

Regional Emergency Services Task Force

Meeting Minutes

6/4/2009

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.

Roll call

The following task force members were present:

Glenn Hess – Highville Fire Co.
Carl Harnish – Highville Fire Co. – Citizen
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

Unable to attend:

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

Others attending:

William Jenaway, PhD.
Ted Gingrich – West Lancaster Fire Co.
Dean Gantz, Jr. – Mountville Fire Co.
Keith Eshleman – Millersville Fire Co.
Dick Schoch – Washington Boro Fire Co.

Carolyn Ranck – Manor Twp. Citizen
Glen Deatrick – Highville Fire Co.
Rob Muschlitz – West Lancaster Fire Co.

III. **Review and approve 5/7/09 Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Jim Eshleman to approve the 5/7/09 minutes as presented.

Second by Ron Goe.

Motion passed.

IV. **Sub-Committee Report – Tactical**

Mark Lauriello reported that the Tactical Committee met last Thursday the 28th. He said the committee continues to work on the SOGs with completion due in September. They are selecting the best from each which is an administrative challenge.

Russell Guthrie said to help the process the SOGs for the individual fire companies have been printed, with each in a different color. The committee's selections can be noted and then compiled digitally for the combined version.

Mark said they developed a draft of the position description of the Fire Administrator, and will be reviewing and revising it at their next meeting. They also took another look at the structure of the consolidated company and made some adjustments. Mark said he will distribute these changes to the Tactical Committee members for review at their next meeting, which because of the special meeting planned for June 25th with Attorney Sholly, will not be until July.

V. **Sub-Committee Report – Administrative**

Robert Thompson reported that the Administrative Committee met on May 21st. The minutes are at the end of the May Task Force Minutes. He said the three presidents who were there expressed some significant concerns which we will need to address as we move forward. The company presidents confirmed that our task is to consolidate the companies.

Russell Guthrie said one attorney responded to the RFP for legal services, "thanks, but 'no thanks.'" We are still awaiting responses from the other four.

Russell also reminded all of future due dates.

July 2, 2009 meeting – Budget done and ready for review
August 6, 2009 – Final Jenway Report & 2nd Budget Look
September 3, 2009 – SOGS Done and Ready for Review & Legal Model Done and Ready for Review

VI. Speaker – Input Session with Dr. Bill Jenaway

Russell Guthrie introduced Dr. Bill Jenaway. Although many have met with Dr. Jenaway, our intended purpose is to provide input from the Task Force as whole.

Dr. Jenway thanked the Task Force for the opportunity to do this project. He said one of the three questions for tonight is “what do you [members of the task force] want me to leave with here tonight?” Another question is “are there items the task force has seen working somewhere else that it would like considered or a comparison made?” And the third question, “are there things seen elsewhere that have not worked, and would like us to comment on?”

Russell Guthrie asked if Dr. Jenaway could comment on his visits to the four fire companies.

Dr. Jenaway said he visited three and his staff visited Washington Boro, and did tours through the service area, and obtained copies of the insurance services reports for Millersville and Manor Township. Although the reports are extremely dated they had valuable baseline data. He also obtained data from the county 911 Center to evaluate the response time for the first unit to arrive at the scene for 80 percent of calls. The average is between 7 and 9 minutes. For volunteer organizations with the square mileage in our area this is pretty good. He said they also had opportunity to observe four actual calls during their visits. NFP 1720 documents were obtained for all companies, run information, and SOGs. He said they have about 95% of the information needed for compilation into the final report.

Phil Lastowski asked about meetings with the municipalities.

Dr. Jenaway said they met with the Manor Township Manager and Police Chief, and Millersville’s Mayor and Boro Manager.

Jay Breneman asked if there is a need to meet with the Supervisors and Boro Council.

Dr. Jenaway said that is a fair question, and sometime it is done through meeting with individual representatives. He suggested that he’d like to see how tonight develops before determining that need, and asked for Jay’s response at the end of the meeting.

Mark Lauriello asked about highlights from the actual company visits.

Dr. Jenaway said the issues we are facing are the same as elsewhere in the state. At his meeting she heard people issues, money issues and governmental issues. He felt none of these are big negatives, they are just facts of the matter—there are fewer people available now, money is tighter and there is more government control due to a number of reasons including right-to-know laws and regulation on accounting for money spent by municipalities.

