

Berks County Fire Service Working Group Meeting Minutes

January 27th, 2011

ATTENDANCE

ZONE 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Schegan (46)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Yenser (21)
ZONE 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chuck Snyder (50)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eric Schrack (41) Ken Quell (37)
ZONE 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lester Feick (27)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Martin (47)
ZONE 4	Scot Landis (67)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bruce Longenecker (79) Mark Hostetter
ZONE 5/6	Matt Gehman (22) Mike DeTurck (25)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chris Schaeffer (20) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chris Stevens (17)
ZONE 7	Open (RFD)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ron Wentzel (RFD)
BERKS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Gottschall <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Matt Stairiker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Craig Wanner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wanda Keener
BERKS COUNTY FIREMAN'S ASSOCIATION	Dick Trostle	
BERKS COUNTY FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION	Leon Grim	
BERKS COUNTY FIRE POLICE ASSOCIATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Englebach	
OTHERS:	Rick Lombardo (RIT Consortium), Steven Knoll (RIT Consortium), Michael Trievel (RIT Consortium), Tom Dietrich (Zone 2 President), Galen Brown (Roberson Township)	

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chris Stevens at 1816 hours in the Berks County Department of Emergency Services Classroom, located in the Direct Link Building, Bernville Road, Leesport, PA.

DISCUSSION

Welcome: Brian Gottschall announced the hiring of Tony Flores, from York County, as Technical Services Manager. Tony will initially be heavily involved in the new CAD and P25 projects. Welcome Tony!!!!

Box Alarms: Brian Gottschall reported that DES is behind on the implementation of box alarm. DES apologized saying they are partially to blame because the project is more time consuming than originally expected and that DES failed on its 1st in 1st out commitment for alarms to be entered into the system. Additional staffing has been trained by DES to help implement box alarms and DES has a timeline for

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implementation to be complete by April 7th. Currently 17 municipal box alarms are actively being used while another 27 municipal alarms are ready for entry into the system. Another 31 municipal box alarms still need information to be sent into DES before they can be entered into the system.

North Heidelberg Township sent a letter to DES demanding that the 3 fire departments that cover their township be allowed to be dispatched as full companies instead of by unit based. DES will meet with both North Heidelberg Township supervisors and the 3 fire departments involved to come up with a resolution.

P25: Brian Gottschall stated that DES is in the Detailed Design Review (DDR) stage which involves breaking down the needed infrastructure for the P25 system in the county.

Currently 2 additional simulcast paging bases and 3 backup paging bases are being added to the project.

Brian also stated there have been some challenges in site acquisition for tower sites. Some examples include the Bally tower site where the owner passed away and the county is working with the estate. Hamburg School District has demanded rent, share of revenue and for the county to pay for upgrades to the school district road that goes by the current tower site. Mt Penn tower site is getting resistance from the organizers of the Duryea Hill Climb as there is fear the tower may impede on parking for the event. Zone 2 announced that some of its fire departments can afford a portion of the new radios needed for the P25 project, however most fire departments cannot afford the entire costs of the new radios needed for the P25 project, even at the 5 year 5% financing. Zone 2 is working on an alternative at this time and will present it to the Working Group after the next Zone 2 meeting in April.

A question of interoperability of the P25 system with surrounding counties was asked. It was reported that the new radios will not work beyond Berks RF Range.

Berks County has awarded a grant writing firm from New Jersey, RCC, to work on trying to secure grant monies for the P25 system and for radios for field users. RCC has recommended 2 regional grants. RCC would like meet with the Fire and EMS Working Groups as well as with the county fire zones. RCC will need data from all fire departments for grant applications and they will also look at foundations as alternate source of monies for radios.

RIT Consortium: Several members of the RIT Consortium attended and provided a 20 minute video presentation on the importance of having RIT on your box alarms. The RIT Consortium will provide the presentation to the county zones in the near future.

Fire Police Association: The Fire Police Association representative Bob Englebach stated that the Fire Police Association is once again in favor of the P25 project however they have some concerns. One concern is fire departments that do not support their fire police. When questioned to please define what they consider to be not supporting it was reported that some fire departments only provide their fire police with "hand me down" radios. When questioned whether the radios they received work or not at the scene of an emergency it was stated that yes, they do work. Bob also reported there

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were some companies that only provide their fire police with a badge and a flag. When asked which fire departments only provide a badge and a flag to their fire police the fire police association representative could not provide a name of any departments but they believe there a few in the county that only provide the basics. The Working Group asks that everybody go back to their zones to determine which fire companies only provide their fire police the basics required by law to their fire police and which ones provide more equipment such as radios (even if they are “hand me downs”).

Chief Moyers Replacement: RFD Representative Ron Wentzel announced that Chief Kulp will be Chief Moyers replacement on the Working Group. The Working Group looks forward to working with Chief Kulp.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday February 24th, 2011 at 1815 hours in the conference room of Berks DES at Direct link.

The meeting was adjourned at 2032.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chuck Snyder, BFSWG Secretary

DRAFT