



Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Board Meeting

Approved

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 14, 2016, 1900 hours

Location: Winchester Hall
3rd Floor Hearing Room
12 E. Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701

Attendance:

Battalion 1 (Marc McNeal)	Present
Battalion 2 (David Remsburg)	Present
Battalion 3 (Susan Nicol)	Present
Battalion 4 (Randy Williams)	Present
Battalion 5 (Tim Clarke)	Present
Career Rep (Warren "Jay" Schwab)	Present (in 7:03)
Career Rep (Chad Cave)	Present
Citizen Rep (Susan Reeder Jessee)	Present (via phone)
Citizen Rep (Carroll Jones)	Present

Nonvoting Reps:

Frederick County Executive (Mrs. Jan Gardner)	Present
Jurisdictional Medical Director (Dr. Jeffrey Fillmore)	Present
Fire & Rescue Services (Chief Tom Owens)	Present
Volunteer Fire & Rescue Assoc. (President Eric Smothers)	Present (via phone)
Volunteer Fire & Rescue Assoc. (Chief Chip Jewell)	Present
Local #3666 (President John Neary)	Present (in 7:08)

Guests: Tricia Griffis, Director, Interagency Internal Audit Division

March 14, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson, Randy Williams, followed by a moment of silence for Prince Georges County Police Officer Jacai Colson, who was killed in the line of duty, and also to recognize eight Montgomery County fire and rescue personnel who were injured earlier that morning in a fire in Gaithersburg, MD.

II. ROLL CALL OF VOTING AND NONVOTING MEMBERS:

All voting and non-voting members were present.

III. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Tricia Griffis, Director of Interagency Internal Audit Division, was introduced to the Board and later spoke.

IV. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to Approve: Moved by Randy Williams; Seconded by Jay Schwab.

VOTE: YES: 9 NO: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 PASSED

V. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

None.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

VII. EX OFFICIO MEMBER REPORTS:

A. Frederick County Executive, Mrs. Jan Gardner:

Budget Hearing

County Executive, Jan Gardner, brought attention to the budget hearing on Wednesday, March 16, 2016. There are \$40,000,000 worth of requests for funding, \$10,000,000 of which are from public safety entities, including Fire and Rescue, the Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management and the 911 Center. Her priority, she said, is to try to give employees raises this year. There are many budget appeals/requests, and only some of them can be funded, so CE Gardner stated she would appreciate any input into that process. Introduction of the actual budget is scheduled for April 15th. A review of the base budget will be given at the County Council Meeting on March 17th.

Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards

CE Jan Gardner had an opportunity to attend the Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards the previous week in Brunswick. She was appreciative of the chamber for going out of their way for the fifth year in a row to recognize first responders in law enforcement and in fire and rescue, career and volunteer alike.

B. Jurisdictional Medical Director, Dr. Jeffrey Fillmore:

Ambulance Company Out of Business

Dr. Fillmore brought up the fact that one of the big commercial ambulance carriers, TransCare, has gone out of business. At this point, he is unsure as to how that will affect the ambulance transportation in Frederick County.

eMEDS Reporting System

Dr. Fillmore reported that the eMEDS reporting system used on the ambulances for their reports has to be updated due to NEMSIS going to version 3.4. Beginning January 1st, data from the old system will no longer be accepted. Disks will be sent out soon for BLS and ALS updates, and everyone should be up and running on the new system around December 1st.

EMS Testing Program

Dr. Fillmore reported that they are getting a better handle on EMS testing and that the new courses and new approach is yielding 80% first-pass rates, which is as well as they have done with the old system. He went on to say that everyone who passed at least the MFRI part received EMR cards, so they will be able to function at some level. The EMR cards are good for one cycle.

Zika Report

Dr. Fillmore advised that there have been no Zika reports in Maryland but that the mosquito responsible for carrying Zika does live in Maryland. Therefore, it is probably only a matter of time until it is seen here. Symptoms include a mild flu-like illness with conjunctivitis. A vaccine should be available in the next year or two, and Dr. Fillmore stated it certainly makes sense for people to consider getting it, since the effect on pregnancies has been well publicized.

Patient Transport to Out-of-State Specialty Centers

Dr. Fillmore stated although we can tell folks that they are not approved for transport within the State of Maryland or by our system, they *can* request to be taken to their specialty out-of-state center. The Attorney General for MIEMSS stated they feel that transporting patients out of state is legally acceptable and safe, but patients insisting on going to a center that is not recognized need to be made aware of that fact and understand that it is their decision. This came out of a ruling for MIEMSS about a month-and-a-half ago.

