

Commonwealth of Virginia Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC)

July 11, 2025

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Joint Safety Operations Center
2430 Pine Forest Drive, South Chesterfield, VA – Room 103

SIEC Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

July 11, 2025

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by Terry Hall, Chair.

2. Introductory Remarks

- **Gabe Elias (SWIC):** Presented a video showcasing communication between Virginia and North Carolina SWICs using native in-state radio systems and a cross-state COMLINC patch.
- **Terry Hall (Chair):** Discussed the role of technology in disaster response, referencing recent events in Virginia/North Carolina and Texas. He acknowledged progress in establishing cross-state communication, as demonstrated by Gabe, but emphasized the need for further advancement in emerging technologies. He commended the Virginia State Police (VSP) for their upgraded system and expressed thoughts and prayers for Commonwealth personnel deployed in Texas.

3. Approval of Previous SIEC Minutes

Minutes from the September 19, 2024, and October 29, 2024, SIEC meetings were presented for approval.

- **Motion:** Pete Kirby
- **Second:** Michelle Gowdy
- **Vote:** All in favor.
- **Motion Carried.**

4. Emerging Technologies Conference 2025 (ETC25) - Introduction

- **Terry Hall:** Reported on the success of last year's conference, noting approximately \$5,000 remaining funds. New dates for ETC25 are December 8-10 at the Hampton Convention Center, with rooms available at the Embassy Suites. The conference will be a half-day on December 8th, a full day on December 9th, and a half-day on December 10th. The goal is 150 attendees, with 4-5 confirmed vendors. Gabe Elias and Dorothy Spears-Dean will assist with funding and sponsorship. The committee is seeking keynote speakers and panelists. VML (Michelle Gowdy) will serve as the fiscal agent. Cybersecurity will be a major focus of the conference.

July 11, 2025

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Joint Safety Operations Center
2430 Pine Forest Drive, South Chesterfield, VA – Room 103

5. Emerging Technologies Conference 2025 (ETC25) - Discussion

- **Bill DeCoste (VSP):** Inquired if ETC25 would support a Public Safety Threat Alliance (PSTA) cyber tabletop exercise, similar to one conducted in Texas.
- **Terry Hall:** Suggested a pre-conference panel discussion on the morning of December 8th, noting VSP's willingness to assist.
- **Tom Nolan (Powhatan County):** Recommended a session on the Emergency Services IP Network (ESINet) and the capability of bringing photos/videos to 911 Centers.
 - **Dorothy Spears-Dean (VDEM NGSB):** Stated that this is being reviewed and will be included in the rewritten capabilities and services document. She suggested further discussion at either the APCO conference or ETC25.
 - **Terry Hall:** Agreed that this is a critical area due to technology convergence.
 - **Tom Nolan:** Raised questions about funding, specifically if NG911 grants from VDEM could be used for video over ESINet and if legislation is needed to require vendors to share information.
 - **Dorothy Spears-Dean:** Emphasized the importance of identifying problems to solve and examining best practices and standards for information sharing.
 - **Tom Nolan:** Asked about obstacles and cost-benefits related to funding transitions from vendors to ESINet.
 - **Chief Craig Branch (VACLEA):** Stressed the need for non-siloed funding approaches, noting that grant funding often requires regional rather than individual entity participation. He highlighted the value of ETC25 for higher education IT, citing Germanna Community College personnel who gained a better understanding of public safety and interoperability after attending last year.

6. VA HB1820 Discussion

- **Gabe Elias:** Introduced Lisa Walbert, Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security from the Governor's Office
- **Virginia "HB1820" Discussion:**
 - **Michelle Gowdy (VML):** Provided an overview of HB1820, which mandates a report on public safety communications infrastructure gaps and needs due to the General Assembly by December 1st from the Secretaries of Public Safety and Finance. The original bill text called for consultation with organizations already part of SIEC, which was addressed by Senator Diggs and others. This group needs to examine the bill for funding and implementation, using the 2023 VDEM NGSB survey data as a starting point.
 - **Deputy Secretary Walbert:** Emphasized the importance of standardization and building upon the 2023 report with an estimate of needs. She stressed the necessity of inter-agency communication, identifying equipment replacement needs, and

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addressing existing gaps.

