

BERKS COUNTY FIRE SERVICES WORKING GROUP
Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2018

ATTENDANCE:

Zone 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Matt Brett (alt)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethan Kunkel	<input type="checkbox"/> “Open” (alt)
Zone 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dean Dalious	<input type="checkbox"/> Blair Miller	<input type="checkbox"/> Ken Quell (alt)
Zone 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Bob Martin	<input type="checkbox"/> Lester Feick	<input type="checkbox"/> Corey Hauser (alt)
Zone 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Colin Hackman	<input type="checkbox"/> Avery Leshar	<input type="checkbox"/> “Open” (alt)
Zone 5/6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chris Bickings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chris Schaeffer	<input type="checkbox"/> Eric Fox
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Reitnauer		
Zone 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Kemery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Rehr	<input type="checkbox"/> Brian Thorpe (alt)
BCFA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roger	<input type="checkbox"/> Leon Grim	
BCFPA	Weidenhammer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> “Open” (alt)	
Task Force	Randy Minninger	<input type="checkbox"/> “Open” (alt)	
Berks DES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Landis	<input type="checkbox"/> Sean Hart	<input type="checkbox"/> Tony Flores
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Gottschall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christina Wood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jon Fritz
Forestry 17	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Todd Boughter		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Troy Withers	*Ron Wentzel, Vice Chair Emeritus	

Other Attendees: Jeff Reinert

The meeting was called to order by Colin Hackman, Chair at 18:15 hours in the Berks County Department of Emergency Services conference room, located in the Direct Link Building, Bernville Road, Reading, PA.

The November 30, 2017 Meeting Minutes were emailed to the group by Chairman Hackman. There were no changes requested or made.

DISCUSSION

Forestry 17 - DCNR (Dalious): Dean Dalious reported that the first meeting with the new warden will be Monday, January 29, 2018.

BCFPA (Minninger): No Report

BCFA (Weidenhammer): Next meeting will be Saturday, January 27, 2018.

Training (Reinert): The new website (Berkscountyfiretraining.org) is up and running. The scheduled essentials class is quickly filling up and will begin on February 17, 2018.

East-Central Task Force (Landis): The following is the list of classes for 2018:

- Rope Rescue Class & Certification
 - Dates: 3/7, 10, 14, 17, 21, 24, 28, 4/4, 7, 14/2018
 - o Wednesdays are 1830 to 2230, Saturdays are 0800 to 1700
 - o **NOTE: April 7 & 14 may change the first night of class**
 - Location: Kingston
- NASAR Search & Rescue Initial Actions
 - Training will be on Saturday, February 24, 2018 0800-1700

- Location – Frackville Ambulance Association located at 10 East Arch Street, Frackville, PA 17931
- Lunch will be provided
- Confined Space Rescue
 - Dates: 03/26/2018, 04/02/2018, 04/07/2018, 04/15/2018, 04/29/2018
 - Location: Boyertown Area Fire & Rescue (classroom) 03/26/2018 – 04/15/2018
Berks County Fire Training Center (practical) 04/29/2018
- GPS and FEMA Symbology
 - Training will be on April 14, 2018. Location will be the Schuylkill County Emergency Services Training Center, 1 Firemans Road. Frackville, PA.
- TEEEX Wide Area Search
 - Training will be on October 5 – 7, 2018. Location will be the Schuylkill County Emergency Services Training Center, 1 Firemans Road. Frackville, PA.
- FSX - Wide Vigilance VII
 - FSX will be held September 22, 2018 at 1000 hours till September 23, 2018 at 1000 hours.
 - This will be an on-going 24.0 hours exercise for 3 – 8 hr. operational periods
 - Location will be the Schuylkill County Emergency Services Training Center, 1 Firemans Road. Frackville, PA.

