

Regional Emergency Services Task Force

Meeting Minutes

9/3/2009

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.
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:

Carl Harnish – Highville Fire Co. – Citizen
Gregory G. Noll – Community-at-large – Citizen

Others attending:

David Love – VFIS
William Jenaway, PhD – VFIS
Bill Hapke – Highville Fire Co.

Glenn Deatrick – Highville Fire Co.
Dick Schock – Washington Boro Fire Co.
Matt Konon – Washington Boro Fire Co.
Les Eckman – Citizen
Brett Graham – Washington Boro Fire Co.
Ted Gingrich – West Lancaster Fire Co.
Joan Matterness – West Lancaster Fire Co.
Rob Muschlitz – West Lancaster Fire Co.
Keith Eshleman – Millersville Fire Co.
Dean Gantz – Mountville Fire Co.

III. Review and approve 8/6/09 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Jim Eshleman to approve the 8/6/09 minutes.

Second by Mark Lauriello.

Motion passed.

IV. Rob Muschlitz – Chief West Lancaster Fire Co.

Rob Muschlitz, West Lancaster Fire Co. Chief addressed the Task Force about their request for funding from Manor Township to replace their obsolete current fire truck with a new Rescue/Pumper. The old truck is no longer manufactured and parts are not available. They have asked for funding the last four years. The request is for \$650,000. They need to replace it this year; it is their only engine, and WLFC would like the support of the Task Force in their request. If necessary they will go into debt if funding assistance is not available. The fire company has over \$100,000 available for down payment, although this would severely deplete their resources. Chief Muschlitz indicated they would work with the other fire companies to make sure the configuration of the engine would be appropriate in the future.

Russell Guthrie asked if any other company could make one of their engines available. Rob said they have spent thousands of dollars on repairs the last few years and considers those dollars wasted. There are a number of problems with using another company's truck, but this would be an option if the current truck breaks down.

Craig Hohman said typically repairs have been in the thousands of dollars per repair.

Recently they had a major steering pump overhaul and were advised at that time it would not be repairable the next time. If that happened they would have to lease or borrow a pumper from another company. They considered a used piece, but considered it not the best option.

Don McCann asked if a used vehicle would make it more difficult to outfit in a standard fashion. Chief Muschlitz said "absolutely."

Russell Guthrie said the Chief is not looking for a Task Force decision tonight but asked us to consider it as soon as possible because the request must go to the Township soon because of the timing of the budget cycle.

Joan Matterness asked about Manor Township's progress in consideration of a fire tax. Jay Breneman said the finance director has done some work on it, but at this point he has not able to say what may come of it.

Scott asked if the present truck has any cash value. Rob said there is very little cash value. Scott asked if it is unusual to ask for total funding. Jay Breneman said not in his six year service.

Don McCann asked if there are funding options such as bank loans, bond issues or other options than cash from the township. Jay Breneman said various options have been employed in the past.

Russell Guthrie said form his personal point of view he supports the request and felt that the Task Force effort may have gotten in the way of the Township support.

Mark Lauriello asked when the Task Force recommendation would be needed. Rob Muschlitz said it is not needed before the request, but would be a help during the budget process. Mark said he felt we could not make a recommendation now but we should consider it at the next meeting. Mark asked how this fit with Dr. Jenaway's recommendation that the total complement of equipment be reduced by five.

Russell asked if we can wait 30 days to make the recommendation. Jay Breneman said an October time frame would be okay.

Mark asked if the request could be refined as to how it would be funded, that is over a period of years.

Don McCann suggested that take one of the advertised meetings of the subcommittees later this month could be used by the task force to consider this request in more depth.

V. Jenaway Fire Study Report (Dr. Bill Jenaway)

Russell Guthrie introduced Dr. Jenaway.

Before beginning, Dr. Jenaway indicated that four of the excess engines identified in their report are older than the one under discussion but would probably cost in excess of \$75,000 to outfit as a rescue vehicle.

Dr. Jenaway said the report as delivered is essentially complete, but it did not contain a risk analysis.

He noted that it was very difficult to assess data available from the County 911 Center based on how the Center collected data. For instance, it was not possible whether a call was Millersville call or a Manor Township call, that is, which fire company was the first responder.

In the study they compared us to three national standards, the NFPA 17-20, NFP Standard of Providing Emergency Services to the Public. And although they did not hold us to the standards of the Commission of Fire Service Accreditation, where appropriate for long term planning, they included the best management practices, such as financial data collection.

He felt we need to move forward with the consolidation process. He said the section that compares our equipment national data for similar sized communities indicates that we have more apparatus, more facilities and more people than typical. The typical reaction to such a statement is fire fighters say we need everything and elected officials say cuts can be made; the truth is somewhere in the middle.

The Vision Statement and the Mission Statement become the basis for justifying the things we need to do to achieve the mission.

The organization and operational design that the Operations Committee presented to VFIS is, in their view, too heavy in officers. It is better to start small and expand as necessary, rather than try to scale down if functions are not needed—no one want to give up a title. Conflicts could result.

