

Regional Emergency Services Task Force

Meeting Minutes

1/17/2008

I. Call to order

Doug Stoner, President of Millersville Fire Company, began the informational meeting of the Regional Emergency Services Task Force at 7 p.m., in the Millersville Borough Building, by introducing Dean Fernsler from the State Department of Community and Economic Development. Doug departed after introducing Dean.

II. Roll call

The following task force members were present:

Jay Breneman – Manor Twp.

Russell Guthrie – Manor Twp. – Citizen

Phil Lastowski – Millersville Boro.

Robert Thompson – Millersville Boro. – Citizen

Brian Henry – Highville Fire Co.

Carl Harnish – Highville Fire Co. – Citizen

Jim Eshleman – Millersville Fire Co.

Don McCann – Millersville Fire Co. – Citizen

Ron Goe – Washington Boro Fire Co.

Scott Haverstick – Washington Boro Fire Co. – Citizen

Craig Hohman – West Lancaster Fire Co.

Mark Lauriello – West Lancaster Fire Co. – Citizen

Gregory G. Noll – Community-at-large – Citizen

Dean Fernsler, Department of Community and Economic Development

III. Presentation by Dean Fernsler

This task force was created by, and draws its authority from a resolution adopted by Millersville Borough Council and the Manor Township Board of Supervisors. The four Fire Companies presented have demonstrated their commitments to the process of seeking improvements by committing \$25,000 each for the funding of the task force. The task force will have an expected life of two years. The scope of its activity and recommendations are limited only by the task force itself.

- A. The broad objective is to make recommendations to the municipalities and the fire companies represented that will enable improved services both in efficiency and quality. Such recommendations can be both short term and long term in their scope and are expected to focus on the “business side” of the fire companies rather than the tactical means of fulfilling their mission.
- B. The process we are embarking on has been completed by approximately 60 organizations around the Commonwealth, and is ongoing. Dean provided to

each of the attendees, copies of *The Feasibility of Regionalizing Pennsylvania's Volunteer Fire Companies*, a resource report of the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, including a number of case studies, several of which are in Lancaster County. In preparing for the next meeting members may wish to become familiar with the report, especially the Report Summary and the Case Studies. In addition to the case studies of completed regionalization in the report, Dean said there are current operating task forces in the Ephrata area, and in East Earl.

- C. As needed the task force may wish to create subcommittees to draw upon resources of other citizens of the community to address special specific functions and issues; for example, finances, fund raising and community educational efforts.
- D. It is recommended the task force become familiar with the organization and operation of each of the fires companies and how they serve the municipalities by visiting and conducting their meetings at the fire company sites.
- E. This task force, unlike some others in the Commonwealth does not involve Emergency Medical Services, which will make the mission of the task force somewhat less complicated.
- F. All meetings will be public and advertised in advance. The functioning of the task force needs to be as open and transparent as possible. The understanding and support of the community at large is important to the success of recommendations that will be made.
- G. For our next meeting, first formal meeting, the task force members should plan on choosing a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Recording Secretary. We may also need to identify a Spokesperson to facilitate clear, consistent communications with the media, our own represented organizations and other organizations and interested parties. This can be important if rumors and misunderstanding arise that need to be corrected or clarified. Dean, from past experience, strongly recommended that these positions be drawn from the ranks of the citizen representatives on the task force.
- H. Also at the next meeting the task force should develop and adopt a Mission Statement. This will define our objectives and provide focus for our efforts, and be the basis for understanding by the Community of the role of the task Force. Dean provided some examples that included lengthy statements and list of objectives. The Mission Statement can take any form we wish. Should we choose to include such a list we may wish to prioritize the order? We should remember to remain flexible as priorities and needs may change as this process evolves.

IV. New business

- A. At this point by consensus of the task force members it was decided begin our work immediately.
- B. The fourth Thursday of each month was established as the regular meeting date.

- C. For our next meeting, February 28, 2008, we will again meet in the Millersville Borough Building, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. Future meeting sites will be determined later.
- D. By consensus Scott Haverstick was chosen as a Temporary Chairman while permanent leaders were chosen. After discussion, and an expression of willingness by Russell Guthrie he was elected Chairman. Russell has served previously on a regionalization task force in another part of the Commonwealth. Scott Haverstick was elected Vice Chairman and Don McCann as the Recording Secretary. For the time being Russell Guthrie will serve as the Spokesperson until such time we might determine the responsibility needs to be separated from the Chairmanship.
- E. It is our intent to post meeting minutes on the Manor Township, Millersville Borough, and each of the Fire Company web sites.
- F. Jay Breneman indicated that there may be some interest by the Mountville Fire Company in joining the task force. Dean indicated that when initially approached they declined participation. Jay said there has been a change of leadership and there may be a different sentiment now. Russell Guthrie and Jay Breneman will contact Mountville Fire Company to determine their interest and if so advise them that they will need to commit the same financial support as the other four fire companies, have the support of the Mountville Borough by adoption of the same resolution as adopted by Manor Township and Millersville Borough, and have representatives provided by the Borough and the Fire Company.

V. **Adjournment**

Dean advised the task force that he will be retiring soon and will be replaced by Colton Weber as the Department of Community and Economic Development representative.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Don McCann, Recording Secretary [with thanks to Phil Lastowski for providing meeting notes.]

Minutes approved by: