

# **Berks County Fire Service Working Group Meeting Minutes**

**June 30, 2011**

## **ATTENDANCE**

ZONE 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Schegan (46)	Bill Battista (33)	Mark George (11)
ZONE 2	Chuck Snyder (50)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eric Schrack (41)	Ken Quell (37)
ZONE 3	Lester Feick (27)	Bob Martin (47)	
ZONE 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scot Landis (67)	Bruce Longenecker (79)	Mark Hostetter
ZONE 5/6	Matt Gehman (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chris Schaeffer (20)	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eric Fox (34)	<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"/> Craig Wanner	Tony Flores
BERKS COUNTY FIREMAN'S ASSOCIATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roger Weidenheimer		
BERKS COUNTY FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leon Grim		
BERKS COUNTY FIRE POLICE ASSOCIATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Englebach		
OTHERS:			

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chris Stevens at 1820 hours in the Berks County Department of Emergency Services Conference room, located in the Direct Link Building, Bernville Road, Leesport, PA.

The minutes from the May 26, 2011 were approved with the following corrections: Kevin Kulp (RFD) and Ron Wentzel (RFD) were incorrectly listed as attendees; the June meeting should have been on the 30<sup>th</sup> and not the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## **DISCUSSION**

**Collapse Task Force:** Scot Landis reported that proposals are being prepared for equipment and the prime mover for RFD's portion of the Berks Technical Rescue Task Force.

**Box Alarms:** To date, all agencies with scheduled dates for uploading have been completed. There are still 22 agencies who have been non-responsive. Those agencies had certified letters sent to them, as well as their municipality, and have until August 31, 2011 to comply. If they fail to do so, DES will complete their run cards for them. It is imperative that these agencies complete their cards, as the New World

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Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) deployment's timeframe is quickly approaching. The most current list can be found on the Berks DES website. If your agency believes that the posted information is incorrect you are asked to contact either Craig Wanner (610-374-4800, x8222) or Tony Flores (x8217) as soon as possible.

**911 Advisory Board:** There was no quorum for the past two meetings, therefore the motion to change representation by the Berks Fire Services through the Working Group was unable to be voted on. Tentatively the vote will be conducted at the August 2011 meeting, as the Board does not meet during the month of July.

**RCC:** Unofficially, it is expected that the Assistance to Firefighters Grants publication of the Application Guidance, followed by the opening of the application period will be coming in July 2011 at the earliest. The FEMA/AFG website has not posted any tentative dates or information regarding these two dates. RCC is currently working on a narrative for review and developing the financial needs section for the grant. DES is also pressing them for additional updates with regard to a stated strategy, an outreach schedule, and the dataset being compiled.

**P25:** Brian reported that further refining of information regarding total subscribers is progressing. Some of the refinement of the radio pricing spreadsheet has occurred; some agencies will see a reduction of pricing, some will see an increase. This is due to clarification from the vendor of what is "standard" versus "optional". There are still a few remaining questions outstanding, but once they are answered an update pricing and comparison matrix will be produced and published.

Information regarding the latest incarnation of the low tier mobile and portable radios was presented; Brian feels that this could likely be the final product.

Clarification on radio accessories: audio accessories including all the multiple models of speaker microphones are interchangeable among all types of portable radios; batteries can NOT be used on all tiers of radios. The low tier single band will have a different battery type from the high tier single band and dual band radios.

The low tier mobile is a stand-alone mobile radio; companies needing dual-head radios (one in cab and one at pump panel) must use the APX6500.

The only holster/carrying case being produced by the vendor for the low tier is a belt case. The vendor's reply to not having a shoulder strap is that users should move to a higher-tier radio. It is quite likely that after-market shoulder straps will appear on the market as the low tier radio is introduced into the market. The County will continue to pressure Motorola to try to make available a shoulder strap compatible case for this radio.

Prototypes of the low tier portable will be available sometime in October, 2011.

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Tower site negotiations are ongoing. Leases that are signed include Bally, Hamburg Area School District, Kutztown, Pulpit Rock, County North Campus, Centre Township (actual tower purchase), Gibraltar Hill. Of the remaining leases, all but three are expected to be signed in the next three weeks.

DES is IMPLORING agencies that have not conducted a needs assessment yet to schedule one ASAP.

There are concerns that full build-out of the radio system to include public works may not occur due to difficulties obtaining additional CAPRAD 700 MHz spectrum. DES has been working towards achieving this goal, however this involves meeting with all entities in FCC Region 28 (portions of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware). This essentially involves presenting the case to a jury of peers, many of which have an interest in the same spectrum. The Lancaster County 800 spectrum that was being pursued is not viable due to interference.

There is however another possibility. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was given a large amount of the 700 MHz spectrum when it became available. Berks County has approached the Commonwealth to secure 700 MHz spectrum in exchange for 800 MHz spectrum currently being used by the City of Reading.

**Training:** As of noon on Friday, June 17, 2011 RACC and the County are out of the fire training business. Roger Weidenhammer spoke to the group about the Berks County Fireman's Association bringing the Training Committee out of dormancy. Under the old format, there were two representatives from each Zone, two instructors, one representative from the Fire Training Site, one representative from the County Fire Chief's Association, and one representative from RACC. Roger would like to see two members from the Working Group be added, and the representation from RACC to be deleted. After some discussion, it was determined that the Working Group representatives on the committee was redundant, as there would be representation already in place though all seven zones. Roger agreed that once the committee was meeting there would be reports provided to the WG. Roger states that Ed Squibb agreed to remain on as chairman for one month after the committee is formed to serve in a transitional role and will then step away. Working Group representatives have been tasked to return to their zones and solicit volunteers to serve on this committee. This new committee will then meet and develop a game plan for the future.

**Berks County Fireman's Association:** Roger Weidenhammer reported that at their last executive meeting they formally approved the Fire Services Working Group as a committee under the BCFA umbrella, and all current representatives were unanimously approved.

**Communication Center Issues:** Zone 4 brought several concerns to Brian Gottschall's attention. Brian reiterated that specific issues and concerns need to be

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addressed with the Watch Officer as soon as physically possible after an occurrence so that they may be immediately addressed, or so an investigation can be initiated.

**Radio SOG'S:** Discussion occurred regarding the current SOGs and revising them to reflect changes necessary for the new radio system. Brian states that the Working Group will have involvement in fleet mapping and radio SOGs, as both are required under contract with the radio vendor. The Working Group has been tasked with going back to their respective zones and soliciting ideas for a "master list" that can be taken to future meetings with the radio vendor. Brian added that fleet mapping would be coming in the near future.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 28, 2011 at 1815 hours in the conference room of Berks DES at Direct Link.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chuck Snyder, BFSWG Secretary

**DRAFT**