

Regional Emergency Services Task Force

Meeting Minutes

2/5/2009

Manor Township Maintenance Building

I. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Guthrie at 7:00 p.m.

II. Recognize Present Members and Visitors

Chairman Guthrie recognized members present and welcomed others and asked all to identify themselves.

III. Roll call

The following task force members were present:

Glenn Hess – Highville Fire Co.
Jay Breneman – Manor Twp.
Russell Guthrie – Manor Twp. – Citizen
Phil Lastowski – Millersville Boro Council
Robert Thompson – Millersville Boro. – 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

Unable to attend:

Carl Harnish – Highville Fire Co. – Citizen

Others attending:

Ted Gingrich – West Lancaster Fire Co.
Bill Hapke – Highville Fire Co.
Dean Gantz – Mountville Fire Co.
Keith Eshleman – Millersville Fire Co.
Jimmy Knapp – Washington Boro Fire Co.
Kevin Nissly – Washington Boro Fire Co.

Dick Schoch – Washington Boro Fire Co.
Joan Matterness – West Lancaster Citizen
Andrew Klambach – Mountville Fire Co.
Rob Brady – Local Government Policy Specialist, Department of Community & Economic Development
Mark Burrows – Guest Speaker, Warrior Run Area Fire Co., Watsonstown, PA.

Review and approve 1/8/08 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Jay Breneman to approve the 1/8/08 minutes as presented.

Second by Jim Eshleman.

Motion passed.

IV. Sub-Committee Report – Tactical

Mark Lauriello reported that the Tactical Committee has completed capital equipment needs, for existing companies, for the next 15 years. They felt they could not project needs for a consolidated company and felt that we need an outside consultant to assist with such a projection. Greg Noll had submitted a draft of a Request for Proposal (RFP), which the committee refined and Mark presented for approval by the Task Force to put out for proposals and entertained questions.

Russ Guthrie said that the time frame would be to send out the RFP this month and make a vendor selection at the March meeting.

Phil Lastowski asked how long it would take for the selected consultant to conduct the study. Greg Noll responded that it would be about 6 months.

Don McCann asked if it was reasonable to expect proposals by the next meeting. Scott Haverstick, Ron Goe and Jay Breneman all commented that they thought it was doable.

Robert Thompson asked if now was the appropriate time to request proposals and spend the money on the study. Greg Noll, Scott Haverstick, and Jim Eshleman, all thought that we should proceed now, that we need the expertise that is beyond what we have. Mark Lauriello noted that the cautionary advice received was that we may receive recommendations that we “don’t want to hear,” but the fire companies are aware of this possibility and prepared for it.

Motion by Scott Haverstick to issue the RFP now and that the selection of the vendor would be by the Task Force as a whole.

Second by Mark Lauriello.

Discussion:

Don McCann asked to how many vendors we would send the RFP? Greg Noll said at least three.

Motion passed unanimously.

Mark stated that Greg Noll will be the committee contact for the vendors to field any questions.

V. Sub-Committee Report -- Administrative

Robert Thompson reported that the Administrative Committee met and condensed the consolidated income statements from 7 pages to 2 pages, categorizing line items by common groupings. The next step will be for the four fire companies to provide their 2008 Income and Expense information in this format and as well as projections for 2009. He also noted that the Administrative Committee will meet regularly on the third Thursday each month at Highville Fire Company.

Russ Guthrie reviewed the committee time line.

VI. 2007 Budget Review

Don McCann reviewed the condensed Consolidated Income Statements for 2007. When the four fire companies provide their 2008 Income and Expense information and projections for 2009 in this format, we will then be able to work with the fire company treasurers to develop a 2010 budget for presentation to Manor Township and Millersville Borough in August for consideration in funding operations for 2010. Don also noted that future projections may be influenced by the Tactical Committee's study.

Keith Eshleman asked if a spreadsheet could be sent out so the fire companies could just fill in the information for 2008 & 2009. Don said he would.

