

BERKS COUNTY FIRE SERVICES WORKING GROUP
Meeting Minutes – April 30, 2015

ATTENDANCE:

Zone 1	x	Matt Brett		Ethan Kunkel	x	Scott Yenser (alt)
Zone 2	x	Ken Quell	x	Dean Dalious		
Zone 3		Bob Martin		Lester Feick		Corey Hauser (alt)
Zone 4	x	Bruce Longenecker	x	Bob Snyder		
Zones 5/6	x	Chris Stevens	x	Chris Schaeffer		Eric Fox
		Chris Bickings				
Zone 7	x	Tom Kemery		Tom Rehr		
BCFA		Roger Weidenhammer	x	Leon Grim		
BCFPA	x	Bob Englebach		J. David Bossard (alt)		
Task Force	x	Scot Landis		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: None

The meeting was called to order at 1822 hours in the Berks County Department of Emergency Services conference room, located in the Direct Link building, Bernville Road, Reading, PA.

The March 26, 2015 meeting minutes were not available. These minutes will be reviewed and approved at the May 28, 2015 meeting.

DISCUSSION

East-Central Task Force (Scot): Training is continuing. The committee meets on Thursday, May 7, 2015 to nail down dates for grant funding from DHS. A Core class will be held in Schuylkill County in May, however the dates have not yet been confirmed. A confined space certification class is scheduled in August. Scot will provide firm dates as they become available.

BCFA: No report.

BCFPA: No report.

Forestry (Dean): Forestry thanks everyone for their assistance in what has been a very busy brush fire season. Discussion ensued regarding how forestry teams within fire agencies in the county are activated. Currently Joe calls local wardens via telephone to assemble crews for mutual aid when Forestry is requested. The only interaction between the local fire agency crews and Berks dispatch is usually when they sign on radio. Brian Gottschall stated that those agencies should call Berks dispatch and place their assets busy. After more discussion, it was suggested to go back to Joe and

(Forestry cont'd) see if he would be agreeable to calling Berks requesting assets. It was also requested that Joe provide DES with a list of forestry-approved resources in Berks County and a "forestry" apparatus type will be created.

Training (Bob S.): Essentials is going well. BVR series ran the entire cycle with approximately 25 students. Mod 5 is going to most likely be canceled due to lack of enrollment. Haz-mat refreshers were also canceled due to low enrollment. The Training Committee will be meeting in May to discuss adding a few more offerings to the Fall 2015 schedule.

Total Visibility: So far only one company in Zone 4 has requested re-training. A few Zone 5/6 companies expressed concerns with the slow speeds from the County's servers prohibiting them from entering resource assets due to lengthy time constraints. Scott Yenser mentioned that current versions of Total Viz need to operate optimally on Internet Explorer, however IE is going away. **Brian Gottschall provided clarification post-meeting that Total Viz will operate on Chrome and Firefox.**

In-County Incident Management Team (IMT): Chris Bickings (via e-mail to Chris Stevens) suggested an in-county IMT similar to what Montgomery County is doing. Discussion ensued, much of which was a re-hash of information to newer Zone reps, as this topic was discussed in the past. The topic never gained momentum in the past, as there is already an IMT in-place through the East-Center region; these folks have received extensive training to be members on the regional team. A suggestion was made about potentially forming an Incident Assist Team (IAT). This team would be an in-county supplemental team for incidents that aren't large enough to require deployment of the regional team, or as a short-term supplement for large-scale incidents until the regional IMT deploys and arrives on-scene. **Zone reps are tasked with going back to their respective Zones to discuss the possibility of creating an IAT, and whether it should be limited to just the fire services or includes EMS, PD, and local government.**

Countywide Purchasing: Chris Bickings (via e-mail to Chris Stevens) suggested countywide purchasing. Brian Gottschall stated that he had asked the County to consider this, however they chose to not engage due to lack of commitment from the fire services at the time. Discussion ensued. A suggestion was made by Brian Gottschall about each Zone appointing a "procurement person". All of the "procurement people" would have each other's e-mail addresses. When a group purchase seems likely within a zone or a cluster of agencies, a reach-out via e-mail to the other Zones' procurement people would occur, and individual agencies within the county would contact the original procurement person and/or host company to jump onto the group purchase. **Zone reps are tasked with going back to their respective Zones for input into this topic.**

Child Protective Services Changes: Discussion about the proposed changes regarding criminal background checks, Childline background checks, and fingerprinting. The exact changes are not set in-stone at this point, and may include a clause where someone living in Pennsylvania for the past 10 years would be exempt from the fingerprinting.

Firehouse Reporting: As per Scott Yenser the Office of the State Fire Commissioner is discontinuing the use of Firehouse at a point in the near future. More information coming.

Zone 1: Question regarding accidental EBAs from users on a side talk group. DES policy is the user of the accidental EBA is to switch back to Fire Alpha or Bravo, and answer Berks with the accepted reply of "Berks XX-X accidental". There are no guarantees that the dispatcher will call them on the side talk group to confirm the accidental EBA. Discussion expanded about dispatchers sometimes answering ICs on a side talk group and sometimes not. Official policy is for the IC to return to Alpha or Bravo to hail Berks and request for assets and/or provide incident updates.

Zone 2: Nothing to report.

Zone 3: Nothing to report.

Zone 4: A few companies asked about additional photo sessions for accountability tags. Brian Gottschall advised that Scott Mildren has left DES, and they are working to find a replacement for his position as well as someone to handle photo sessions in the interim. Brian also mentioned that DES could be able to come to each Zone for photo sessions if there are a number of new members who need accountability tags. Agencies **MUST** have the new member's information loaded into Total Viz prior to the photo session.

Zones 5/6: Nothing to report other than topics discussed above.

Zone 7: Nothing to report.

(NOTE: All Zones are requested to go back to their respective Zone companies/departments and bring back to the WG the agencies who wish to have the dummy types of apparatus added for relocates to their respective stations.)

Total Visibility: As an off-shoot to Matt Brett's questions regarding resources and assets, a lengthy discussion ensued regarding the current state and usage of Total Visibility within Berks' fire agencies. Specifically:

- Very few agencies have added or are adding resources into Total Visibility. This was/is due to several reasons (agencies were originally told to not add resources when Total Viz was originally rolled out, admins from agencies need re-training, admins from agencies are no longer in leadership positions and their replacements were never trained to use Total Viz, etc.)

In response to this, Brian Gottschall asked whether agencies would begin or continue to enter resources if DES provided re-training? **Zone reps were tasked with taking this question back to their Zones for a response.**

- A commodity list was created several years prior by Ron Wentzel and Scot Landis identifying "big ticket" items that would be worthy of harvesting from within the county. **(This list was passed on to Chris by Brian and distributed to Zone reps to be disseminated within each Zone).** Some discussion occurred as to whether there should be any other commodity categories added.

Zones are tasked to review the Commodity Report and make suggestions for additional categories which will then be discussed at a future FSWG meeting.

DES:

- FirstNet: survey documents have been rolled out, and they need to be completed by July. In order to allow input from all of the county's fire agencies, a meeting will be scheduled in the very near future asking each company to send representation so that the survey answers are coming from the position of the county's fire services.
- Continued issues with paging coverage, more recently than in the past. Motorola states there is no problem. That said, field users who are having specific, ongoing issues are asked to e-mail Brian Gottschall and he will forward those e-mails to Motorola for review.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2033 hours. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 28, 2015 at 1815 hours in the Direct Link conference room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Stevens, Chair