and get you on the air. This would only apply should the person be within range of a club who can train this person.

Now we are not only generating funds, but also creating awareness of Amateur Radio!

(Note – this thought came to mind whilst writing the minutes)

Bye the way – funding of the prize – should the entrant fail the exam – we can still offer him/her the alternate prize and recover costs from the money raised! Like I said, you can even smother a cat in peanut butter! – Just a thought!

Chris ZS6VB mentioned that the National Bulletin at 12 noon on Sunday's is a bit of a pain. Propagation is a problem.

Francois suggested that with immediate effect, the National Bulletin for the first Sunday of every month will in future be sent to each PD for reading at a time most convenient for his members.

Running Hamnet on an Intecnet basis is a financial problem at this stage. This does not mean that it will never happen, but I have spoken to Hans vd Groenendal about this and it is a financial problem. Like this first teleconference, I must first have a look at costs before we commit ourselves.

Jannie ZS4JR then discussed a project that him and I started some time back. Jannie is also a member of their local disaster management control unit and in touch with what is happening in his area.

Jannie has been working on a patch system for a number of years. The initial idea was a "patch box" that could handle messages from one frequency to another without having to "make notes" or "take messages". This was a dream of Arthur Bradshaw who ran SASAR.

I approached Jannie to work on something like this, but Jannie has taken it one step further. Patch boxes are now locally available – but at a price!

What Jannie has developed is more like a “remote control” whereby you can link a repeater (or cell phone) to an HF rig.

Jannie would like input and ideas from you OR if you want more information on what he is developing, please contact him directly via his e-mail address to put you in the picture.

Jannie is an electronics engineer and is a gold mine of information. His e-mail address is minny_j@dorea.co.za repeated to ensure you have it right - minny(underscore)j@dorea.co.za.

Graham again mentioned that we need to create web presence, promote HAMNET, press releases etc. Equipment – portable HF radio's namely the Icom IC703. We could get some of them at a reasonable price – one for each Province – put this in your budget. We need motivation and costing in your budget.

Al ZS2U mentioned my trip around the country. That is still on the cards. I did not want to make use of grant money to pay for this trip. I am waiting for my annuities to be paid out from March this year. This will give me more private and personal capital to play around with.

Some costs will obviously come out of my “budget” but I still wish to do this run around the country over a period of about 10 days and do my SASAR presentation plus my Finland presentations to anybody who is interested in not only Amateur Radio but particularly the Emergency Communications side of things.

I am thinking in terms of April – after all the Easter holidays etc.

Steve ZS6XU made the comment that we should as a team, committee or provincial directors, stay in contact with each other on a regular basis – especially via the Internet. A good point and we should be making more use of the Internet as a means of “staying in touch”.

Johan ZS6JHB suggested that we should get together every 3 months.

Keith ZS5WFD also mentioned the new Civil Protection Act and how that is going to affect all of us.

We took a run around the various participants for final comments and the meeting closed at approx. 8.50pm (20:50).

The next meeting will be advised in due course.

My thanks to all participants!

Francois – Chairperson and minute keeper.