

Berks County Fire Services Working Group

March 26, 2026

Officers: Chair Colin Hackman, Vice Chair Jesiah Newsome, Secretary Blair Miller

The meeting was called to order at 1800 hours with 17 people in attendance. There were no additions or corrections to the previous month's minutes (January 22, 2026), they stand approved as read.

Attendance:

Zone 1: Jesiah Newsome, Josh Young

Zone 2: Rusty Wagner

Zone 3: Bob Martin, Stephen Weaver

Zone 4: Colin Hackman, Lance Parmer

Zone 5&6: Brian Sierocinski, Josh Trate, Michael Blevins

Zone 7: Andrew Getka, Jesiah Newsome

BCFA: Roger Weidenheimer

BCFT: No Attendance

BCFPA: No Attendance

Forestry: No Attendance

DES: Brian Gottschall, Matt Stairiker, Michael Smith, Philip Salamone

Additional Attendance: Scot Landis, Colby, Daryl George

Communications: None

Zone 1: Josh Young reported Zone 1 met with DCNR Greg Reese which was concerned about a lack of communication with Berks County radios. Director Gottschall advised this was explained to DCNR multiple times and that DCNR has 100% access to DES's system, but the DCNR radio people are not interested in accessing it.

Zone 2: Rusty Wagner advised Zone 2 had concerns with the current apparatus and specialty unit equipment lists on the DES website and suggesting it be updated. This led to a lengthy discussion, and it was determined that this is the information that should be in Total Visibility. Matt Stairiker advised DES had provided a few training classes recently on Total Visibility and it was poorly attended. Philip Salamone will run a report on the current apparatus list which will be sent out through the Working Group for Departments to review and provide feedback through each Zone to the Working Group to discuss changes or updates.

Zone 3: Bob Martin reported having email issues and he is trying to get the information out to Zone 3.

Zone 4: Colin Hackman nothing to report

Zone 5&6: Michael Blevins advised Zone 5/6 felt DES should not have a say in run cards and it should be up to the Department and the authorized signer.

Zone 7: Andrew Getka advised Chief Stoudt has retired and the new Chief was announced, new Lieutenants were doing well, and they are waiting on their run cards to be updated.

BCFA: Roger Weidenheimer nothing to report

BCFT: Colin Hackman provided updates provided by Jeff Reinert for FF1 and FF2 testing dates. FF1 written 4/15/26, Skills 4/19/26 with application due 4/1/26. FF2 written 4/29/26, Skills 5/2/26 with application due 4/8/26. FF1 Closed Exam 6/24/26, Skills 6/27/26 with application due 6/10/26. July 1, 2026, will start the new testing process.

BCFPA: Lance Parmer advised a memo was sent out to the Fire Police Association about hailing Berks and making sure DES is advised when Fire Police are remaining on scene and provided a point of contact. Director Gottschall stated that memo should go out to the Fire Departments through the Working Group. Lance advised he will follow up and get something together to send out through the Working Group.

Forestry: No attendance / report

DES: Director Gottschall advised the cost of FF1 / FF2 testing will increase by \$10.00 after the scheduled test already scheduled. This will provide a National Certification certificate as well as the state certificate. The new cost will be \$110.00, which will still be refunded by the County if the test is passed on the first attempt.

Director Gottschall advised that after July 1, 2026, the new FF1 / FF2 certification testing will take effect. There is a bridge program, but it will require extra work. If a student completed Mod 2, they could take the bridge course which is an entry path to FF1, the new 1010 standard.

Matt Stairiker advised the Burn Building has been inspected and needs repairs. Due to contractor scheduling the repairs will be completed in the last week in May or the first week in June. Burn building will still be able to be used, with modification to burn plans during repairs.

Director Gottschall advised the new call types will go into effect Tuesday March 31, at 0900 hours.

Director Gottschall advised they are working with their CAD vendor on updates which could include 8 new CAD commands which will autofill into Departments RMS with timestamps.

360 Completed

Command Established

Fire Knocked Down

Fire Suppression Completed

Fire Under Control

Primary Search Completed

Primary Search Started

Water on Fire

This is still a work in progress and would need to be agreed upon and a policy established.

Director Gotschall advised if implemented you would need to use a key words (ex. Berks Chief 99 Bench Mark, Water on the Fire). Andrew Getka had concerns about field users utilizing the word Bench Mark. Jesiah Newsome asked if the word Bench Mark was not used if it would still be entered into CAD like normal radio traffic. Director Gotschall said it should be entered and the use of Bench Mark would be if you wanted it to autofill into your RMS. An additional question was raised about PAR Checks. Director Gotschall advised that was not in the CAD update through the vendor, but they would check with Christina Wood to see if there is something in CAD now or could be created.

Director Gottschall advised the County is still in negotiation with Motorola for the radio refresh program and to ensure the County Fire Service is aware no radios are being disabled. The radio refresh is due to the current radios in service are no longer supported and unable to be repaired. Director Gottschall reported that the County has agreed to do a 7-year pass through financing program like the one in 2014, but it will not be interest free with a projected interest rate of 4.6%. Director Gottschall advised that information regarding the radio refresh will be sent out within the next week or two with a data collection form that Departments need to complete and return ASAP. Lance Parmer thanked Director Gottschall and the County Commissioners for getting the pass-through financing option available through the County.

Old Business: None

New Business: Scot Landis advised Bucks County Community College has a new registration process through Campus Market Place. Each Department must create a Department account and each student has to create a student account to register for classes. Scot also advised that

Parchment will be going away eventually and certificates will be provided through Campus Market Place.

Good of the Order: None

Next meeting will be Thursday May 28, 2026, at 1800 hours via Teams.

Meeting adjourned at 1948 hours with 18 people in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,

Colin D Hackman

Colin D. Hackman, Chair