Question asked: “Is Battalion Chief Cole aware of that?”

Dr. Fillmore answered that they discussed this previously, and that while he missed seeing him in the office earlier in the day, he would speak to him the following day. Dr. Fillmore asked if there had been issues with that, and Chief Owens responded that there had been none, but it was new information to him and that it needs to be published so it becomes common knowledge.

Dr. Fillmore further explained that in Maryland, MIEMSS actually goes out to all the hospitals with a certifying agency. They go down a checklist with all the hospitals, he said, to make sure they are compliant with what we feel is appropriate. Pennsylvania does not

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have a way of doing that statewide, so it often comes down to things being checked off when the joint commission team comes to the hospital from the federal government. He plans to talk to someone there to be sure they are compliant.

Question Asked: “If somebody wants to go to Charlestown, Jefferson Memorial, we can still take them over there?”

Dr. Fillmore said that it basically comes down whether or not a facility holds itself out as a cardiac center or a stroke center. If it does not, patients need to be told this specifically.

C. Fire & Rescue Division Director, Chief Tom Owens:

Fire Rescue Code

Chief Owens reported that the staff report with the legislative bill passed through the County Executive’s office to the County Council, and we are still awaiting word as to when the bill will be on the Council’s agenda. The advisory board will be made aware when that occurs.

Active Assailant Procedures

Chief Owens updated the board on the progress of the Active Assailant Procedure, stating that a tabletop exercise had been done with good results and positive feedback. An actual live active shooter simulation at a facility in the county is being planned. There has been great cooperation between our representatives and our law enforcement partners to make sure that we are all on the same page for those kinds of events.

Assistance to Firefighters Grant

Chief Owens has received no word yet on any awards from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant application that we have in for the Lucas CPR devices.

Middletown Fire Station

The County Executive has authorized this project to proceed. The architectural firm has now been re-engaged to proceed to final design and completion of construction drawings with the goal of being ready to go out to bid late this year.

SAFER Grant Application

The last item from Chief Owens was to make the board aware that the County Executive has authorized fire rescue to submit an application for a SAFER Grant for hiring. The request will be for 41 firefighter positions. The 41 positions are based on the FY-17 budget requests that were received by the volunteer corporations. If awarded, the SAFER Grant will provide full salary and benefits for those positions for two years. The application submission is due by the 25th of March. Ann Brown, our Grants Specialist, is working aggressively to finish the application.

Question Asked: “When will they decide on that grant?”

AFG awards start first, and then the SAFER grant, so it will probably be summer, (July). The monies must be awarded by the end of the federal fiscal year.

Question Asked: “After that two-year period, do we have to go back, or do you have to go back and say, ‘Hey, we want to keep those 41 employed,’ or is that an automatic deal?”

CE Gardner answered that it is not an automatic deal. The intent is to keep those employees on. “I do have a budget request this year for 36 employees, so the need is there, she said. It will help us to do that, but obviously we will have to hold that in our budget, because it is a big price tag.”

Chief Owens further stated that the County Executive’s authorization to submit the application does not automatically mean we would accept the grant if awarded. If a SAFER Grant is awarded, then a decision is needed from the Chief Executive Officer on whether or not we will actually accept the award. He believes we do have a legitimate need for this staffing and should see if we can get the federal government’s help with funding to support us. Ultimately, a decision will need to be made as to whether the County can assume that financial responsibility for these positions at the conclusion of the Grant.

Question Asked: “This is a way to get employees now, the ones that we either lost or did not get in the last couple of years, so this is a way to kind of backfill and get those people on staff, correct? The grant?”

Chief Owens answered in the affirmative, but advised the group that you cannot really go for leave impact positions through the federal grant. The positions must be tied to actual staffing needs that are identified in stations. The basis of the request for 41 employees is directly related to the corporations around the county that submitted requests for additional staffing for their stations as a part of their budget request for FY-2017.

Question Asked: “Just so I’m clear Chief, we have 36 requested in FY-2017. Are these 41 in addition to the 36?”

Chief Owens answered that the staffing requests represent two fiscal years that we are trying to combine into one, some through county funding and others through the federal grant.

Question Asked: “So we’re looking to add 78 ...?”

