

# **Regional Emergency Services Task Force**

## ***Meeting Minutes***

5/7/2009

Manor Township Maintenance Building

### **I. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Guthrie at 6:50 p.m.

### **II. Recognize Present Members and Visitors**

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

#### **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  
Mark Lauriello – West Lancaster Fire Co. – Citizen

Unable to attend:

Carl Harnish – Highville Fire Co. – Citizen  
Craig Hohman – West Lancaster Fire Co.  
Gregory G. Noll – Community-at-large – Citizen

Others attending:

Andy Weaver, Fire Chief – Southeastern Adams ES  
Craig Hagerman, Deputy Fire Chief – Southeastern Adams ES  
Ted Gingrich – West Lancaster Fire Co.  
Joan Matterness – West Lancaster Citizen  
Dean Gantz, Jr. – Mountville Fire Co.  
Keith Eshleman – Millersville Fire Co.

Dick Schoch – Washington Boro Fire Co.  
Carolyn Ranck – Manor Twp. Citizen

### III. Review and approve 4/2/09 Meeting Minutes

Don McCann noted that Scott Haverstick was omitted from the “Unable to attend” section of the 4/2/09 minutes, and he would make note of that correction in the 5/7/09 minutes in lieu of sending everyone a corrected 4/2/09 copy.

**Motion** by Jay Breneman to approve the 4/2/09 minutes with a correction that Scott Haverstick was unable to attend the 4/2/09 meeting.

**Second** by Ron Goe.

**Motion passed**, with Scott Haverstick’s abstention.

### IV. Sub-Committee Report – Tactical

Mark Lauriello said the SOG subcommittee continues to meet.

Keith Eshleman said they felt they needed the SOGs in electronic format to aid in the consolidation and development of a new SOG. Ron Goe said Ted Gingrich submitted West Lancaster’s in electronic format, which might help. He asked how long it might take. Russell Guthrie said they would get it done for next meeting, although he is not sure how it will be accomplished as it is a large task.

Carolyn Ranck volunteered to work on the project.

Mark said the Dr. Jenaway will attend the next month’s meeting. Russell said this will be a general “listening” meeting for the whole Task Force at our June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, and then give his final report in August.

Jay Breneman asked if Dr. Jenaway has met with all the fire companies. Russell said that he has.

Mark said at the meeting on May 28<sup>th</sup> in addition to updating the progress of the SOG they will review the organizational structure previously developed and also the work on a job description for the Fire Administrator, as well as review whether “Fire Administrator” is the appropriate title.

### V. Sub-Committee Report – Administrative

Robert Thompson reminded that the report of the April Administrative committee meeting in April were included with last month's minutes. At that meeting they approved the legal services RFP and subsequently the Chairman mailed the RFP to the firms which had been suggested to us.

Russell Guthrie noted that the four fire company presidents have been invited to attend the May Administrative Committee meeting.

## **VI. Speaker – Andy Weaver, Chief – Southeastern Adams ES – 501(c)3 Model**

Russell B Guthrie introduced Chief Weaver from Southeastern Adams Emergency Services. He presented a PowerPoint show explaining what they did, when they did it and how they did it. They serve one McSherrystown Borough and Conewago, Mount Pleasant and Union Townships. One fire company chose not to be involved and closed.

They began their process in 2000 with a study. A preliminary plan for consolidation was presented to the municipalities and the fire companies in 2003. All municipalities supported the plan. It was voted on by the companies the following June. A name for the organization and the first officers were elected in July 2004. All the preliminary steps occurred in late 2004, with little involvement by the municipalities—the consolidation committee members were all from the fire companies. They also had subcommittees for tactical and administrative functions. On January 1, 2005 they officially became the new organization.

Prior to consolidation the four companies responded to each others' calls, they did combined fundraisers and split the proceeds. Many members (50) were members of multiple companies.

They developed a 10 year plan which was front loaded in the first five years, with the second five years being developed and refined this year. The first year they sold some duplicate equipment, developed standard apparatus, and developed minimum training standards for members. They recruited new EMS members. Prior to consolidation, one EMS unit, McSherrystown had a paid daylight staff, they now they have one EMS department that is fully paid and are working on having it be staffed 24/7, by the end of this year or early next year. In 2006 one fire station was sold and another in 2007. The last two stations are currently under sales contract or listed for sale. Eventually all stations are to be closed or sold; all had social halls and this was a difficult emotional process.

A fifteen acre tract was purchased in early 2008 for a new central fire station, Groundbreaking was in November of 2008 and they expect to be in the new facility by Labor Day this year. One central location was one of their initial goals. This is a \$5 million project financed with loans, a capital campaign and the sale of the other stations.

Their general membership dropped from about 750 when the consolidation occurred to about 450 now. They lost a lot of older members, but the remaining older members are the keys for the fundraising efforts. They had previously had about 80 fundraisers combined. Now they

have consolidated or eliminated non-successful fundraisers. Their operating budget has gone down slightly since the date of consolidation.

