

# **Berks County Fire Service Working Group Meeting Minutes**

**December 10, 2009**

## **ATTENDANCE**

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ZONE 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Dave Feltenberger (13)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Yenser (21)
ZONE 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Reeser (37)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eric Schrack (41)
ZONE 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lester Feick (27)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Martin (47)
ZONE 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Scot Landis (67)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bruce Longenecker (79)
ZONE 5/6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Matt Gehman (22) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike DeTurk (25)	<input type="checkbox"/> Derrick Nester (49) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice-Chairman, Chris Stevens (17)
ZONE 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Moyer (RFD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ron Wentzel (RFD)
BERKS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Gottschall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Craig Wanner
BERKS COUNTY FIREMAN'S ASSOCIATION	<input type="checkbox"/> Dick Trostle	
BERKS COUNTY FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leon Grim	
BERKS COUNTY FIRE POLICE ASSOCIATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Englebach	
OTHERS:	Robert Schegan (46), Theodore Cole (DES),	

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The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Chris Stevens at 1817 hours in the Berks County Department of Emergency Services Conference room, located in the Direct Link Building, Bernville Road, Leesport, PA.

## **DISCUSSION**

- General Information from DES
  - o Zone 5/6 Water Rescue Task Force – They had contacted the DES about a separate company identification number. DES has asked for more specific information as to who they are what they will do, are they incorporated, etc... No action at this time.
  - o There will be letters forthcoming to the county units advising them of upcoming company identifier changes. Companies 36 and 7 are combining and will be company 7 stations 1 & 2. Shillington will change their number to 36 from 67.
  - o An employment offer has been made to an individual for the Communications center Operations Manager. It is anticipated that they would start in February 2010.
  - o Personnel adjustments within the communications center. Todd Boughter will be Sr. Watch Officer; Wanda Keener is in charge of professional issues. Concerns (good or bad) should be handled with the on shift watch officer, but professional issues (good or bad) are to be directed to Wanda directly. There is an online comment form available on the 911 website.

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- There are still some interference issues with the Topton/Kutztown area. The problems are very sporadic, but they exist.
- The Hamburg Comcast Tower seems to be back on track of progress again.
- PEMA is planning a move into a new facility in Windsor Township. The move includes a large communications tower which could include antenna space for the County.
  
- QRS Dispatching – after review with the EMS working group, it was decided that there would not cover unit dispatches for QRS assignments unless the responding EMS unit requests the same
  
- Cover Dispatches / Call Announcements – This topic was discussed at length. The DES staff reviewed the information discussed at the previous Working Group meeting as well as there was feedback received from the field users on the topic. Based on the confusion and multitude of opinions in this matter, DES requested clearer direction on the issue from the Group; however the final decision needs to be in sync with the EMS Working Group, so some coordination will be needed. Zone 2 requested that a cover announcement be made to the ‘home company’ and that if units are “on air available” they also receive an announcement; both announcements would be made on the appropriate hailing frequency. Zone 1 requested that a dispatch announcement be made for ALL incidents on the hailing frequency including cover assignments. Randy and Brian will review the issue further with the DES staff to look at the logistics of the proposals and bring their recommendation to the next Working Group meeting.
  
- Dispatch Timers / Response Checks – This topic was discussed at length. The current policy is that the second dispatch occurs at 5 minutes after dispatch and the cover assignment is sent at 6 minutes after dispatch.
  - Response Check - Zone 1 has requested that the response check be brought back at the 4 minute mark. A motion was made by Scott Yenser and seconded by Robert Schlegan (Zone 1 Alternate) to re-institute the response check at the four (4) minute mark). The vote was 2 in favor and 9 against; therefore the response check will not be brought back.
  - Timers – While there was some discussion on the current timers and more common second dispatches, there was no action requested on making a change.
  
- Low Band Towers – Discussion was held on the installation of 33.68 and 33.80 on several towers in the county. Everyone was reminded that the communications center does not monitor 33.68 or 33.80.
  
- Centre Township Tower – the issue of having 33.94 installed on the Centre Township tower was again discussed. DES will review this situation and report back at the next meeting.
  
- Operational Zoning on Low Band – some discussion took place on the concept of splitting the 3 low band county frequencies into zones of the county. There could be some logistical problems with this as the staffing in the communications center would not change, but the number of frequencies needed to be monitored would. DES will review the logistics of such a scenario and report back to the Working Group, likely NOT at the next meeting.

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- Run Cards – Since the previous Working Group meeting there were three orientation sessions on the proposed run card format. Discussion was held on where we are now and what do we do next. Highlights of the discussion were as follows:
  - No zone voted against the proposal, Zone 4 did not make a formal vote, but the representative present did not feel there was any opposition to the proposal. Zone 1 had their first meeting in many years which included 8 of the 11 companies in the zone. The zone requested one item to be modified which is noted herein.
  - Company as an identifier – Zone 1 requested that the identifier “COMPANY” be allowed for use on the entire first alarm assignment. This was reviewed and debated at some length. There were pros and cons raised on both sides of the issue. A motion was made by Scott Yenser and seconded by Robert Schlegman to allow the use of COMPANY for the home company only and not beyond the first alarm. As a result of this motion and discussion, the following points were identified as being critical to pass along:
    - If the COMPANY is used for a dispatch, the entire company will be placed busy and not be suggested for other assignments, despite the number of units that actually go on the assignment
    - If the UNIT is used for a dispatch, the remainder of the company is left available for other assignments
    - If the COMPANY is used for a dispatch, once a single unit is placed on the assignment, the dispatch is satisfied
    - If the COMPANY is being used for a dispatch, the second alarm should be set up to cover the entire expected COMPANY response
  - Timing of roll-out – DES will review the work needed to complete revisions, get the information out to the fire service community and internal adjustments then they will make a recommendation to the Working Group as to when the new system will be placed in service. The group decided that a timeline of no more than 90 days was appropriate for the modification and resubmission of run cards. A concern of significant magnitude will be the interaction of the EMS cards.
  - Card numbering was discussed; some type of indication in the card will be included to indicate who has “ownership” of the run card. The card numbering will possibly be based on municipal numbers
  - Specialty units – there was a request to include specialized units on run cards such as tow trucks and fuel units; the group decided this was not a run card issue
  - Standby vs Relocate – the cards will be modified to include a relocate category, there will need to be some characterization of how the location of the relocate will be indicated on the card, possibly the station number in parentheses behind the unit to be relocated; STANDBY means standby at the requested units station
  - CAFS/Foam Engine – a request was made during the info sessions to add CAFS/FAOM engine to the list of resources, the group decided this was not to be added
  - Several rescue related call types were discussed for addition; the group decided to add Trench Rescue, High Angle Rescue, Confined Space Rescue, and Structural Building Collapse; Farm Rescue was discussed but since this covers several scenarios, it was felt that it was too broad of a type to be used
  - Safety Company – the addition of a safety company resource to the cards in addition to RIT was discussed; the group decided that this would not be added

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- RIT – a discussion was held on the topic of RIT assignments; if a company is dispatched as RIT, then the entire company will be placed busy and not be recommended for other calls; companies doing RIT will have to identify their RIT unit which then would be unit dispatched (ex. R99R), said unit would be cross manned so it would not be recommended for other assignments

The next meeting will be held on Thursday January 28, 2010 at 1815 hours in the conference room of the Berks DES at Direct Link.

The meeting was adjourned at 2122 hours.

DRAFT