

Regional Emergency Services Task Force

Meeting Minutes

8/6/2009

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.

Russell Guthrie introduced Dave Love of Emergency Services Education & Consulting Group, substituting for Dr. Jenaway, who will discuss the draft of the report presented tonight. Russell also asked members to read the draft and submit questions and comments within 15 days.

Roll call

The following task force members were present:

Glenn Hess – Highville Fire Co.
Carl Harnish – Highville Fire Co. – Citizen
Russell Guthrie – Manor Twp. – Citizen
Scott Bailey – Millersville Boro Council (for Phil Lastowski)
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
Gregory G. Noll – Community-at-large – Citizen

Unable to attend:

Jay Breneman – Manor Twp.
Phil Lastowski – Millersville Boro Council
Craig Hohman – West Lancaster Fire Co.

Others attending:

Dave Love – Emergency Services Education & Consulting Group
Bill Hapke –Highville Fire Co.
Mike Ditzler – Highville Fire Co.
Glenn Hess – Highville Fire Co.
Dick Schock – Washington Boro Fire Co.
Jimmy Knapp – Washington Boro Fire Co.
Joan Broome – Washington Boro Fire Co.
Ted Gingrich –West Lancaster Fire Co.
Keith Eshleman – Millersville Fire Co.
Dean Gantz – Mountville Fire Co.

III. **Review and approve 7/2/09 Meeting Minutes**

Don McCann reported that Jay Breneman advised him of a correction; it was Jay Breneman who raised the question about how trust were handled, not Keith Eshleman [see first paragraph of page 4, Minutes of 7/2/09].

Motion by Scott Haverstick to approve the 7/2/09 minutes as corrected.

Second by Glenn Hess.

Motion passed.

IV. **Speaker – Dave Love – Emergency Services Education & Consulting Group (ESECG)**

Russell Guthrie introduced Dave Love who is filling in for Dr. Jenaway who is away and unable to attend.

Dave Love presented the draft of the **Fire Services Assessment for Millersville Borough and Manor Township**. He said his background in fire services includes more than 30 years in a combination Fire Department; he was the Chief of the Fire Department of the city of York, PA. He has worked for VFIS for more than 22 years and several projects of this type with Dr. Bill Jenaway. He conveyed Bill's apologies for not being able to attend the meeting as he is on vacation with his family.

He said what the Task Force is doing is common across the United States. Working cooperatively is enabling fire companies to do what they cannot do on their own and provides better service to the community. Volunteers perform a valuable service, it has been estimated that the value of a volunteer fire fighter is about \$75,000 annually.

Dave called particular attention to the Project Findings on page 21. He asked that as it is reviewed in the coming month that any technical errors be pointed out so they can be corrected.

He said they looked at management issues and made recommendations. They looked at operational issues and how the departments are strategically located. They looked at Risk Analysis and Finances, Personnel, Apparatus and Facilities were reviewed; somethings need to be replaced. He said they looked at Standard Operating Procedures (SOGs) and felt we were ahead of the curve in that regard, they also looked at Mutual Aid and Training. They felt we work with Mutual Aid very well.

Most of the recommendations are based on what they heard in conversations with us. And unless based on inaccuracies, will stand, that doesn't mean we will necessarily agree with all, or implement all.

They thought our Org Chart was a bit top heavy in officers. ESECG has included a suggested Org Chart. Dave said we want a Fire Administrator with fire service background, and he agreed that Fire Service command experience is important for success of the position.

Don McCann asked if there were any organization models where the Administrator does not have command experience and if so do they work. Dave said yes, but cautioned that in certain other matters, such as training and discipline, it is difficult to succeed without the command experience.

He also commented that he felt our financial model is on target and should work.

Dave invited any questions before the next meeting so that ESECG can respond.

Russell Guthrie said he read the report, having received it several days ago. He did a brief "book review" of the text. He called attention to pages 59 and following, which contain the specific recommendations. Russell then pointed out that the Project Findings are on page 21, with Assumptions and Current Trends following, beginning on page 25, which compares us to national trends to provide perspective.

Russell noted that on Management and Governance Issues (pg. 28) Vision and Mission Statements are suggested. Dave Love said it is important not only to state what you do but also what you do not do. The Fire Company cannot be all things to all people.

Russell also pointed out that each Recommendation is prioritized as he briefly went through each of them.

A discussion of Risk Analysis ensued. Dave said risks must be assessed to determine geographic location, equipment needs, etc.

Scott Haverstick asked if Safe Harbor hydro electric plant has its own fire department. Mike Ditzler responded that they do, and that Highville also responds.

Dave Love indicated that that VFIS and the Glatfelter organization have available several free programs on recruitment and retention. A standard form should be developed for documenting and building a database of training and capabilities of all members.

Testing of equipment, pumpers, ladders and hoses, should be done annually. Russell asked how frequently the Millersville test facility is used. Keith Eshleman responded that the pumpers are tested annually but not the hoses. The hoses are tested every other year. Dave Love asked if a third party does the hose test. Keith said yes, someone else does the hose test, which is expensive; the fire company does the pumper test.

Dave recommended that a specific process should be developed for determining when apparatus should be replaced.

Also, the process should begin to look at replacing and relocating stations as all are not suited for fire service in the 21st century. A map showing geographic locations of stations is included in the report with a “hole” in the middle of the population distribution, which could be better served with a station in that area.