VII. Speaker – Chief Mark Burrows - Warrior Run Area Fire Company

Mark Burrows presented the history of the Warrior Run Area Fire Company as it was developed to serve Watsontown Borough, Delaware Township, McEwensville Borough and Gregg Township. Warrior Run Community Corporation, which coincides with the Warrior Run School District surveyed residents in the early 1990's to learn community concerns. The number one issue was the future of emergency services, followed by development of nature trails. Fire companies from Allenwood, Turbotville, McEwensville, and Watsontown, which cover parts of three counties, met and decided to consolidate resources. They considered two options; remain as is and provide services under contract to the municipalities, or engage and

involve the municipalities in the process with equal say in the process. They chose the later, and had quite a few meetings with the department of Community and Economic Development. The municipalities funded a 3rd party consultant to conduct a four-month study, which recommended consolidating the fire companies. The municipalities hired an attorney to mediate the process and define the organization structure.

The Warrior Run Area Fire Cooperative, which is an umbrella organization for the Fire Department and EMS services, was created. An auxiliary, which is a non-profit 501(c) 3, was also created, to receive funds and in turn provide funding for the operations of the cooperative. It was noted that one fire company, McEwensville Fire Company chose not to participate and was dissolved. Also, one municipality chose not to join and therefore the cooperative provides fire and EMS to that municipality on a contract basis.

The cooperative is the Fire Board consisting of 12 members with equal representation from the municipalities and the fire department, serving staggered terms. Members are appointed by the municipalities; each municipality names a representative from government and the fire department. As part of the process they developed bylaws, standard operating guidelines (SOG), municipal financing responsibilities (originally defined as \$8 per resident and recently increased to \$16 per resident), training guidelines and the Fire Department organizational structure. Change to the municipal per capita rate for funding must be agreed to by all the municipalities. The per capita rate covers both operating expenses and long term capital expenditures, but does not cover workers compensation, which is handled separately. Mark also commented that the municipality which did not join pays about 30% more per resident based on the contract for services.

There whole process took five years to complete. At the creation of the consolidated company they also received \$1 million from the Commonwealth for “bricks and mortar” as they closed two locations and built one new location.

They have a fire chief and an administrative chief, both volunteer, and a paid part-time treasurer. The Fire Board defined the qualifications of the fire and administrative chiefs, which are elected by the Fire Department and approved by the Fire Board. The treasurer pays all bills based on purchase orders signed by both the chiefs (expenditures over \$4,000 are bid), and reports financial information each month, including details of every dollar spent. Mark felt this detailed reporting was critical information for education of the citizenry. All meetings are advertised public meetings.

They have a capital plan that covers 10 years and is reviewed every two years and revised as needed. All equipment is owned by the Cooperative and leased for \$1 per year to the Fire Department.

Mark Burrows entertained questions.

Questions included: How many pieces of apparatus? 14 altogether. How many locations? Two (four prior to consolidation). How many square miles covered? 90. How many residents? 16,000. Average response number of people? Varies 6 to 30. What portion of the operating budget is provided by the \$16 per resident? About one third; other sources are hospital ambulance revenue, fund drive, carnival and support from the federal prisons. Do you have duty crews? No.

Keith Eshleman asked who handled grants. Mark said he was responsible for grants.

Jay Breneman asked if the municipalities had a fire tax. Mark said two of the municipalities have a fire tax.

Ted Gingrich asked about coverage to other townships outside the cooperative. Mark said they do provide some coverage and receive donations from those townships. He also noted that there are some other fire companies that are first responders for some areas in the cooperative's municipalities.

Marks final comment was that education of the citizens is important in obtaining municipal support. To this end they have asked the governments and school districts to consider hiring firemen and allowing them to respond to calls during work hours, several have. Also the fire department has a practice of making their buildings available for community organizations without charge.

Chairman Guthrie thanked Mr. Burrows for a very informative presentation.

VIII. "Wrap Up" Comments Roundtable for the Good of the Order

Robert Brady gave a brief summary of the recent consolidation of fire companies in Adams County and Cambria County as illustration that the process of consolidation is occurring in a number of locations around the Commonwealth. He also discussed the challenges of funding local services.