Chief Owens answered that the number would be 78 total. The number based on FY-2017 was submitted, and the FY-18 numbers are for additional stations that have traditionally been asking for quite a number of years. Our request has to be distinctly apart as to what positions the staffing would fill if they are awarded. Through the FY-17 budget, 36 positions were requested. As the 36 positions are not likely to be funded through the county budget, the staffing requests that are coming from the SAFER Grant will fill that gap. That is where the numbers come from between the two different requests. The requests have to be distinctly different and apart in terms of the funding intent. Otherwise, federal dollars are considered to be supplanted, which is not allowed.

Mr. Jones mentioned it seemed to be a projection of what the staffing needs were going to be at a given point in time, then weighing in what the turnover is going to be in that same time frame to come up with a number that is felt to be achievable. Chief Owens explained that the projection is with 53 people being eligible to retire in the next three years, so they have looked ahead in order to project that.

CE Jan Gardner, mentioned that in looking at the budget requests this year, there was a request for even more people from the volunteer companies than what was included in the

budget request. According to Chief Owens, the total requested was 65. County Executive Gardner stated that she feels the need is there over time, so the real question becomes the affordability of all of it.

D. FCVFRA President, Eric Smothers:

No report was given by President Smothers.

E. President of the Career Firefighters Association, John Neary

Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards

President Neary congratulated all who were part of the awards they had at the Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards.

St. Patrick's Day Event

President Neary made the board aware that the Local was going to be having a St. Patrick's Day event at the Blue Side Bar, starting the next morning (17th). All funds being raised will be for muscular dystrophy.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. VFRS, Chief Chip Jewell:

New Officer Training

New officer training has been conducted. In the month of February, 51 people attended, going over a lot of the county policies, procedures, and billings. It was very successful, and we will probably do another one later on this year. Compliance trainings are also being looked into.

Moodlerooms

This should be up and running by March 1st, but there are still a few issues with getting it totally up and running. Copies of the CDs will be made available for regular compliance training, if necessary.

Gear Inventories

Roughly a third of the gear inventory sheets have been returned. They were due back on March 1st. We are still asking the companies to get the gear inventories back and also seek their cooperation in getting the gear returned. The chiefs and presidents have also been reminded to make sure they request any and all county or company property to be returned when people are removed from their roles to try to tighten that up.

Winter Storm Update

Chief Jewell commended everyone for their winter storm efforts and stated that it had been declared a federal disaster area. The companies have been advised to compile their bills, and the needed forms have been sent out. There will be a meeting at the training center to go over

the procedures for FIMA filing on March, the 24th. Volunteer company officers that will be submitting were encouraged to attend.

Internship Program

Chief Jewell informed the board that there are two high school interns presently serving; one at the Carroll Manor Volunteer Fire Company and one at the Middletown Volunteer Fire Company. This is a cooperative program with Frederick County Public Schools, and a great way to get some of the young people in our school system involved in the fire service. They are also being rotated out into the field. They will be riding with a battalion chief during the week, he said, and riding with some of the other field personnel as well.

Fit Testing

There was a reminder from Chief Jewell that annual fit testing is still required for all operational volunteers. We still have some issues with the face pieces that are of an odd size, but another one has been found that hopefully will be able to pass the test.

Accreditation Process

Chiefs Jewell and Owens will begin the accreditation process on April 1st, and this will be an ongoing process throughout the year. The Vigilant Hose Company and possibly one other company will be utilized as the beta test to get these up and running.

LOSAP and the Membership Database

Chief Jewell brought up the internal audit conducted of the LOSAP program, stating that some testing had been done at each company. Tricia Griffis from Internal Audit provided a hard copy of the report for those present, and Chief Jewell stated that he would provide the members with an electronic copy. Ms. Griffis was then introduced to present her comments regarding the LOSAP audit.

Ms. Griffis briefed the board on the report prepared by the contractor, Clifton, Larson, Allen. The report presented showed each procedure that was done and the findings for each of those procedures.

Clifton, Larson, Allen found that benefits payments was the area needing the most attention. They did a selective sample of 25 benefit payments out of 1,712 individual payments listed, and 13 of the 25 had issues. Because of that finding, they recommended we that fire and rescue test each and every single benefit payment. Tricia stated that there was also a recommendation for IIT to put in a macro to automate the calculation of the benefit payments.

The next item recommendation was for the standardization and consistency of LOSAP policies and procedures, documentation approvals, record maintenance, and record retention. They felt that the policies and procedures varied from company to company and were not well documented.