Scott Haverstick asked how many stations nationally should be replaced. Dave said depending on the area of the country, most should be replaced. Scott said that we should then not necessarily be alarmed that our stations need to be replaced. Dave said yes but, some issues are more pressing, such as Highville’s lease which runs out in 2015, and there has been no willingness by the landlord to discuss renewal, so alternate plans must be pursued in case it is not renewed.

Scott Bailey asked about long term capital funding needs. Russell responded that the Tactical Committee has developed a spreadsheet of equipment, (included in Appendix 15 on page 173 of the report) with expected replacement dates and costs, but it does not include building needs. Dave Love indicated he felt that in the aggregate we were a bit heavy in the equipment we have.

Dave Love took notes of several questions about omissions and clarifications needed for the final report. Also, Russell indicated he already has a list of questions he would be submitting to Dr. Jenaway, including Russell’s observations that none of the Millersville Borough Council questions, provided by Phil Lastowski, has been addressed; no comments on the Co-Op model versus a 501(c) were included, and no recommendations on the Mountville coverage of part of Manor Township were included.

Mark Lauriello commented that the draft report indicates that we should complete a risk assessment, although in our RFP we specifically asked for completion of a risk analysis. Also the RFP asked for recommendation on locations of station replacements.

Ron Goe’s initial assessment is that it seems to be a generally generic report. Others concurred that initially the draft looks like less than we expected.

Robert Thompson suggested that Russell should address the discrepancy with the requirements of the RFP with Dr. Jenaway.

V. 2010 Budget Projection

Don McCann advised that the spreadsheet that was handed out is not a projection of a consolidated company, but merely an aggregation of the projections for 2010 of the individual companies as they operate now. He will email the electronic version of the spreadsheet to all. He also noted that some of the figures are a bit inflated as they contain some capital expenditures. Don asked that as this is reviewed the fire companies should consider whether any of the figures should be adjusted.

Scott asked if Don could explain the negative interest in 2008. Don said he did not have that answer; the figure came from West Lancaster, and the question remained unanswered.

Russell asked about the net loss in 2008, Scott clarified that it included Washington Boro's purchase of a new tanker. Ron Goe said that although this was capital, lacking sufficient funding they paid for it out of their general fund.

Don McCann acknowledge that compiling income statements is a challenge because the fire companies work on a cash basis and often compile their financial information directly from their checking account records.

Mark Lauriello said that it is now August and he questioned whether we should attempt to develop a budget for a consolidated company for 2010. He thought it would be difficult to do, given that it appears unlikely that a consolidated company would be in place by the beginning of the next year.

Scott Bailey said on a legal basis the Boro cannot allocate funds to an organization that does not yet exist. He felt this budget cycle has its limitations; the Borough has a deficit this year they must address.

Scott Haverstick agreed it's not likely consolidation will occur that quickly.

Carl Harnish asked when info on a consolidated company would be needed next year. Scott Bailey said budget is always a topic of discussion and solid information would be welcome whenever it would be available. Carl asked "no later than October?" Scott replied "definitely," but even if it were in place this year, if it contained substantial increase it would be difficult for the borough to do anything this year given the borough's situation.

Russell Guthrie said that even though there would be significant changes in a consolidated company in the future, there would probably not be significant operating changes the first year or so until plans could be implemented.

Scott Haverstick said the process will be evolutionary and achieving and change in budget needs for the next year is not likely.

Mark Lauriello said he agreed we are “not there” in getting a consolidated budget ready for next year. He asked if the fire companies are expecting the level of municipal support as indicated in the 2010 projection. It appears that although at the beginning of the year we thought we could have a budget in place first and then a new organization to follow. Now it appears more realistic that we will have the new organization in place *before* the consolidated budget, which probably makes more sense.

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

Ted Gingrich said he thought we should now give the municipalities an indication of what to expect in 2011.

Jimmy Knapp commented to Scott Bailey that firefighters are tired of fundraisers.

Keith Eshleman concurred that time demands are such that fundraising has become more difficult. He also said that politically we will need to present the full package of what is needed for a consolidation and a budget for it to be approved by the municipalities and accepted by the public.

A discussion ensued about the municipal funding challenges in the current economic and political situation.

Don McCann asked Scott Bailey if there is a structure, or working group, or some sort of mechanism for resolving between Millersville Borough and Manor Township how funding a consolidated company would occur.

Scott Bailey said that nothing currently exists. He said agreement could be achieved by ordinance or a referendum, or memorandum of understanding.

Ron Goe said his SOG committee felt that professional help is needed in developing SOGs. He asked if the SOG work should continue or if it should be deferred to be completed by the consolidated company. Russell Guthrie suggested the SOG committee should “sit tight” for now and completed in conjunction with the fire administrator; and if hiring help may or may not be needed at that time. Mark Lauriello said he felt there was a need to get the SOGs done now. Russell Guthrie disagreed. Keith Eshleman said they are independent of the organization and will always be undergoing revision; he agreed with Mark.

Russell Guthrie suggested that the SOG committee should proceed with looking for possible assistance.

Robert Thompson said there would not be a Administrative Committee meeting while we work on reviewing the report.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Robert Thompson to adjourn.

Second by Mark Lauriello.

Motion Passed; Chairman Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

VIII. Next Meeting

Time – 7:00 p.m.

Date – September 3, 2009

Place – Manor Township Maintenance Building

Route 999 and Supervisor Road

Minutes submitted by: Don McCann, Recording Secretary