Ron Goe said Washington Boro Fire Company's new tanker has arrived. The Tactical Committee indicated that it probably would be prudent to hang on to **the old tanker** for now, even though initially the plan was to sell it for \$60,000+/- . If we keep paying on it, it may lose value if not sold soon. **The old tanker** needs a new tank and he would like some guidance from the Task Force, at a future meeting, whether repair of the tank should be pursued.

Jim Eshleman noted that he provided handouts of the Millersville Fire Company annual report and an article on the merger of two companies in Clearfield Borough.

IX. Adjournment

By unanimous consent Chairman Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

X. Next Meeting

Time – 7:00 p.m.

Date – March 5, 2009

Place – Manor Township Maintenance Building

Route 999 and Supervisor Road

Minutes submitted by: Don McCann, Recording Secretary

The following notes from the Administrative Committee, by Robert Thompson, and Tactical Committee, by Mark Lauriello, which met later in February, are incorporated here for reference.

February 19 2009 meeting of Administrative Sub-Committee of ESTF

Eight members (Russ, Don, Les, Glen, Ted, Jane, Dick and Bob) commiserated for 90 minutes.

Finances

In order to have the best financial data available for presentation to the Manor Township Supervisors and the Millersville Borough Council on the joint four (4) station operation of a new consolidated Volunteer Fire Service entity in 2010, the Sub-Committee will reevaluate past data submissions, evaluate new data submissions and incorporate in the presentation proposed short term capital expenditures. A set of talking points will be developed to explain and expanded on the spreadsheet presentation.

Constitution and By-Laws

Extensive discourse occurred on the manner and methods that could be employed to elect the Chiefs of the four substations. This topic was not resolved.

Before substantive discussions can begin regarding the Constitution (the foundation document) of the new VFC the Administrative Sub-Committee will require directions from and determinations be made by the full body of the ESTF Committee. In this regard, this Sub-Committee would like to recommend that since we have all heard presentations on Model I (Manheim Township) and Model II (Warrior Run) type reorganization efforts that we be afforded the privilege of hearing from an experienced Model III (Consolidation) presenter. A third presentation should allow us to avoid obvious (but not to us) pitfalls.

Recommendations

Actions recommended by the Administrative Sub-Committee of the ESTF include;

1. That a schedule of all meetings be published,
2. That a Model III type presentation occur,
3. That more information on the Model II type reorganization of services be made available and
4. That the Executive Officers of the ESTF (Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary) be directed and authorized to initiate a search for a legal advisor to and for the Emergency Services Task Force.

The Tactical Committee met 2/26/09.

Status of Response to RFP

To date, we have received one proposal in response to the RFP we issued. Our RFP listed the due date for proposals as March 5, 2009, so we expect/hope to receive at least one additional proposal prior to our meeting next week. The proposal that we did receive is from Harry R. Carter, PH.D., LLC and is attached [sent separately] in its entirety for everyone to review prior to next week's meeting.

Standard Operating Guidelines

The four chiefs will be responsible for sorting thru the SOGs of the four companies and developing a single SOG manual. Ron Goe volunteered to be the committee member responsible for leading and coordinating this charge, along with the 4 chiefs. The date of July 1, 2009 was established as the tentative target date to have the consolidated SOGs complete. There may be a need to hire someone to do some typing to pull all of this together.

Duties of the Tactical Committee

We briefly reviewed the duties of the Tactical Committee:

1. The Tactical Operations Committee...
 - 1.1 Officer Structure Defined (Chief, Deputy Chief and so on)
 - 1.2 Housing Needs Defined
 - 1.3 Equipment Needs Defined
 - 1.4 Manpower Needs Defined
 - 1.5 Operational Procedures Defined
 - 1.6 Budget Needs Defined (Tactical)

With the work that the Tactical Committee has done to date, and with what will be accomplished with the study, the Tactical Committee is on track