The next recommendation referred to PII, (personally identifiable information). The old LOSAP forms included social security numbers, addresses, and dates of birth, and were transported to various locations, thereby putting PII security at risk.

Question Asked: “Does it make sense for the companies to have all those papers digitized and stored somewhere so they don’t need to be maintained in paper form?”

Tricia answered that she would absolutely recommend that, and that she was certain the IIAA would stand behind it. Chief Jewell added that it would be feasible to digitize every copy of every form back to 1984. CE Gardner pointed out that this would reduce paper copies and the risk of identity theft.

Question Asked: “The only LOSAP form that’s got PII on it is the initial application, right?”

Chief Jewell stated that over the years, the labels that were printed had all that information on them and they were also on every single form.

Question Asked: “You did find some people were taking them home and ...?”

Tricia answered that some of them were completely locked within the company, some of them were partially locked within the company, and some of them were “traveling” around between the residence of a LOSAP chairperson and the company. Only one company already had their forms digitized.

Question Asked: “If you digitize them, who has access?”

Tricia answered that it should just be the LOSAP Chairperson or whoever deals with LOSAP at each company.

Question Asked: “With the new software program, I’m understanding that that information will be hidden. Is that correct, Chip?”

Chief Jewell answered that only the hackers can get to it.

The final recommendation presented by Tricia was for more consistency and communication regarding activity points. The report stated, “We recommend the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association release additional guidance, additional policies and frequently ask questions on how points should be calculated for various activities such as special events and banquets. The process of accumulating activity points and reporting the results for review by the LOSAP participants could be improved by establishing specific time frames.”

This recommendation also speaks to when members should turn in their points and suggests placing a time frame on that. Again, varied between the different companies. Work is needed to standardize those two pieces, as well as the accumulation of points and the quality of points for each company.

Question Asked: “Chip, is that what is being worked on now in committee?”

Chief Jewell answered that some of these areas are already being worked on. With the last distribution of LOSAP checks, his administrative specialist actually reviewed all of the LOSAP payments that were more than just a 25-year payment and made adjustments where needed. Some were overpaid, and some were underpaid, but she went through them and made any needed corrections and payments. We will be meeting later this month to go over the recommendations for consistency, and also the areas needed to set up more specific guidelines with respect to points. Also, with regard to points, we want to change things a bit so that each member with an email address can receive their points monthly via e-mail.

Additional Chief Jewell believes that the new recommendation will be for all points to be submitted to members' local LOSAP chairman within 60 days.

Question Asked: "Before you decided to implement this, was it approved, and was it brought to the Executive Committee and the Association? I hope we didn't just start with taking recommendations that were brought up to you?"

Chief Jewell answered that they have been sent to the Executive Committee.

Question Asked: "But we're already acting on them before any ..."

Chief Jewell responded that they are not yet acting. The LOSAP Committee is meeting Wednesday night, March 17th, to begin work on the recommendations.

Question Asked: "The ultimate outcome is when you're done, every company will be running a LOSAP program along the same guidelines in the same fashion so the county can manage it?"

Chief Jewell replied, "Yes, in order to tighten it up more. They will still be managed at the local level, but they will be using the database provided. That alone will provide some consistency of reporting. In addition, the program will allow you to put the hours in, and the program will calculate out your hours."

Question Asked: "Chip, the pay adjustments. Are we just sending out more money for those that were underpaid and then taking money away from those that underpaid?"

Chief Jewell answered that the checks went out, and he believed there was an explanation with the check.

Tricia stated that from being involved in looking at the calculations and benefit payments, she believed the miscalculations came about just a few years ago when the benefit payments changed with the 5-year increments. She thinks there was possibly a hiccup in the system and that it was just for a few years and not a long period of time.

Question Asked: "Your committee is meeting Wednesday night to start some of these?"

Chief Jewell stated "that is correct."

Question Asked: "As any points change, is there anything your committee recommends that is going to come back from the Association?"

Chief Jewell answered that the points themselves have a high ordinance and that they are looking at what changed the ordinance. Very simply stated, if you do not make your five years, then you are ineligible for LOSAP. If you do not want LOSAP on the back end of it, you should say, "I do not want the LOSAP benefits." Also if the person has not "enrolled in LOSAP," they are not being tracked for tax incentive, and they *are* eligible for tax incentives under Maryland law. "We have an obligation to make sure that those people eligible for the tax incentive *get* the tax incentive, as well as their LOSAP." Chief Jewell then went into more detail with regard to the tax incentive.

