

Berks Country Fire Services Working Group Meeting Minutes – January 27, 2022

Attendance: not taken

Zone 1: Matt Brett – no report to offer.

Zone 2: Blair Miller

1. Distribution of PPE to the county (companies request XL gloves and were supplied all smalls); No guarantee that all items requested would be supplied. Need to contact Matt and discuss the concerns that they have.

2. Inquiring concerning the status of Berks/Schuylkill County interop communications. Schuylkill is pushing back the meeting to the week of the 7th.

3. Concerns from departments about EMS call from 590 last Thursday was handled. (the way it was expressed on the radio was not necessary); Agencies involved need to file a complaint to the watch officer. The agencies were not concerned, it was members of Zone 2 that expressed the concerns concerning the verbiage. If a complaint is filed, it would be evaluated and then decisions would be made.

Zone 3: No one in Attendance; An email from Bob Martin reported that he has not received information from Frystown about their Zone 3 status and a possible succession.

Zone 4: No one in attendance;

1. Colin emailed an inquiry to see if DES or anyone is helping with the disposal of AFFF foam with PFOA implications; No plans at the time with DES. What do the zones feel about this? If it is actively being used, foam that has been around for a long time and unused should be evaluated.

~ Address at the Zone meetings and revisit at another meeting.

~ Do any of the companies have a plan or is there a county plan? Is there something that the tank farms can do?

~ State had a task force concerning this with decision by July 1, 2021. This did not come to fruition. Took the mandatory foam module out of the Hazmat curriculum. City is switching to the environmentally friendly foam. Disposal of the foam needs high heat incineration. Have not been able to find any location capable of this.

Zone 5/6: Chris Schaeffer;

1. When Berks County units go into Mont Co are the radios going to be able to pick up on Montco's towers; if on the Mont Co towers you will only get the Mont Co information. Berks Radios will not be accessible unless on Berks County.
2. Gilbertsville moving into Berks Co radio
3. Can we notify Montgomery County through active 911. (Will be addressed later in the meeting)

Zone 7: Tom Kemmery;

2. Last academy class is out. Another class will start in a couple months.
3. Fire chief retiring in a couple months. Replacement process has been started.
4. No decision on what age of foam they will draw a line for no use. No one knows if they were going to get rid of all AFFF or after a certain manufacturing date. Some states have taken the foam and disposed of it and replaced. Nothing specific from PA Fire Commissioners at this time.

BCFA: Roger Weidenheimer - have a meeting on Saturday at the fire training site at 2pm.

BCFPA: No one in attendance

Task Force: NA

Berks DES: Brian Gottschall;

1. Update on the subscriber fleet. We are back under way in having the likelihood of having to touch encrypted radios. Hoping to be at the final deployment of fire and EMS. RMI is reaching out to get out to agencies to get the final updates completed. As we go through this process, we are finding agencies that are not conforming to keeping their radio assignments up to date. This is problematic. Please make sure the radio assignments are kept current.
2. Issue with the IT department that has to do with occasional restarts of the mail server for the county, that sends the text pages. Asked to reboot when the CAD server is restarted. For whatever reason they are not willing to do this. This means that when this restart is completed there is a text pager outage. This will be occurring on Sunday evenings where text paging will be non-functional. Do you want to be notified about this outage? Discussion resulted that on approximately 7pm on a Sunday night text paging will be down for a certain amount of time and there will be no notification. Question about if it was going to be done other than Sunday evening will the agencies be notified. These notifications were being done at other times and people complained about getting all of these notifications. **DES will make a best effort decision about whether or not to make notice of an outage depending on time of day and severity of the issue**

3. Special announcement from DES- a small sub-committee will be formed to decide what should be the standard for these announcements. Matt Brett and Blair Miller volunteered to help with this process.
4. Berks County Search & Rescue has provided all of the required documentation to be considered an agency of the County and will be Berks Company 2 under DES.
5. Security checks of Berks County agencies going into other counties. Agencies reporting that they do not want to monitor the Berks County radios for security checks. DES will be stopping these checks in the future. Is there any concern with these not occurring through Berks? No issues with the committee.
6. Out of County text paging. Prior agreements to not dispatch for surrounding counties. There is some legality issues if you are not dispatched from the county where the incident is occurring. Berks DES is going to need to request that a Berks County agency sponsors the out of county agency requesting Berks dispatch. There will be legal documentation required stating the risks involved to these dispatches. These outside agencies would need to agree to the administrative notices and text pages.
7. Montgomery & Schuylkill interop discussion. No one other than Zone 1, 2 or 3 will need to be involved in this discussion. Brian would like to reach out to just the agencies that this will affect.
8. Christina Wood – 2019 an email was sent concerning Web CAD. Most agency are still using the old link. The old link will be out of service as of March 1. Emails will be sent to notify of this information.

9. Run Card review process for all pertinent information. Best practice run to be established. Looking for volunteers to help form a sub-committee with the guidelines for these best practice run cards. It was recommended that it be taken back to the zone meetings to see if some senior personnel would like to help.

Forestry: No one in attendance.

Training: Jeff Reinert;

1. new website.
2. Attempted an Essentials class during the week but it was canceled due to low enrollment.
3. All classes on the weekend are running and full.

Officer Nominations: Chris Schaeffer stated that the officers will remain the same for the next year.

Officers for 2022

Chair Colin Hackman

Vice Chair Chris Schaeffer

Secretary Mike Kline

Additional Attendance: None