He also noted that he was only able to obtain three Relief association audits form the Auditor General's website, and needs to track down the fourth. Dick Schoch said that Washington Boro's was recently completed and the first time in four years. Dr. Jenaway said that is understandable and explains why it was not yet on the website.

Dr. Jenaway said that our concerns notwithstanding we have several pluses. We are in a growth area on the border of a fairly good size city, in a suburban setting instead of a entirely rural setting. There is a lot of potential here that we will need to plan for. There are four fire stations that are older and not built for tomorrow's fire service, which is a long term issue; rolling stock has some age to it, but is "good stuff" that has been well maintained. He will be looking at locations—same versus alternative locations.

Don McCann said when have been looking at different legal structure, including a "co-op" and asked if Dr. Jenaway has any comment on such a structure.

Dr. Jenaway commented this is one option. He has seen it typically used for law enforcement, although it has other service delivery applications. The Warrior Run model we looked at is unique in Pennsylvania and there are only 5 EMS services with Authorities. Pennsylvania has generally not been receptive to non-traditional forms of organization. In Pennsylvania these forms (co-ops or authorities) are unique, but not in other states where they work very well. They work well and have been used for trash or water systems. Out West these systems are extremely popular because they can relate to square miles served, or population density, or most use of services, and become very good user oriented systems.

Russell Guthrie said that the Tactical Committee has indicated a preference for a Fire Administrator rather than a Chief, and would like comment on this in his report.

Phil Lastowski asked how this plan should be introduced to the public. Dr. Jenaway said the report will contain a mini-PR Plan.

Russell Guthrie asked projections that we could use as guidelines in budget forecasts. Dr. Jenaway said statewide guidelines are not of much value, but comparable locales will be of benefit for comparison and will be provided.

Russell also asked that service areas, particularly as it relates to overlap with other companies be considered in the report. Dr. Jenaway said this will be included and in fact they were working on it today.

Russell Guthrie asked if Dr. Jenaway could be here when we meet with Attorney Sholly to learn about the co-op model. Dr. Jenway said that if he could not he would see if one of his staff could attend.

Russ also asked about funding streams as this has been a discussion item since we began. We talked about four funding streams taxation, fund raising activities & mailings, business and

industry solicitation and grants, and he asked that if we overlooked any sources that Dr. Jenaway would so advise.

Further, Russ asked for comment on the advisability of having the Fire Administrator and the Emergency Manger be the same individual. This had been suggested, but also Keith Eshleman had previously noted that it may seem advisable from an administrative viewpoint, but in an actual emergency one individual would find it difficult to perform both functions.

Russell also asked whether a position for “Community Utilization,” i.e. a development officer, would be valuable position for us in working with business and industry. Dr. Jenaway said there are a number of such successful instances of such a position and although he had not yet thought about it for our situation, he will consider it.

Don McCann asked if there is a database in the Commonwealth of firefighter and their addresses. Dr. Jenaway said not in Pennsylvania.

Carl Harnish asked if after Dr. Jenaway has completed a study, has he seen a denial of money by a municipality, and if so did it result in a referendum. Dr. Jenaway said he has not seen a referendum. But often although there is not denial, there frequently are strings attached to municipal funding.

Russell asked about training; we would like assessment of our training efforts to make sure we are being effective. Dr. Jenaway said they always look at training. At this point he felt there is nothing unique or abnormal about the training that the companies are doing. What he has seen here is a consistent effort to make sure basic requirements are met. Officer training is more advanced and important.

Robert Thompson asked if in Pennsylvania there is any qualification to become a fire company. Dr. Jenaway said becoming a fire company is not too difficult but being assigned a service area by a municipality is more difficult.

Russell Guthrie asked about our lack ladder trucks given the high buildings at Millersville University. Dr. Jenaway said there is no state requirement. The issue may be if there is a mutual aid agreement with a ladder truck company. Our ISO ratings would probably not be affected by the absence of a ladder truck. Currently the rating is a “5” and possibly could be improved to a “4,” but the most likely way to do that is with improved staffing, and secondarily with improved water supply availability, although this would take a lot of work, because they look for 4 to 5 times the number of volunteers available compared to responders needed, and it would probably take new water systems to improve the rating! The change from 5 to 4 is “pennies,” 4 to a 3 is “dollars.”

