

Berks County Fire Service Working Group Meeting Minutes

February 24, 2011

ATTENDANCE

ZONE 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Schegan (46)	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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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	Kevin Kulp (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
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:	Michael Hunter (RCC Consultants), Tony Damore (Berks County Sheriffs)	

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

DISCUSSION

Operation Lifesaver: Tony Damore from the Berks County Sheriff Department explained a new program entitled Operation Lifesaver. The program helps locate people with cognitive disorders who have a history of wandering off. Members who sign up will be given a nylon transmitter strap that is worn around the wrist. If the member should wander off, a family member or friend can call 911 and report a missing person and notify 911 the person is a member of Operation Lifesaver and PD will respond to the person's last known location. In the meantime the Sheriff's Department will be notified and they will respond with a receiver that has a range up to 1 mile. It tracks the transmitter like a homing beacon to locate the missing person. If the person is beyond the receiver's 1 mile range, the Sheriff's also have Omni range antennas on their

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vehicles to try and locate the missing person. People can sign up through the Berks County Sheriffs Department and the cost is \$300 which includes the transmitter and a year's supply of batteries and wrist straps.

RCC: Michael W. Hunter, President and CEO of RCC Consultants, Inc. spoke regarding securing grants for radios for end users in the county. He reported that RCC will seek monies from several locations. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program will be opening soon and RCC recommends applying for 2 regional grants, each for \$1,000,000. However RCC will need to collect data from every fire department in Berks. RCC will use an online survey to collect the data needed and the Working Group member's fire departments will test the survey system when it's ready. All fire depts will be notified when you can access the system to complete the surveys. RCC did state that they will need at least 7 to 10 days to add up the survey information which means the survey will be closed 7 to 10 prior to the AFG grant application deadline. If a fire department does not complete their survey before it closes online then that fire department will not be included in the regional grant request. RCC also stated they will be looking at several foundations to secure additional monies but most foundations generally award less than \$300,000 each. RCC is also looking for at least 2 fire departments who are willing to be the "host" for the AFG grant applications.

P25: Brian Gottschall reported that DES and the Berks County Commissioners are concerned that several fire departments and municipalities do not have the funding available for the radios and accessories for the P25 project. DES and the Berks County Commissioners are in discussions on a possible proposal to help alleviate some of the financial burden to fire departments and municipalities. Additional information will be forthcoming as it becomes available.

Run Cards: Craig Wanner gave an updated status of fire departments and municipalities who have to submit box alarms or municipal authorization forms. He did report that DES is currently up to date on the timeline for implementation of all box alarms that was set at January's Working Group Meeting.

Use of "Station" Identifier: Brian Gottschall announced the addition of "station" to the box alarms for dispatching. The host fire department on the box alarm will still be dispatched as "company" but you may add a "station" only for the first alarm. Only drawback is if "station" is used on the first alarm, the CAD cannot determine what is considered a station and thus it will not provide a second dispatch or a cover assignment if the "station" does not respond or if the apparatus an OIC wishes from that station does not respond. A "station" may also be used as a special call unit type for manpower needs only. If a fire dept wishes to use "station" but its box alarms are already submitted to DES, they will need to wait until all county box alarms are entered into the CAD before changes can be made.

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Dispatching Policy for Response Checks and Cover Assignments: Topic of second dispatches was discussed at length based on data received from DES before and after the implementation of the dedicated paging dispatch position and discussion over the number of second dispatches on the centralpafire.com forums. After some discussion, it was proposed to add 1 additional minute to the dispatch timer for a second dispatch. After initial dispatch, a 2nd dispatch will occur at 6 minutes instead of 5 minutes and then a fire dept will have 1 minute before a cover assignment is dispatched. However, before policy changes, the proposal will be addressed with the EMS Working Group at their scheduled meeting.

Fire Police Association: It was reported that several zones received a letter from the Fire Police Association of Berks County explaining how its current legacy system is less expensive when it comes to the price of radios versus the P25 system. However it does not address the FPA system and the P25 system will not be interoperable with each other and thus if one company is working on the FPA system and a mutual aid company is working off the P25 system then they will be unable to talk to each other. Bob Englebach stated that the FPA will continue to offer to keep their radio system available to anybody who wishes to continue to use the FPA system. Bob Englebach also noted that if all Fire Police in Berks do switch over to the P25 radio system that the FPA will effectively shut down their radio system.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday March 31st, 2011 at 1815 hours in the conference room of Berks DES at Direct link.

The meeting was adjourned at 2112.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chuck Snyder, BFSWG Secretary