

BERKS COUNTY FIRE SERVICES WORKING GROUP
Meeting Minutes – February 26, 2015

ATTENDANCE:

Zone 1	x	Matt Brett		Ethan Kunkel	x	Scott Yenser (alt)
Zone 2	x	Ken Quell	x	Dean Dalious		
Zone 3	x	Bob Martin		Lester Feick		Corey Hauser (alt)
Zone 4	x	Bruce Longenecker	x	Bob Snyder		
Zones 5/6	x	Chris Stevens	x	Chris Schaeffer	x	Eric Fox
		Chris Bickings				
Zone 7	x	Tom Kemery		Tom Rehr		
BCFA	x	Roger Weidenhammer		Leon Grim		
BCFPA	x	Bob Englebach		J. David Bossard (alt)		
Task Force		Scot Landis	x	Michael Lessar		
Berks DES	x	Brian Gottschall	x	Tony Flores		Matt Stairiker
	x	Todd Boughter	x	Christina Wood		
Forestry 17		Joe Sherman				

*Ron Wentzel, Vice Chair Emeritus

Other attendees: Phil Kearney, Motorola

The meeting was called to order at 1817 hours in the Berks County Department of Emergency Services conference room, located in the Direct Link building, Bernville Road, Reading, PA.

The January 29, 2015 meeting minutes were approved with the following correction:

- Under “DES” section regarding field complaints: “The follow-up will be provided to the IC by DES if the IC files an Incident History Audit (IHA) request. The official policy is outlined in the radio SOGs; please refer to them.

DISCUSSION

Radio Rumors: Phil Kearney, representing Motorola, was invited to attend by Brian Gottschall to address radio concerns that were out for public consumption via news media and/or social media.

- Rumor: APX line of radios are not suitable for the fire service. TRUE. There are no NFPA standards as to fire service suitable radios. The radios DO meet all mil specs. The APX XE line of radios (which came out after radio orders were taken from agencies in advance of the new radio system) have better protection against dust/particle infiltration, and can be immersed in more than one meter of water for more than 30 minutes. The APX line can be immersed in up to one meter for 30 minutes. The majority of the legacy radios were business-grade radios with lower mil specs than the APX radios. The APX and APX XE line of radios are all made with basically the same materials as the legacy business-grade radios. The advantages to the APX XE radios are ergonomics (larger EBA, larger knobs, recessed PTT, etc.). If an agency elects to upgrade their radios from the APX to the APX XE, or if an agency upgrades the speaker-mics on their existing APX radios it is highly recommended that they purchase the high-temperature cable (this is an option with Motorola).

- There was some short discussion dispelling a number of other rumors that were primarily via social media.
- A question was raised as to how long Motorola will continue to service Minitor V pagers. Motorola product support for the Minitor V pagers will end in 2-3 years. Another question raised was when the Minitor VII line will be created. There is no Minitor VII on the foreseeable horizon. There was some brief discussion about some sporadic “falsing” issues with both Minitor V and VI pagers.

East-Central Task Force (Scot): The next committee meeting is Thursday, March 12, 2015 in Frackville. PEMA has approved all of the requested training classes.

BCFA (Roger): Nothing.

BCFPA (Bob E.): Nothing.

Forestry (Dean): 2015 Tactical Aircraft Schedule passed out. All printed dates for first and last day operations have been pushed back a week.

Training (Bob S.):

- Essentials mods are performing well, and split classes are once again being run to accommodate large number of students. Other classes are filling up well.
- The experiment about running smaller winter classes is not going as well; some have been pushed back and other canceled. A suggestion was offered about the possibility of local level winter one-nighters or low-hour classes; this will be considered for winter 2015-2016.
- Potential upcoming announcement about offering a BVR class, however the test may be delayed due to DOH getting up-to-speed with testing (someone posted the PA BVR test with questions and answers online, thereby prompting said delay).

Zone 1:

- Discussion about relocating apparatus at the request of a home company’s IC, specifically about relocating apparatus types that aren’t normally housed at the home company. Brian Gottschall requests that all zone reps poll their zones for feedback as to how many companies/departments normally relocate apparatus types to their station that they themselves don’t have.
- Suggestion about having the WG create resource lists. This capability already exists via Total Visibility. Some agencies have embraced it while others have not. DES can provide re-training to agencies that request it.

Zone 2: Nothing.

Zone 3: Currently no ladder in Zone 3. Womelsdorf expecting a new ladder in May 2015.

Zone 4: Nothing.

Zone 5/6: Nothing.

Zone 7: Nothing.

DES (Brian):

- Brian discussed FirstNet with the group. FirstNet is a voice-to-broadband network dedicated to public safety. The federal government created the First Responder Network Authority and tasked them with conceptualizing how this would work. The reality is that voice-to-broadband is not currently ready and likely won't be for several years. It is likely that FirstNet will not be free; one of the issues at-hand is delivering the product at a palatable price point for the end-user. The Working Group feels that the best opportunity for input from a countywide level is to have information packages created and disseminated back to all zones to allow as many individuals and agencies as possible to comment.
- Continued reach-out to WG reps for comments and/or issues regarding new radio system. One comment about entities who clearly did not properly train their people from an operational perspective. Another comment about interoperability working very well with patching of out-of-county agencies to our 700 MHz system; it was passed back to Brian that all out-of-county patches to our system are clear but with reduced audio.
- Haz-Mat Spill Response Trailers: These resources are being called by agencies to perform spill cleanup. This is the responsibility of the spiller, not the cleaner. The purpose of the Spill Response Trailers is to assist in mitigating the spill, not cleaning it up. Current Spill Response Trailers are located at Mt. Penn (Co. 1), Goodwill (Co. 10), Shillington (Co. 36), Rehrersberg (Co. 27), Hamburg (Co. 61), and Hereford (Co. 58). As an aside, foam trailers are located at Western Berks (Co. 18) and Fleetwood (Co. 45).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2012 hours. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2015 at 1815 hours in the Direct Link conference room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Stevens, Chair