- **Michelle Gowdy:** Suggested that the first page of the submitted draft should be a summary.
- **Steve Parrott (Region 1 RPAC-I):** Advocated for supporting regional RPAC-I groups with funding to attend SIEC meetings and conferences, acknowledging the costs borne by participants.
- **Terry Hall:** Agreed with the need for such funding.
- **Discussion:** Highlighted the central role of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees in funding and the need for bipartisan support.
- **Terry Hall:** Stressed the influence of SIEC representation.
- **Dorothy Spears-Dean:** Noted that FCC funding supports interoperability.
- **Discussion:** A fast-moving subcommittee will be needed to advance this initiative. Is there funding in the bill to support a new study? Answer: no. The consensus was to develop, articulate, and create an actionable, clear report.
- **Terry Hall:** Suggested bringing in bipartisan (competing) vendors for work sessions during the process.
- **Michelle Gowdy:** Advised bringing in outside resources for their expertise, as they understand existing gaps.
- **Terry Hall:** Suggested following CISA guidelines.
- **Gabe Elias:** Recommended keeping the report high-level and focused on understanding the gaps.
- **VDEM:** Reported 110 responses out of 124 PSAPs to the 2023 locality survey.
- **Overview:** 81 localities reported End-of-Life (EoL) systems or uncertain EoL dates, with 15 localities having EoL systems within a decade. Many are currently replacing or upgrading systems. It was noted that modern radio systems have shorter support lives compared to the 20-25 year lifespan of older systems.
- **Terry Hall:** Characterized this as a lifecycle process.
- **Discussion:** Covered the original survey's target (9-1-1/PSAP), who manages radio systems, and the feasibility of re-sending the survey versus time constraints.
- **Sam Burnette (VDH OEMS):** Mentioned that SAFECOM survey automated spreadsheets are being analyzed by a data analyst for the Office of EMS.
- **Tom Gagnon (CISA):** Commended Virginia's response to the SAFECOM survey and noted the availability of best practices documents for sustainment (CISA/SAFECOM/NCSWIC). He suggested CISA could expand on items in the survey, which appeared to be radio-centric.
- **Discussion:** 46% of respondents reported gaps, with 35% having gaps in subscriber and infrastructure funding.
- **Discussion:** Addressed how to prioritize funding
- **Bill DeCoste:** Suggested leveraging data from VITA contracts and ensuring state

Commonwealth of Virginia Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC)

July 11, 2025

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Joint Safety Operations Center
2430 Pine Forest Drive, South Chesterfield, VA – Room 103

funding for interoperability follows established standards.

- **Dorothy Spears-Dean:** Stated that qualitative results require a use case.
- **Terry Hall:** Suggested VSP and ORION case studies.
- **Gabe Elias:** Emphasized the need to highlight gaps, needs, and sustainability.
- **Michelle Gowdy:** Noted code could be changed to require sustainment in Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) or comprehensive plans.
- **Unknown Voice:** Noted that many purchased subscribers include subscriptions.
- **Bill DeCoste:** Stated that upfront 5-year costs are known and that models exist to capture these costs to avoid being caught off guard.
- **Gabe Elias:** Stated that we cannot ask the General Assembly for new funding unless it can be spent in effective ways.
- **Chief Branch:** Noted benefit of SIEC member organizations meeting with legislators to understand goals and priorities.
- **Gabe Elias:** Asked if anything was missed in the survey or any other items.
 - **Tom Nolan:** Identified data sharing as a missed item and suggested developing a priority list to identify regions most in need of funding.
 - **Terry Hall:** Suggested a living document that would be updated annually to include LMR, data, data sharing, RF, infrastructure, and "pipe" (connectivity).
 - **Discussion:** Highlighted instances of old, unused radio batteries in buses and command posts, emphasizing the need for governance to ensure the success of any strategic plan.
 - **Bill DeCoste:**
 - Provided an update on the VTAC project
 - Discussed the "Future of COMLINC" meetings ongoing, noting no single solution to fit all
 - Noted that STARS capabilities have come a long way, with a draft study indicating the ability to expand to 20,000 additional subscribers as built today
 - Noted bringing on additional localities and state agencies and talking to others; reiterated that STARS is not the "VSP radio system," but the Commonwealth's and VSP runs/maintains it for the Commonwealth
 - STARS is piloting capabilities with various localities, including Powhatan County, which can now talk directly to VSP Troopers and Dispatchers and other STARS user agencies.
 - Taken in total, these developments may help fill many gaps.
 - **Pete Kirby:** Asked about the outcome of the report.
 - **Discussion:** Report to Secretaries' Offices, then ultimately

July 11, 2025

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Joint Safety Operations Center
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bound for General Assembly.

- **Terry Hall:** Noted need to look at this from the perspective of localities.
- **Terry Hall:** Need to identify HB1820 subcommittee
 - Hall, DeCoste, Gowdy, Spears-Dean, Nolan, Burnette, Bennett, Bohr, with SWIC as support

