

## **Berks County Fire Services Working Group**

**December 12, 2024**

**Officers:** Chair Colin Hackman, Vice Chair Chris Schaeffer, Secretary *Vacant*

Meeting was called to order at 1800 hours. There were no additions or corrections to the previous months minutes, they stand approved as read.

**Attendance:**

**Zone 1:** Jesiah Newsome, Josh Young

**Zone 2:** Rusty Wagner, Blair Miller

**Zone 3:** Bob Martin

**Zone 4:** Colin Hackman, Lance Parmer

**Zone 5&6:** Brian Sierocinski, Tim Trate

**Zone 7:** No one in attendance

**BCFA:** Roger Weidenheimer

**BCFT:** Jeff Reinert

**BCFPA:** No one in attendance

**Forestry:** No one in attendance

**DES:** Brian Gottschall, Mike Smith, Matt Stairiker, Christina Wood, Philip Salamone

**Additional Attendance:** Scot Landis

**Communications:** DCNR William Penn Forest District new contact is Rick Deppen. Rick can be reached at 610-476-7089 (m) or 610-582-9665 (o).

**Zone 1:** Jesiah Newsome reported Zone 1 had nothing to report.

**Zone 2:** Blair Miller reported Zone 2 was observing audio issues again between tone and voice and wasn't sure if it was a radio issue or a human operator issue. Director Gottschall reported it was a human operator issue, and the Watch Officer needs to be notified immediately when this is happening so DES can address with the dispatcher.

**Zone 3:** Bob Martin reported Zone 3 had nothing to report.

**Zone 4:** Chair Hackman asked if other Departments utilizing Crew Force were having any issues? Chair Hackman advised Station 85 is fully utilizing Crew Force and it is working well, except for DES not calling the Officer, but the apparatus instead. The issues have been reported to the Watch Officer when they occur. Director Gottschall reported it to be an internal issue due to the difficulties with two sets of users (radio versus Crew Force), a limited number of Departments currently using Crew Force and DES will continue to work with the dispatchers. Direct Gottschall advised continuing to report the issues to the Watch Officer. Blair Miller reported Zone 2 reported status change errors on Crew Force. Director Gottschall advised testing would need to be done to confirm if the issue is a technology issue or human issue.

**Zone 5 & 6:** Brian Sierocinski reported Zone 5/6 had nothing to report.

**Zone 7:** Chair Hackman reported Andrew Getka provided an email with an update for Zone 7. The 8<sup>th</sup> and Court Station will re-open in February, the Medic units will be moving to the Fire Station's eliminating a singular EMS Station which will give each Medic their own response district corresponding to the Engine Company they are stationed at, all run cards for the City have been updated and submitted to DES, high rise boxes will add the last Engine and Ladder from the City which will call for more County Departments on 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm and they have transitioned to First Due for RMS. For 2025 they will be working on updating SOG's, NERIS implantation and looking to utilize Crew Force.

**BCFA:** Roger Weidenheimer reported the 2025 membership cards are available for both individuals and Departments, and the next meeting will be Saturday January 25, at 1400 hours at the BCFTC.

**BCFT:** Jeff Reinert reported the 2025 training schedule is posted to their website and the website is [www.berkscountyfiretraining.org](http://www.berkscountyfiretraining.org)

**BCFPA:** No Attendance / Report

**Forestry:** No Attendance / Report

**DES:** Director Gottschall reported the City is redeploying the Medic units to Engine Company Stations. There will be 4 to 5 Medic units with their own response district which will make it easier to get to a higher due level as it pertains to QRS for County Departments which could produce a higher number of QRS responses.

DES will be making changes to assist EMS with Intermediate units in the beginning of 2025. This will create two new call types of ILS-Medical and ILS-Trauma. With the conjunction of the ILS, DES will be deploying an updated CAD that will allow Station GPS based dispatching for EMS units instead of manually defining a Station order. First due areas will continue to be defined by the run card and second due and beyond will be GPS Station based. Potentially in the future DES will investigate using actual unit GPS dispatching.

Director Gottschall advised text paging for recalls has been implemented and the Radio SOG has been updated. The below highlighted area is the change.

3.15 FOLLOW-ON INFORMATION/RECALLS

3.15.1 The radio operator and/or the dispatcher shall communicate orders to recall, hold, or slow down on all system accessible resources that are (within reason) likely to be being monitored by responders needing to receive the recall. This shall include the dispatch, hailing, and operational (if assigned) talkgroups. This will be a coordinated effort between the dispatcher and radio operator to ensure an announcement is transmitted over all applicable talkgroups. Recalls, holds, and slowdowns will not be done until the dispatch has been completed. All such announcements will begin with five (5) short alert tones. Under no circumstances will any other notifications or pre-arrival instructions be rebroadcast on the dispatch talkgroup.

3.15.2 In addition to the above direction with respect to voice announcements, a radio operator transmitting a recall to fire units shall also then transmit the same by text page using the following procedure:

3.15.2.1 The CAD command "PAGE" is to be entered in the command line followed by all applicable stations.

3.15.2.1.1 Station numbers are to be separated by commas, and a semi-colon is to be placed at the end of the station list.

3.15.2.1.2 The specific recall directions (if any were provided), and incident location, are to follow the semi-colon. It is critical to include the incident location to ensure there is no confusion when the agency is activated on multiple incidents.

**"PAGE 9,98; CO98, E9 RECALL, L9 CONTINUE IN FOR CALL AT DIRECTLINK"**

3.15.2.1.3 When the recall direction specifies the modification of the response of individual companies or apparatus, the recall message will be sent to individual agencies only.

3.15.2.1.4 The recall message will be sent to all assigned agencies on the incident if the recall request does not include specific agencies. (i.e. recall everyone not on location).

3.15.2.2 The above direction with respect to text notifications shall only apply to recalls of fire agencies and need not be completed for other dispatch assignment modifications (slow and hold, standby at station, etc.) or the recall of other disciplines.

OIC's need to notify the Watch Officer if there are issues.

**Old Business:**

Tax Credit Sub-Committee – No updates

Lance Parmer asked about a County Radio Refresh? Director Gottschall reported the County Commissioners are well aware of the concern's, and it remains on their radar, but there is zero possibility that it will happen before 2027 due to the extended warranties expiring at that time. DES is also in a very ugly dispute with Motorola which will hopefully not move to litigation, but this compounds the problem.

Chair Hackman advised we still have a vacancy for Secretary. Anyone interested in filling this position should contact Chair Hackman

**New Business:**

Election of Officers – Chair Hackman pushed this back to the January meeting due to the Vice Chair not in attendance and no communications were made to confirm his intent.

Chair Hackman asked that the Zone delegates provide any changes so the WG list can be updated, and calendar invites can be sent to new members.

Scot Landis advised there is an 8-minute Safety video available for lithium-ion batteries in the residential setting and if anyone had contact with cable companies to have them air the video periodically. Scot forwarded a drop-box with the video and information which was forwarded out to all the WG delegates to send to their Zone Departments. Director Gottschall stated they have not received any feedback from the Fire Service regarding the lithium-ion battery SOG that was created and distributed, and they would like to know if it was time well spent.

The next FSWG meeting will be Thursday January 23, 2025, at 1800 hours via TEAMS

There being no further business to come forth, Chair Hackman adjourned the meeting at 1842 hours.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Colin D. Hackman*