Regarding confidentiality, Chief Jewell has asked IT for a confidentiality agreement in addition to the IT agreement.

Question Asked: “What are the sanctions if the confidentiality is broken or compromised?”

Chief Jewell stated that the State law will be printed directly on the forms.

Question Asked: “Did you say HB-1481 got an unfavorable ...?”

Chief Jewell answered that it was House Bill 19. He had not heard anything recently on 1481, but stated that Chief Owens had checked earlier in the day, and it was an unfavorable report, which is what we had hoped for.

B. Operations Committee, Chief Chip Jewell:

Chief Jewell gave a quick Operations Report for President Smothers, stating the Operations Committee would be meeting the next night, and that one of the discussion points would be the Training Center Burn Building. Funding appeared to be short at the last meeting, but Chief Owens interjected, stating that there is a strategy within the CIP budget to make the project funding work.

Chief Jewell reported that the Everbridge notification of chief officers is now in place. Additionally, we are in the process of replacing Code Messaging with Everbridge for *all* dispatch calls, and registration is underway so that everyone can sign up for it.

C. Planning and Research Committee:

Nothing further.

D. Emergency Medical Services Committee:

Chief Jewell deferred to Dr. Fillmore, who had nothing else to cover. President Smothers also had nothing further to add.

E. Budget Committee:

Chief Jewell noted that there would be a hearing this week on the appeals.

F. Training Committee:

Nothing further.

Question Asked: “I have a question about the training committee. Do they bring recommendations for training into DFRS for what they want or what they need for training?”

Chief Jewell answered that Smiley White and Chief Dave Barnes do meet regularly, and Chief Barnes participates in the meeting. The Training Committee is responsible for coordinating the training requested by MFRI.

Question Asked: “I guess my next question is, and it’s just a comment, is Cheryl Riley’s been sending out many e-mails about canceled classes. I’ve been a victim with one of the classes I wanted to get in. It couldn’t get off the ground, because nobody would sign up, and I was just curious. We must have the best-trained county, because we can’t get a class off the ground.”

Chief Jewell commented that some of those are requested classes and some are classes that MFRI felt were needed in the area. There certainly is a need to continue to encourage the training in some of the classes, he said, but we had several this year that unfortunately did not take off.

IX. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Old Business

Update on Fire Rescue Service Initiatives and Projects

Chief Owens had nothing further.

Response Review Committee Update

Chief Owens reiterated that the Response Review Committee is in the hands of Operations. From the last All Chiefs meeting, there is a detailed explanation about the work completed by the Response Review Committee. It is due back on the agenda for the Operations Committee after two months of discussion at the Battalion level. There is much information that has gone forward that will hopefully allow us to right-size the resources sent at initial dispatch.

Protective Clothing for Volunteers

Chief Jewell had nothing further to add. Chief Owens made another appeal to the corporation leadership to complete the spreadsheets and get them back to Chief Jewell. The corporations' feedback is needed to identify those who are still active on the role, so collection of gear from the others can begin. Only one-third of the corporations have answered the request within the deadline. The gear must be recovered in order to equip grab racks at each of the stations. Chief Owens asked that each battalion rep put pressure on their corporation leadership to get this work done.

Chief Jewell added that he is waiting for a contract approval for the EMS gear, and that once we have the final vendor award, we will move forward with it.

Chad Cave stated that it is disheartening with companies who are not turning in their sheets. With the 20 sets retrieved last month, there are still 780 sets of gear out there. At a cost of \$3500 a set, that is roughly \$2.7 million, which is enough for another recruit class. He further commented that getting the gear in will also benefit people who have damaged turnout gear, allowing them to change it out, whether career or volunteer. Captain Cave feels some sort of consequence is needed.

Question Asked: "Now that the corporations that have done their part and got their spreadsheets in, we have the other issue of how do we go about recouping the gear?"

Chief Owens stated the process begins with identifying the individuals. From there, registered letters can be sent to those individuals, indicating the date they were issued their protective clothing. A copy of the property record card can be included showing their signature on it and the statement that says they are responsible and will return it if they are no longer active. If we don't get the gear back, he said, we'll start invoicing them. Chief Owens indicated that he had attended a staff meeting recently that entertained the idea of re-assessing the contribution that the county makes to each of the corporations commensurate with the value of the missing gear.

