

# **Regional Emergency Services Task Force**

## ***Meeting Minutes***

**5/1/2008**

Manor Township Maintenance Building

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

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

### **II. Roll call**

The following task force members were present:

Russell Guthrie – Manor Twp. – Citizen  
Phil Lastowski – Millersville Boro.  
Robert Thompson – Millersville Boro. – Citizen  
Brian Henry – Highville Fire Co.  
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:

Jay Breneman – Manor Twp.  
Carl Harnish – Highville Fire Co. – Citizen  
Gregory G. Noll – Community-at-large – Citizen

Others attending:

Ted Gingrich – West Lancaster Fire Co.

Chairman Guthrie welcomed the members, and recognized the guest and thanked them for attending.

### **III. Review and approve 4/3/08 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion** by Scott Haverstick to approve the Minutes as distributed.

**Second** by Jim Eshleman.

**Motion passed.**

#### **IV. Review Approval Process for Spending Money**

Russell Guthrie reviewed the motion we approved during the April meeting for payment of expenditures. All requests to spend money will be voted on by the Task Force. Expenditures greater than or equal to \$1,000 will require approval by a majority of the Task Force (7 members), all other expenditures will require approval by a majority of a quorum (minimum of 4 members), and then passed on to the trustees for issuance of the check.

#### **V. Study Committee Identification of Assignments**

Russell Guthrie presented the slides showing all the stakeholders in the services provided by the fire companies.

Russell also reviewed the resolutions passed by Manor Township and Millersville Borough creating this task force and the Fire Companies Agreement.

Next Russell reviewed the Funding provided to the fire companies by the Township and the Borough, including the funds to the Relief Associations that pass through the municipalities but originate with the Commonwealth. Jim Eshleman explained that the determination of the amount of funds for the Relief Associations has changed over the years. At one time it was 2% of the premiums on fire insurance policies sold in the fire company service area by foreign (headquartered in states other than Pennsylvania) insurance companies. Now the formula for distributing the funds is more complex and is based on population and real estate value.

The Commonwealth has in the past strictly audited Relief Associations to assure that the funds were spent only for safety equipment for the fireman. Now eligible purchase have been broadened somewhat. Some companies spend more of there relief funds than others. For example, in the past Highville spent less than the other companies, and Millersville generally spent more.

Next followed a discussion of expenditures on safety equipment, masks, gloves, helmets etc. Equipment has become more sophisticated, and expensive. Additionally some equipment that used to be reparable now must, by regulation, be replaced if it is damage. Some equipment must now even be replaced after it reaches a creation age. Scott asked if some firemen by their own equipment. Ron Goe indicated this does happen to some extent, typically this would be done by those, who due to were their work, want to keep their gear in their personal vehicles so they can respond directly to the site of the fire call. However, this practice is becoming less common as the cost of equipment continues to rise; a complete outfit of helmet, mask, jacket, pants, boots and gloves can exceed \$5,000.

Russell presented some possible committees:

1. Organization, including Budget and Legal
2. Education
3. Funding
4. Manpower

Robert Thompson asked if in the discussions among the fire chiefs they reached an agreement to maintain the four fire company buildings. Scott Haverstick asked if the locations might need to change. Jim Eshleman and Ron Goe indicated no agreement had been reached on the buildings and that they did not think they would need to be changed. Robert expressed concern that we began our effort to study the possibilities, and now it seems that our objective is to effect a consolidation. Jim indicated that merger is out of the question as it has been ruled out previously by the fire companies, that the fire companies' consensus is that the only successful option would be consolidation and creation of a new company.

Further discussion ensued about location of buildings, and the question whether there would be any environmental issues if buildings were abandoned, particularly underground fuel tanks. Indications were that all fuel tank issues have already been resolved. Building location is primarily a matter of minimum response time. Scott Haverstick asked about responding to others' fire calls. Jim said this has happened. Ron Goe indicated that currently standards and training are the same for the companies so cooperation is easy.

Don McCann asked, in a consolidated company with multiple location how would the responses be coordinated, i.e. who would respond to which facility and which equipment would be dispatched? Jim indicated that dispatch is based on the location of the territory where the call originates. Based on the type of fire different resources may be dispatched including current territories would need to be continued, to facilitate dispatch by the county dispatcher.

Scott Haverstick asked about how companies respond to assist other company's calls. Jim Eshleman replied that this does occur now. It is based on needs. Also, other companies will often provide a Rapid Intervention Team, five men who stand by with all hand tools to assist if a firefighter gets in trouble while fighting a fire. And, a fire company can call for a squad of personnel when additional manpower but not equipment is needed from another fire company.

Craig Hohman explained the "box alarm" system. "Boxes" are preset by the fire chiefs defining the type of dispatch and the equipment and the manpower and the fire

companies involved, based on the category of fire or emergency, such as “residential, church, or industrial structure fire, accident or rescue.” The county dispatcher determines the category of the 911 call, based on procedures the dispatcher uses to evaluate the emergency call. A “box” is the set of resources that will initially be dispatched.

The “contents” of the box is determined by the fire chiefs, and can be modified as a chief assesses the situation.

Russell Guthrie brought the discussion back to structure of committees that should be formed to enable a consolidation, and a rough timeline needed to follow to accomplish our objective, which would run into 2010. He emphasized that other individuals should be recruited from the community for the committees, and suggested that the committees should be chaired by someone from the Task Force. There was agreement on this point.

Much discussion ensued with several suggestions and comments on the structure of committees and subcommittees. Scott Haverstick suggested having a few committees empowered to define their own subcommittees. Russell Guthrie will try to incorporate the suggestions into a modified structure for discussion at the next meeting.

Mark Lauriello asked that we clarify the issue of whether we are *pursuing* a consolidation or *studying the possibility* of a consolidation.

**Motion by Scott Haverstick: At this point in time our objective is to form a consolidation, with the understanding that that objective may change, but that it will give us a focal point going forward for this task force to reach a consolidation.**

**Second by Mark Lauriello.**

**No further discussion.**

**Motion passed.**

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

Robert Thompson noted that the prepared information about the fire companies is very informative, and thanked the fire companies for providing it.

Mark Hohman asked that we soon visit the various fire companies. Russell Guthrie will schedule visits.

Jim Eshleman indicated he will see if he can provide to the members an example of a “box alarm.”

Mark asked whether the governing bodies are being updating on our meetings. Phil Lastowski said he emails the agenda and minutes to all Millersville Councilmen. He further indicated that another member of Council (Chairman of the Borough Safety Committee) intends to attend future meetings.

**VII. Adjournment**

**Motion** for Adjournment: Robert Thompson.

**Second** by Ron Goe.

Motion passed. Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.

**VIII. Next Meeting**

Time – 7:00 p.m.

Date – June 5, 2008

Place – Manor Township Maintenance Building  
Route 999 and Supervisor Road

Minutes submitted by: Don McCann, Recording Secretary