

BERKS COUNTY FIRE SERVICES WORKING GROUP
Meeting Minutes – May 28, 2015

ATTENDANCE:

Zone 1		Matt Brett		Ethan Kunkel		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		Chris Schaeffer	x	Eric Fox
	x	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 and April 30, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as written.

DISCUSSION

East-Central Task Force (Scot): Northumberland County failed to run their vehicle machinery program. The monies that were set aside for that have been moved to Luzerne County so that they can provide Confined Space I & II. Schuylkill County is also going to run Confined Space I & II. The Task Force has a website: www.ecpatf.org. Boyertown Area Fire & Rescue is working to schedule a 40-hour core competency class in late August or early September. Firm dates for all of the above-listed classes will be coming soon.

BCFA: No report.

BCFPA: Discussion at their executive meeting about fire police using analog tac channels. DES' position is that tac channels are available for everyone but the communications center should know about their use so they can mark them busy in the event other agencies ask for the same tac.

Forestry (Dean): Some progress on refining the process for dispatching in-county assets that have forestry teams.

Training (Bob S.): Essentials is moving forward with a large number of students. The two pump classes scheduled for this summer will run, as each has reached the minimum number of students. Additional 16-hour courses for this Fall are in the planning stage. Aerial Ops still needs more students to reach the minimum to be able to run the class. Offers have been received by Bob for help handling some of the administrative back-end of training; these offers will likely reduce backlog. All companies/departments are reminded that inquiries into use of the burn building as well as FFI/FFII testing MUST contact Jeff Shilling, the Fire Training Site superintendent.

Paging Issues: Reps from all Zones have identified a recent change where voice audio is lower than normal. Some areas in the county have also experienced new areas where pages aren't received, or falsing is occurring. Still other agencies have experienced pager activation, voice dispatch, and then several seconds of back-end squelch. As this now appears to be more of a widespread issue, Brian contacted Mike Parkman, the Berks DES project manager from Motorola. Each rep was able to identify their issues with Mike, and Mike assures that he will be taking this back to his technical team to investigate further.

Zone 1: No attendance/nothing to report.

Zone 2: Supports the continued use of Total Visibility, and hopes that the commodity list will be available on the dispatch floor. Some discussion about the card readers; at the time of the offering from DES, no company or department stepped up to handle incidents in-county from an accountability perspective. Those card readers are now 10 year-old technology. Brian Gottschall noted that we are the only county in the region to be using accountability cards. DES is more than willing to conduct re-training on use of Total Visibility. Interested agencies should contact John Fritz (jfritz@countyofberks.com).

Zone 3: No attendance. Bob Martin reached out prior to the meeting to state that Zone 3 supports the continued use of Total Visibility. They are also in support of each zone having a procurement representative for bulk purchasing.

Zone 4: Nothing to report.

Zones 5/6: Nothing to report.

Zone 7: Nothing to report.

DES:

- Motorola has a new speaker-mic offering targeted for EMS and Law Enforcement. It is the XP RSM NMN6271. Rated at IP 68 (equal or better than all radios and accessories). This speaker mic has a somewhat recessed PTT button, volume control, emergency button, and one button function.
- Motorola is now also offering an APX 8000 portable radio. "All band" to cover VHF/UHF/700-800 spectrums. All of this comes in a radio the size of the APX 6000 portable, and uses APX 6000 accessories. Cost? \$10,000 per radio.
- Another Motorola offering is an APX dual radio. This setup couples two drawer units to one 07 mobile head and two speakers. This allows priority scanning of both conventional and trunked systems. Prices have not been released yet, however it is anticipated that pricing will likely begin with the price of two APX 7500 radios. Existing APX 7500 radios can be "upgraded" to this configuration.
- Newer server platform has been released for the radio system. The server platform cannot be upgraded due to several agencies who have jobs pending in RM for anywhere from weeks to months. **Zone reps are asked to reach out to any and all agencies from all disciplines within their zones to express urgency in having them complete their pending jobs.**

- There are agencies who are using non-certified, third-party accessories with their radios. DES cautions agencies who are shopping for these third-party accessories.
- Inquiries are coming in from agencies who either have or will be purchasing Bluetooth-capable SCBA. DES plans to buy Bluetooth licensing for a limited number of DES radios for testing. This is in the formative stages at this point.
- Based on how things progress with Bluetooth testing, DES may look into GPS bulk licensing along with group Bluetooth licensing in the hopes that it may be a better overall bargain. This is also in the formative stages.
- The North Albany site is still on the “burner” to be completed. Conservation groups are now “in-fighting” to see how they will all benefit.
- Change in emergency process: There are three types of EBA’s: accidental activation where the response from the radio user is inappropriate, activation with no response, and activation with a user identifying that they are indeed in trouble. An inappropriate response or no response will result in local police being dispatched. A fire or EMS field user who has a valid emergency (i.e. duress call) will result in a PD “all call” where any and all agencies both inside and outside of the municipality where the emergency is occurring will be requested to respond (this will be broadcast on both police zones).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2018 hours. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 25, 2015 at 1815 hours in the Direct Link conference room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Stevens, Chair