The Standard of Cover recommended is for response of one piece of apparatus, with crew of six, in ten minutes or less, 80% of the time. This is extremely good. All companies currently meet this standard. Appendix 4 offers a strategic approach for incident response. The SOGs vary in complexity for the four fire companies. He recommended that we select the best and try to work with it, and refine as needed, rather than compile a new SOG.

Millersville is an urban environment, West Lancaster is suburban, and the rest of the Township is rural. These three environment present different risks. Water is the main issue in Millersville and Manor Township as it does not meet ISO requirement of 3,500 gallons per minute fire flow. VFIS has been refining the target hazards in the coverage area for the Risk Assessment. The Risk Assessment will be about a 10 page separate document dealing with the three separate environments. Appendices 8, 11 and 12 all relate to the Risk Assessment.

A one to three page Annual Report produced for the public will be essential for community outreach.

The fire administrator job description as put together by the task force is good. He would recommend that the Administrator have command experience and be granted officer status,

such as lieutenant, in case he, or she, is the only command person to respond to an incident so they could take charge.

In recruiting the most successful approach they have seen is when each fire company member recruits one new member. On the retention side we need to look at benefits of membership, not necessarily financial benefits but other factors affecting a sense of belonging.

In terms of the value of volunteer staffing, to put two pieces of apparatus out of each station for a major fire compared to a career fire department the savings is \$4.26 million in labor and benefits. This is based on a St. Josephs University study. Staffing is a challenge in daytime, but our practice of dispatching from multiple stations enables us to meet the standard of cover. The ISO has not recognized this fact because they look at each company independently. Dr. Jenway expects multiple dispatch to eventually be addressed in the ISO standard.

The report recommends that Millersville pump testing apparatus needs an engineer's certification to get ISO to recognize the results.

An annual assessment each vehicle when it reaches a certain age, including all equipment pump, chassis and tank for condition and expected repairs is important in budget planning. In terms of vehicle deployment, as a combined agency, a rescue engine in each location, and a backup and a tender (tanker) in some locations as well as some specialized equipment, such as a brush truck, along with a service vehicle and a command vehicle at each location are recommended, and becomes the basis for a long term plan. The structure approach that works in most places is to fund a certain amount each year for a capital reserve. But the nature of capital funding is an issue to be resolved by elected officials.

A conceptual station is addressed in appendix 18. Where stations are located in the long term is based on a 1.5 road mileage standard. This is the basis of ISO insurance rating for fire insurance. If the distance from a home to a fire station exceeds 5 miles it is considered unprotected. The four locations recommended were based on these distances. A new three to six bay station costs \$2 to \$5 million apiece.

Appendix 9 is intended to present the budget process as more of a business application by relating expense stream to revenue stream. For example money from the Borough and Township would be used for specific things, fund raising would be associated with benefits, and mail solicitation would be used for building maintenance. These are examples only. There are several bases for determining how much each community contributes. In Dr. Jenaway's opinion the most equitable basis for cost allocation between the Borough and the Township is based on demand for service.

Dr. Jenaway thought our budget approach has been good, and the bottom line of about \$500,000 to run the four fire companies is quite reasonable.

Dr. Jenaway also recommended a number of resource materials for consideration by the task force and the fire companies.

In summation Dr. Jenaway complemented the task force in progress so far and encouraged the task force to continue the effort to consolidate. Financially he sees us looking at a need for \$3 million for trucks over the next 10-15 years and at least \$4 million for stations. How we get that is something he cannot help us; that is for the Borough and Township to solve.

Can we save money with vehicle reduction, yes, but many current vehicles need to be replaced and newer vehicles we would have savings in maintenance. The real savings for the community is avoiding a paid fire service.

Ron Goe asked about the possibility of obtaining water from the river. Dr. Jenaway said it would be a good idea, but is complicated by the railroad and the issue is assuring access at all times of the year.

Keith Eshleman asked about why station location in the report did not address station locations to assure 1.5 mile road coverage to all locations in the Township and Borough. Dr. Jenaway said it was based on the lower demand in some areas, but in terms of long term plan it should probably be considered.

Mark Lauriello asked about the recommended organization not having a single chief. Dr. Jenaway said in his recommendation each chief is responsible for his primary domain. It is understood that conceptually any one of them should be able to go into another zone and perform as needed. A single overall chief is a formula for conflict, at least initially, but over time may evolve to that.

Russell Guthrie said the Task Force will meet September 17th at Highville to discuss the West Lancaster rescue pumper request.

Dr; Jenaway asked for comments questions by the 17th. He also said he will have a draft of the Rick Analysis by that date for review.

VI. Fire Service Cost Analysis (Russ Guthrie)

Russell Guthrie provided the task force with a cost analysis which Dr. Jenaway said is close to the need. Russell asked that we read it for discussion at future meetings. Rob Brady will be at the next meeting monthly to discuss legislation.

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

Washington Borough will have a chicken barbeque on September 19th.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion by Jay Breneman to adjourn.

Second by Craig Hohman.

Motion Passed. Chairman Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

IX. Next Meeting

To discuss West Lancaster Fire company request for new engine funding

Time – 7:00 p.m.

Date – September 17, 2009

Place – Highville Fire Company Building

Creswell

Minutes submitted by: Don McCann, Recording Secretary