

Berks County Fire Services Working Group

August 3, 2023

Officers: Chair Colin Hackman, Vice Chair Chris Schaeffer, Secretary Mike Kline

Meeting was called to order at 1803 hours. There were no additions or corrections to the previous months minutes, they stand approved as read.

Attendance:

Zone 1: Matt Brett, Mark Richards

Zone 2: No one in attendance

Zone 3: Robert Martin

Zone 4: Colin Hackman

Zone 5&6: Chris Schaeffer

Zone 7: Tom Kemery

BCFA: No one in attendance

BCFT: No one in attendance

BCFPA: No one in attendance

Forestry: No one in attendance

DES Brian Gottschall, Mike Smith, Matt Stairiker

Additional Attendance: Scot Landis

Communications: None

Zone 1: Matt Brett ask about operations talkgroups and advised he was denied the request during a storm with heavy radio traffic. DES reported the issue was addressed at the time and advised the Working Group and dispatchers that any incident can be assigned to other operations talkgroups such as Disaster talkgroups, Fire Training Site Talkgroups, etc.

Zone 2: No one in attendance

Zone 3: Bob Martin advised that Chuck Zechman would be the Zone 3 delegate for the Lithium Ion sub-committee.

Zone 4: Chair Hackman brought up a request from Zone 4 regarding the policy for Departments to request audio recordings from DES.

- The Fire Chief signing off on any request made.
- If there was another way to obtain, the audio recordings other than a CD, such as a memory stick or an online shared file.

Director Gottschall advised DES just asks for two signatures, which does not need to be the Fire Chief. The signatures for a request should be two officers, one higher in rank (EX. Captain 85 makes the request, and a higher officer would authorize it Asst. Chief, Dep. Chief, or Chief). Director Gottschall stated that memory sticks are not a good option as it could pass a virus into another computer. Director Gottschall talked about the possibility of sending the requested file through a secured email, which would save field users time and travel. This will be looked into further.

Chair Hackman reported Zone 4 has three delegates for the Lithium Ion sub-committee. Alex Haines (18), Scot Landis (85), and Colin Hackman (85).

Zone 5 & 6: Vice Chair Schaeffer advised, they had nothing for the meeting and no delegates for the Lithium Ion sub-committee

Zone 7: Tom Kemery reported he would be the delegate for the Lithium Ion sub-committee and he agreed with sending audio requests through a secured email. Tom also advised DC Getca was interested in becoming a Zone 7 Working Group delegate and would talk to the Fire Chief to see who would be removed to allow DC Getca a position. Tom Kemery ask if he could provide constructive thoughts and suggestions to DES regarding the recent storms and the high volume of radio traffic. Chair Hackman agreed and also had thoughts and suggestions. Director Gottschall advised DES would entertain suggestions and evaluate them. Director Gottschall directed Tom and Colin to go direct with Senior Watch Officer Smith.

BCFA: No one in attendance

BCFT: No one in attendance

BCFPA: No one in attendance

DES: Director Gottschall reported Kutztown EMS (590) went Out of Service and will no longer handle 911 calls. DES has not received any additional information from the Municipalities covered by 590.

Director Gottschall advised they have selected a new director for the County Fire Training Site, which is currently going through clearance checks and approval by the County Commissioners. The name of the new director will be announced soon.

Crewforce (Mobile CAD): Director Gottschall reported they received responses from less than half the county Fire Departments, and DES feels this is a message from the fire service that they are not interested in this. Chair Hackman disagreed and cited a lack of any response from Fire Departments with any information sent out as well as a lack of returned information through the Working Group. Director Gottschall stated they need buy-in for this type of project and with the lack of interested, this would be placed aside at this time as DES has other projects to handle.

Portable Radio Hot Mic Issue: Motorola is still working on the issue with DES. When the fix is ready, all portable radios will need to be updated. Departments should make sure the radio software is up to date.

Lithium Ion Sub-Committee: The following names were provided to DES for the sub-committee:

- Mark Richards (Zone 1)
- Chuck Zechman (Zone 3)
- Alex Haines (Zone 4)
- Scot Landis (Zone 4)
- Colin Hackman (Zone 4)
- Tom Kemery (Zone 7)

A motion was made by Chair Hackman, Second by Vice Chair Schaeffer. All in favor to approve the sub-committee with no objection.

Text Paging: DES reported RAVE is actively working with DES to update their program to handle CAD text paging. When this is ready to launch, the current text paging (Swift) will need to be migrated to RAVE Alert, which will be a large task within DES.

Old Business: Tax Credit Sub-Committee is meeting to discuss the program thru out the county. Paul Janson with the Center for Excellence is assisting with promoting the Tax Credit. The Sub-Committee will be making themselves available to Zones, Departments and their local government to help create a program if interested.

New Business: None

The next FSWG meeting will be Thursday September 28, 2023 at 1800 hours via TEAMS

There being no further business to come forth, Chair Hackman adjourned the meeting at 1850 hours.

Respectfully Submitted,

Colin D. Hackman