7. Member Items of Interest

- **Tom Nolan (Powhatan County):** Working with Cumberland County on interoperability. Inquired about cellular buildout and co-location with carriers.
 - **Gabe Elias:** Noted Virginia's BEAD Non-Deployment projects included cellular expansion but that is on hold pending Federal guidance related to that portion of the BEAD program nationally. Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is lead and runs the Governor's Broadband Office.
- **Tom Gagnon (CISA):** Awaiting the appointment of a new CISA Director.
- **DMA/National Guard:** Reported 8 HF kits deployed with new solar generators, scheduled cyber assessments for several localities, and updated a small trailer with Starlink and three cell companies, noting it is helicopter-liftable and the old satellite remains operational.
- **VACO:** Expressed support for the committee's work and will provide updates to the steering committee.
- **Virginia State Police (VSP):** Implementing mapping on Motorola APX NeXT radios and rolling out floor plans on portables. Stood up 800 spare/cache portables (80 per division) for locality use, without competing with the Virginia Communications Cache. Pushing out VHF/UHF/700 and will provide a Fall Conference update.
- **Schoonover/COMLINC:** Identifying communication gaps.
- **Region 1:** Thanked the committee for the COMLINC 3 assessment. Planning a second meeting to focus on end-users and 911 centers. The 2005 UASI grant Goochland trailer is a potential regional asset. Amelia's new radio is online, and Nottoway is focusing on interoperability. Starlink is providing backup and failover for the 911 center in Goochland.

July 11, 2025

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Joint Safety Operations Center
2430 Pine Forest Drive, South Chesterfield, VA – Room 103

- **Region 6:** Held a COMLINC 3 meeting and is planning a second. Conducted a small interoperability rally in partnership with VALGITE.
- **VACP and VACALEA:** Pursuing digital mapping, with funding believed to be approved. Discussed DCJS and grants related to public bodies handling critical infrastructure risks in public documentation/proceedings.
- **Michelle Gowdy:** Addressed concerns from a coalition of local governments regarding the appropriateness of a FOIA exemption related to Chief Branch's discussion of critical infrastructure.
- **Deputy Secretary Walbert:** Took notes for discussion on the DCJS grant.
- **Gabe Elias:** Thanked VDOT for the meeting location.
- **Terry Hall:** Concluded the meeting with thanks and well wishes for safe travels.

8. Adjournment

- **Motion:** Chief Branch
- **Second:** Terry Hall
- The meeting adjourned at 12:03 PM.

Membership; Appointment (BOLD = PRESENT)

1. **Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, or his or her designee**
 - a. **Deputy Secretary Lisa Walbert**
2. **Superintendent, Virginia State Police, or his or her designee**
 - a. **Bill DeCoste**
3. Director, Virginia Department of Fire Programs or his or her designee;
4. **State Coordinator, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, or his or her designee**
 - a. **Dorothy Spears-Dean**
5. **Director, Virginia Department of Health - Office of EMS, or his or her designee**
 - a. **Sam Burnette**
6. Director, Virginia Department of Health - Office of Emergency Preparedness, or his or her designee

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July 11, 2025

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7. **Adjutant General of the Department of Military Affairs, or his or her designee**
 - a. **Mike Pittman**
8. **Chief Information Officer, Virginia Information Technology Agency, or his or her designee;**
 - a. **Stephen Smith**
9. **Commissioner, Virginia Department of Transportation, or his or her designee**
10. **State Forester, Department of Forestry, or his or her designee;**
11. **SWIC (ex officio)**
 - a. **Gabe Elias**
12. **a representative of Region 1 Regional Preparedness Advisory Committee – Interoperability (RPAC-I), appointed by Region 1 RPAC-I**
 - a. **Steve Parrott**
13. **a representative of Region 2 RPAC-I, appointed by Region 2 RPAC-I**
 - a.
14. **a representative of Region 3 RPAC-I, appointed by Region 3 RPAC-I**
 - a. **Jamie Shumaker**
15. **a representative of Region 4 RPAC-I, appointed by Region 4 RPAC-I**
16. **a representative of Region 5 RPAC-I, appointed by Region 5 RPAC-I**
 - a. **Terry Hall**
17. **a representative of Region 6 RPAC-I, appointed by Region 6 RPAC-I**
 - a. **Zach Beckner**
18. **a representative of Region 7 RPAC-I, appointed by Region 7 RPAC-I;**
 - a. **Stu Sanz**
19. **a representative of Virginia Association of Counties**
 - a. **Jeremy Bennett**
20. **a representative of Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police**
21. **a representative of Virginia Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators**
 - a. **Chief Craig Branch**
22. **a representative of Virginia Fire Chiefs Association**
23. **a representative of Virginia Association of Government EMS Administrators;**
 - a. **Dan Norville**
24. **a representative of Virginia NENA**
 - a. **Stephen Willoughby**
25. **a representative of Virginia APCO**
 - a. **Derek Rogers**
26. **a representative of Virginia Municipal League**
 - a. **Michelle Gowdy**
27. **a representative of Virginia Local Government IT Executives;**
 - a. **Vanessa Bohr**
28. **a representative of Virginia Sheriff's Association**

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a. Terry Hall

29. a representative of Virginia State Firefighters Association;

a. Pete Kirby

30. a representative of Virginia Amateur Radio Emergency Services/RACES

31. a representative of Virginia Professional Firefighters;

32. a representative of the Virginia State Police Association;

33. a representative of Tribal governing councils, or his or her designee;

34. a representative of the State Council of Higher Education;

35. a representative of the Virginia Military Advisory Council.

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