Zone 1 (Brett):

- There was a concern from the zone about the voice quality of the dispatchers versus the field users. Essentially, the field users' voice quality is good, but the dispatchers are extremely quiet requiring the need to adjust the volume of the radio. DES requested more specifics, such as date, time, incident, so they could investigate. DES further reported that over the past two weeks, adjustments have been made to the dispatcher consoles to increase the output. They believe that this is isolated to specific dispatchers, and request that field users tell the dispatchers that they are hard to hear.
- Areas of the zone are experiencing a decrease in coverage in the 700 MHz system. Areas include within buildings at Bear Creek Ski Area. Coverage was available within the buildings previously. DES needs detailed information, such as radio information, decreased coverage with multiple radios, etc.)
- There is a concern about the need to switch between Ops channels and Fire A when responding to a call when an Ops channel has been assigned. Apparatus are missing orders because apparatus only has the ability to listen to one channel.

This started a lengthy discussion about the use of the Ops channels. DES stated that after going responding with the dispatcher, there is no requirement for the apparatus to announce their arrival with the dispatcher. If the individual department feels it is necessary to maintain their times with DES, a portable should be set to the Ops channel while responding to hear the incoming radio calls from command.

- DES was asked if they ever considered splitting EMS Hail into two zones like Fire A and B, because the radio traffic on EMS is becoming too busy, and Zone 1 fire departments are unable to respond to EMS Assist calls resulting in covers being dispatched. DES reported that it is not possible right now, mainly because they do not have the resources to provide a dispatcher to both EMS zones.

This started a lengthy discussion about the “additional information” provided to the field users. It is felt that most of the information being provided is not necessary and quality of the information varies. It was also discussed that only the first responding apparatus and officer should receive the additional information, not every responding apparatus and officer. DES stated that dispatcher retraining may be necessary. The information that is provided to the dispatchers was also discussed. DES stated that the field users do not need to give the dispatchers any information related to the call, except that the units are available. There was no conclusion or answer to this conversation. DES recommended that the individual zones discuss this for a remedy.

- The zone would like to know the status of CAD Assist for Water Supply. DES reported that it needed to be tabled for now.

Zone 2 (Daliou):

- Should departments receive additional text messages for calls when an incident is upgraded? DES reported that the only time a department will receive an additional text is when their apparatus was due to respond on the upgrade. If a request for a re-dispatch is made, will a text message be sent with it? No, a text would manually need to be sent.
- The zone would like to know what other municipalities are doing for public works communications, and are any utilizing the 700 MHz system? DES reported that no public works department is on the system, and they are unsure if they ever will. It was reminded that all units and services could use VTAC channels.

Zone 3: No one present and no report sent to Chairman Hackman

Zone 4 (Hackman): The zone has not met yet, so no report.

Zone 5/6 (Schaeffer): Scott Reitnauer was introduced to the group. He will be the fourth representative for Zone 5/6.

Zone 7 (Rehr):

- A new academy class begins on February 1, 2018.
- The Active Shooter classes are coming to a close.
- They are finishing up re-templating their radios.

DES:

- Representatives met with representatives from FirstNet from ATT in New Jersey at the end of 2017. Pennsylvania was going to form a committee in 2018 to review the system; however, Pennsylvania decided not to do anything with the system at this time. At this time, DES suggests that departments wait before purchasing the system.
- DES discussed the new G4 P25 pager currently being offered by Unication Communications. Currently, Exeter Fire Department has a demo unit, and DES is awaiting a demo unit for testing. Right now, the pager does not have paging capabilities. It is only able to receive the talk groups programmed in them. A dual band pager is \$625/unit.
- DES is getting ready to start re-fleeting the radios. As part of this, they are looking at changing audible features and other “behind the scenes” technology.
- The hard cut-over date for E-CAD is April 8, 2018.

New Business: There is no new business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 20:11 hours. The next meeting is scheduled for 18:15 hours on Thursday, March 29, 2018 at the Direct Link conference room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Bickings, Secretary