

BERKS COUNTY FIRE SERVICES WORKING GROUP
Meeting Minutes – September 26, 2013

ATTENDANCE:

Zone 1	x	Matt Brett		Ethan Kunkel		Scott Yenser (alt)
Zone 2	x	Eric Schrack		Ken Quell	x	Dean Dalious (alt)
Zone 3	x	Bob Martin		Corey Houser		Lester Feick
Zone 4	x	Scot Landis	x	Bruce Longenecker		
Zones 5/6	x	Chris Stevens	x	Chris Schaeffer		Matt Gehman
	x	Eric Fox				
Zone 7		Ron Wentzel	x	Stephen Serba		Tom Rehr
BCFA		Roger Weidenhammer	x	Leon Grim		
BCFPA	x	Bob Englebach		J. David Bossard (alt)		
Training	x	Bob Snyder				
Berks DES	x	Brian Gottschall	x	Tony Flores		Matt Stairiker
		Craig Wanner		Todd Boughter	x	Christina Wood
Forestry 17		Joe Sherman		Ron Minnich (alt)		

Other attendees: None.

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 of the June 2013 meeting were approved as written.

DISCUSSION

East-Central Task Force (Scot):

- PA Task Force 1 now has an open enrollment for rescue technicians. **THEY ARE STILL LOOKING FOR INTERESTED CANDIDATES.** There is funding available to send interested and qualified candidates to training. If you have an interest in becoming part of PA TF-1 please e-mail Scot Landis: scot.landis@verizon.net.
- The Pa. Fire & Rescue Mutual Aid System (FRMAS) will be conducting a Task Force Strike Team Leader class (24 hour class) November 6, 7, and 8 at the Berks Fire Training site. Dates for the Division Group Supervisor class (also a 24 hours class) have not been established.
- Operation “Coal Cracker” has been officially postponed; a new venue is being sought.

RIT Consortium: No update

BCFA: Nothing to report.

911 Advisory Board (Chris):

- There was no quorum for the September meeting, however some informal discussion ensued as to the future of the board. There was general consensus that the Working Groups for fire, EMS, and law enforcement were going above-and-beyond communications. That said, there are and will be occasional needs for cross-discipline communication. Therefore, the Advisory Board will continue to provide that liaison opportunity. Until the new radio system is up and running the Board will now meet bi-monthly; beyond that it is likely that meetings will be held quarterly, with ad hoc meetings as needed. The Board is also looking to change its name to better reflect the newer mission.

BCFPA (Bob Englebach):

- There were 31 attendees at the Legal seminar for fire officers and municipal officials held on Thursday, September 19, 2013, at the Berks Fire Training Site.
- An article for Municipal Officials written by the BCFPA will be disseminated with these minutes to all Working Group representatives for broad distribution among the county fire zones.

Forestry: Nothing to report.

Training (Bob Snyder):

- The training website has been completely updated and now has many new classes listed. Please check out the website at www.berkscountyfiretraining.org and continue to monitor the site for new offerings. 2014 training sessions are being planned but will not be posted until dates and instructors are confirmed.
- The training committee is also now on Facebook. Please check it out and “like” the page.
- The committee is looking into the possibility of building an e-mail “list serv”.
- There are still a few slots open for the Structural Burn Session this Fall.
- The 3rd floor of the residential burn structure at the Fire Training Site is closed through the Fall 2103 burn season due to water leakage that has seeped behind the tiles. The County is working with the manufacturer to resolve and/or repair the issue.
- The Commonwealth is rolling out a new entry-level Firefighter program. This new program will be based off IFSTA, and will likely begin to be offered in 2014. There will be 5 Mods: Mods 1-4 will train candidates to the FF1 level (approximately 168 hours), and Mod 5 will advance candidates to the FF2 level. There is an alternate Mod 4 that doesn’t include a Structural Burn Session.
- The Commonwealth is also rolling out new Hazardous Materials programs in 2014.
- The training committee is seeking younger representation on the committee. This is being done so that the seasoned members on the committee have replacements at some point, and also to solicit opinions from the newer generation of firefighters regarding training.

CAD (Tony):

- There are still a handful of fire companies who are not signed up for WEBCAD. If you are one of these companies please contact Vince Rush.

Run Cards (Christina):

- Continuing to meet with fire chiefs to load run cards into CAD and to verify that everything is correct.
- Brian reports that a revised listing of Call Types for all disciplines has been rolled out as of September 20th. A listing of call types for the fire services will be disseminated to all Working Group representatives for broad distribution along with these minutes.

P25 (Brian):

- Discussion occurred regarding a future spreadsheet that will be disseminated to all fire companies/departments to set up portable radio IDs.
- The County has executed a change order for Motorola, which now includes several features that weren't in the original contract:
 - 1) Radio Trace Functionality: this allows a dispatcher to make a field user's portable radio microphone "hot" if there is a possibility that a field user is in danger and/or unable to physically communicate with the dispatcher.
 - 2) Forced Analog: This is an alternative software capability that makes a portable radio appear as its own portable when a vehicle has a digital repeater system. This also includes the software for mobile radios and digital repeaters systems.
 - 3) Radio Management: POP25 over-the-air programming (OTAP) is already in-place, but it inherently slow, especially if programming is countywide. Radio Management allows radios to be programmed over the internet via a radio programming session. The software is free for users, and the County will be supplying a USB port attached to multiple cables. End-users must supply an appropriate computer, and the end-users will be able to log-in to the programming session to update all of their radios in-house.

Zone 1: Discussion about calling an out-of-county Hazardous Materials team. Brian clarified that Act 165 makes it illegal for out-of-county teams to enter Berks County unless they are specifically requested by the Berks Haz-Mat team. If a Chief Officer from Berks County calls Berks Dispatch asking for an out-of-county Haz-Mat team it will not be honored.

Zone 2: Discussion about increasing lags in performance with WEBCAD. This was found to be more widespread than isolated, as other Zone representatives reported similar issues. DES will investigate with the County's IT Department. Also discussed was radio training for the new system; Brian advised that there is a 70-day window in early 2014, and each company/department will need to send a representative to a "Train the Trainer" session. Each representative will then be responsible for training all of the people in their company/department.

Zone 3: Nothing to report.

Zone 4: Nothing to report.

Zones 5/6: Nothing to report.

Zone 7: Nothing to report.

The representatives discussed meeting dates for November and December. Since both meetings would fall around the holidays it was decided to meet on Thursday, December 12, 2013.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1955 hours. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 31, 2013 at 1815 hours in the Direct Link conference room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Stevens, Chairman