In their experience a lot of the details, such as name of the organization, company colors, etc. were handled after the consolidation vote, and proved to be “no big deal.” As expected there have been a number of “we always did it this way,” or “who made that decision” issues, but they got through and expect these to disappear when they occupy the new facility and decisions are made looking forward instead of with a backward frame of reference.

Russell asked if the impetus for this project was from the companies or the municipalities. Andy said it originated from the companies. This idea has been kicking around since the 80’s. Russell asked about the legal organization. Andy said they four predecessors were all 501(c)3 organization, and the new organization is also a 501(c)3.

Keith Eshleman asked how the organization is governed. Chief Weaver said they have a board of officers consisting of President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Membership Secretary, Administrative Secretary, Treasurer, and five Trustees. On the fire services side, Andy said there are a fire chief, deputy chief, assistant chief, two captains and two lieutenants, and an EMS Administrator. All of these officers were elected in July 2004 and most were contested positions.

There is an Executive Board is comprised of President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Fire Chief and five Trustees. Their primary responsibility is set policy paid positions.

Phil Lastowski asked the characteristics of the Trustees, and specifically if the municipalities were represented on the executive board. Andy said they are not represented as government officials, but may be if they happen to be a member of the department.

Andy summed it up by saying the consolidation is a difficult process, with a number of contentious issues and some loss of membership, but he can think of any number of reasons to consolidate, but none not to consolidate.

## **VII. “Wrap Up” Comments Roundtable for the Good of the Order**

Don McCann observed that the Southeast Adams ES model was a simple consolidation from four into one.

Robert Thompson said “good meeting.” A number of others concurred.

Jay Breneman asked if any companies are currently doing any grants. He wanted to make sure all were aware of one available from the Department of Homeland Security, with a deadline this month. Jay also asked about arrangements for the June 25 meeting. Russell Guthrie said the building had been arranged for the Tactical Committee meeting and that meeting date was previously advertised.

Phil asked about the second community update. Russell said the final version is not yet ready.

Scott asked whether the fire companies advertise their meetings as we do for the Sunshine Law. Responses were negative. Phil said fire companies are not elected officials.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

By unanimous consent Chairman Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

### **IX. Next Meeting**

Time – 7:00 p.m.

Date – June 4, 2009

Place – Manor Township Maintenance Building

Route 999 and Supervisor Road

Speaker Dr. Bill Jenaway

A listening meeting for the Task Force

#### **Special Date**

Time – 7:00 p.m.

Date – June 25, 2009

Place – Manor Township Maintenance Building

Route 999 and Supervisor Road

Speaker – Lawyer Mike Sholly

Legal review of the Co-Op model

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 the month, are incorporated here for reference.**

#### Administrative Sub-Committee meeting of May 21, 2009

Members, (Phil, Russ, Dick, Don, Joan, Ted, Glenn, and Bob) met with the Presidents of three

VFC's ( Doug Stoner of Millersville Fire Co, James Knapp of Goodwill Fire Co and James Pontz of West Lancaster Fire Co).

The almost two hour meeting proved to be instructional, informative and thought provoking.

As a body the Presidents stressed these points.

1. The current method of providing funds to VFC's through fund raising activities and public solicitations are outmoded, inefficient and ineffective. Most of work required of these activities falls on the shoulders of a small number of older members. Younger members are not willing participants in those activities and the value of team building and camaraderie is greatly overstated. The combined efforts of the Consolidated Company, in fund raising activities, might prove beneficial in very selective instances.
2. VFC's should not be identified through their fund raising activities.
3. Funding for fire and emergency services protection must be through public funding by Authority Fees, Taxes or through some combination of those sources.
4. Elected officials must be strenuously and frequently advised of the urgency of providing an immediate funding stream to VFC's to assure the continuation of emergency services by Volunteers.
5. Recruitment and Retention of volunteers is critical. Many younger fire fighters have career aspirations as paid fire fighter and are actively seeking positions.
6. It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain current on line equipment.
7. Volunteer fire fighter should be provided with functioning state of the art equipment.
8. Current Constitutions and By-Laws limit growth and the ability to reorganize and should be completely reworked.
9. New organizational models should be studied and a new model proposed to the Consolidated Company.
10. The Presidents believe that the duty of the RESTF is to bring about the Consolidation of the four Volunteer Fire Company's.

I believe that this meeting of minds was long overdue and it provided an excellent opportunity for the exchange of ideas and concepts. The Presidents, as are all other stake holders, were informed that this committee meets the third Thursday of every month at 7 PM at the Highville Station and that their presence and ideas are welcomed.

RPT

Mark Lauriello reported that the Tactical Committee meeting is scheduled for May 28<sup>th</sup> and will be reported to be at the next Task Force meeting.