Russell asked that Washington Boro’s river rescue and Millersville’s Collapse Response Unit be discussed in the report.

Ron Goe asked about the second tanker they have replaced but still retain.

Robert Thompson asked how critical the fireman's residence location is to the station location. Dr. Jenway said it varies by deployment models and by circumstance. A duty crew living in stations is a growing trend, and is a definite option, and is not generally recommended because there are many different systems and circumstances; it depends.

Russell Guthrie picked up on Dr. Jenaway's earlier comment about our aging fire houses, and commented that had not thought of our buildings as "old." Scott Haverstick pointed out that in our discussions we were aware that West Lancaster has considered moving, Washington Boro is considering a new building and Millersville has purchased land for an additional site. Craig Hohman said West Lancaster's building was built in mid-fifties for 1950's fire trucks. Keith Eshleman said that their building was built in 1952. Ron Goe said that in addition to there building they have another issue with their property; there is a real steep angle to the road when they exit their fire house. Dr. Jenaway said he noticed this and thought that it's possible that the torque created could snap an axle, or they might hit the utility pole close to the angle.

Keith Eshleman said that in the proposal there was nothing mentioned about how volunteers from the different companies are made to feel as one in new consolidated company. Russell asked that this issue be addressed. Don McCann observed that in the instance of the Adams County example we learned about last meeting they had the advantage of looking forward to closing all fire houses and opening one new facility for the new organization. We do not have that situation here. Dr. Jenaway said one of the things is to figure out how all can fit into the new organization; to change the cultural identity.

Scott Haverstick said one of his concerns is how to blend the interests of the two municipalities, given that one is growing and somewhat affluent and has a good tax base and the other is limited in growth and a limited tax base because of the university. Dr. Jenaway said that around the state this is typical; townships are growing, and boroughs and third class cities are not growing. Dr. Jenaway said in Delaware County a few years ago there was some consideration of first combining municipalities, and as one might expect this did not happen. Jay Breneman said he has heard this idea as well as combining school districts, but it is not likely municipalities would combine. Dr. Jenaway said fundraising organizations have advised him that contributions will probably be down 10% to 15% in the coming year, and this puts pressure back on taxing authorities for funding; 2010 will be a difficult year.

Robert Thompson asked about defection of volunteers when the consolidation occurs. Dr. Jenaway said typical is 10%, but it could be as high as 15% or as low as 5%. Scott asked what our fire company representatives foresee. Ron Goe said he did not see it as an issue with Washington Boro as Goodwill voted 100% to approve the funding of the consolidation study. Jay Breneman said he felt we have the advantage that all the companies committed to this and chipped in for funding. Dr. Jenway said it depends on anticipations and expectations, and circumstances.

Dr. Jenaway said it would welcome contact if anything comes up that we did not cover tonight.

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

Favorable comments were made about the study project and Dr. Jenaway. Scott Haverstick expressed his opinion that we certainly chose the right man for the job.

VIII. Adjournment

By unanimous consent Chairman Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

IX. Next Meeting

Time – 7:00 p.m.

Date – June 25, 2009

Place – Manor Township Maintenance Building

Route 999 and Supervisor Road

Speaker Lawyer Mike Sholly

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 June 18, 2009

Eight (Ted, Joan, Dick, Les, Phil, Glen, Russ and Bob) members of the Administrative Sub-Committee met for 1 1/2 hours at the Highville Station on Thursday the 18th.

Topics:

1. Two RFP,s for legal services were reviewed and evaluated. One more proposal is expected.
2. Organizational structures were discussed at length. The conclusion of those in attendance was that this topic deserves the attention of the entire RESTF.
3. Dick reported that he had submitted all required information required for the 2010 budget projection. Ted reported that the West Lancaster Fire Co. had also submitted the required information and that the Treasurer of that Co. generally was out of town Thursday through Sunday. Lacking further information discussion on the budget was ended.

Respectfully,
RPT

Tactical Committee meeting June 25, 2009

The Tactical Committee met last evening [6/25] to review and put the finishing touches on the Fire Administrator job description and the Tactical Organizational Chart. The results of that work is attached. If time allows, we will be happy to discuss these two items with the full committee on July 2nd.

Best regards.

Mark.