Question Asked: "How many have not turned it in?"

Chief Jewell answered that he believes it is about 15 or 16 companies, between two-thirds and a half.

Randy Williams suggested the approach has to be toward the individuals based on their signing of the issuance form when they receive their PPE. Chief Owens explained that the chain of custody is that the corporation initiates the request, the county fills it, and the member goes away with the protective clothing. The plan is to follow up with members directly, but that does not relieve the corporation of their responsibility. Beyond protective clothing, workers' compensation benefits are paid per head count. As long as members remain on that list, it is costing the county money for a member that is not around anymore. Membership has to be fluid. People cannot be added only. It is equally important to remove people from the county's roles when you have a member that leaves your service.

Question Asked: "Do we have these cards? Are they assigned for their PPEs by company?"

Chief Owens answered that they do. That is what the spreadsheets that went out to corporations were based on.

Question Asked: "... so you didn't get acknowledgment on those spreadsheets from 15 companies?"

Chief Jewell mentioned receiving one or two more in the last week. Marc McNeal pointed out that it has been quite a time-consuming process and wondered whether Logistics still sends out the electronic notices when gear is issued or turned back in. Chief Owens pointed out that people sometimes turn gear in at their fire station, never making it to logistics, and it can be sitting in a back room at a station somewhere. It was stated that if everybody would get on board with the plan and the gear recovered, then the new system can be set up.

Marc McNeal brought up the fact that the list goes back into the early 90s and that he has no idea who some of the members were. Chief Owens stated the spreadsheet is a result of every property record that Logistics has. Chad Cave brought up the point that anything more than ten years old is no good anyway. Chief Owens replied that the first and most basic thing the spreadsheet is trying to help us understand is, which members are still active and which ones are not.

Question Asked: "It would seem to me, as a citizen rep, because I'm not tied up in all the inner parts, that the first order of business is perspective. What are we doing from this point forward? That's number one. Then deal with the delinquent situation, because if you get your perspective in place, then you're not going to have to deal with the delinquency that you're dealing with now. Chief, you've worked in a lot of different places. There have got to be some best practices in other jurisdictions."

Chief Owens responded that he is trying to do that with the grab rack system.

Question Asked: “How about in the recovery?”

Chief Owens responded that it works great. The individual corporation becomes the responsible entity. There is some disconnection there, because gear is issued to a person, and the corporation believes it is up to that person to bring it back. While that is right, the corporation cannot become disconnected from that process. They need to be vested enough in their members to help recover gear when someone leaves.

CE Gardner commented that they could go through 800 cards and mail something to all of them, although she knows they are trying to shorten the list down. Chief Owens agreed, stating they are trying to manage the work load, figuring the corporations can tell us who these people are, and then the problem will be attacked based on that census.

Chad Cave suggested tying the spreadsheets/database to firefighter physicals and fit testing. Chief Jewell replied that that was the ultimate goal, and the same with the membership database. Because that information is needed for worker’s comp, it will all tie together. This is just the beginning stage.

Question Asked: “Why let perfection be the enemy of the good? You’ve got this list. If you’re the chief or the president of the company, you have to have a pretty good idea if you’ve seen any of those people lately. You know who you’ve seen. Then everybody else you haven’t seen, can’t you just send a card to all of them, saying, ‘To the best of our knowledge, you haven’t been active for x period of time. You signed this card. We’d like you to return your equipment, and we’d like you to contact us by this date.’”

Chief Owens replied that that is exactly what they want to do.

CE Gardner noted that it seems to be taking many hours to go through the list and suggested putting a line through names of those not seen since 1990, as their equipment is over ten years old.

Question Asked: “How many people do you have on your roster?”

Chad Cave answered that with the Gear Up program, there are so many people coming through. A big problem lies with newer individuals as well. He stated that when he was at Company 1, the nametags for the back of the turnout coats would hang on the wall for six months. Eventually they would just get taken down. That individual was geared up, but they never got in gear.

Question Asked: “Why is that? Why do they get geared up and then never show up?”

Various reasons were offered by board members. Chief Owens spoke of the warnings he gives on the first night of class for every group to make sure they realize the amount commitment that is needed. He theorized that many think they can make the commitment, but when reality sets in, they realize this may not be for them. If gear has been issued at that point in time, that can be the person whose tag has been hanging on the wall for six months or who has just vanished, never to return again.

CE Gardner stated that if we don’t see them for six months, then we should immediately, at the six-month point or some other milestone, be going back to them and collecting their gear. Chief Owens agreed and stated that that “somebody” is the corporation.

Question Asked: “Are letters going to be sent out, or is it too massive of a job? Because like Jan said, you’ve got the names and everything. Just try something else and just stress, ‘This is county property. It’s not your property.’ I tell you, it’s terrible that gear is needed for people that are actively working and there’s not enough gear.”

Chief Owens stated that they are trying to make that transition without buying more gear by supplying the grab rack from gear that is received back from people who are not using it.

Susan Nicol noted that the board has been round and round this topic and that there needs to be some kind of sanction in place.

Question Asked: “The deadline was March 1st. Where do we go from here? What do you need?”

Chief Owens replied that he needs to know the correct names of the persons to give official notice to, and that the corporations should be copied on it so they know we are trying to track these individuals down.

Question Asked: “Then there’s the issue of what Tim said. How do we handle that? How do we make the corporations accountable that aren’t doing what the other corporations have done?”

Much discussion ensued regarding what consequences corporations should face for not returning their sheets. CE Gardner suggested a date of July 1st, as that gives people three months before they have an edict come down saying their money is going to be held. Chief Owens agreed that unfortunately, without motivation for funding, people have not been reactive to the deadlines that have come out.

Question Asked: “Can we just go back 10 years and make them give us that? Just 10 years?”

Chief Owens agreed that may be the best plan given how far back the records go. Lieutenant Schwab noted he could then go forward with that list and get the rest of the gear, knowing the turnout gear beyond ten years cannot be used anyway.

Chief Owens explained the spreadsheets were built from every property card held in Logistics. They were put together, broken down by corporation, distributed out to the chief and president of each corporation with the instructions to go through and essentially audit everything that we have just sent. Determining who is still a member or not will help clean up several countywide databases, such as LOSAP.

A second point mentioned by Chief Owens is the need to transition the ambulance companies over to less expensive rescue gear and get structural firefighting gear back from members that are essentially riding the EMS units. They are supposed to give a count of the EMS gear needed so that the number of sets can be identified.

Chief Owens reiterated that there were some companies who got right on it and got the information turned in, but the vast majority of the corporations did not, stating, “If we’re to a point where it’s time for sanctions, then it’s time for sanctions.”

CE Gardner suggested that any record over ten years old be purged off the lists. She also suggested the possibility of utilizing an intern to verify the addresses via the White Pages, and sending them a notice by registered mail.

Question Asked: “We keep saying, ‘the individual.’ Can it come back on the company?”

Chief Owens stated that is what he had said earlier and that one alternative is to dock the county contribution to the company to pay for the gear that’s been misplaced, lost, destroyed, whatever the case may be. We can do that. The problem with that is that it’s the operating money for each of the corporations. It becomes “pay me now or pay me later.” As a company’s operating funds run short toward the end of the fiscal year, they’re going to send a request in to the Association’s Budget Committee for a supplemental appropriation to keep them in business for the balance.

President Neary offered a suggestion of giving 30 days and then reducing a company’s budget by the sets of gear that are still out. That way they know in the upcoming year they are already going to be docked out about a month.

While Tim Clarke was in favor of penalizing corporations for not meeting deadlines, he also felt the list should be cleaned up before imposing a penalty. Chief Owens stressed the need to have the individual corporations clean up the lists. Chairperson Williams suggested another approach being some face-to-face communication with Logistics at the individual stations, but Chief Owens stated the management of the corporations is the responsibility of the volunteer leadership and that he feels it is a very simple task.

Tim Clarke recommended the start of going through the White Pages tomorrow to come up with a list of who needs a letter sent for the individual gear to start the process. He further suggested the formation of a committee, directed by President Smothers, to determine how to address this noncompliance from the companies and set a standard punishment system. Chief Jewell urged for call-to-call action to the ones that have not yet submitted.

Question Asked: “Could those of you who are in battalions and represent a district, do you feel that you can call those companies and say, ‘Hey, have you done your list?’”

Chairman Williams stated they meet with them once a month. Every month he communicates with the chiefs in his battalion.

Question Asked: “If you meet with them all and some of them haven’t done it, how do you motivate them to do it?”

Chairman Williams replied that he would come back and say, “Here’s what was talked about. Here’s what is possibly coming down the pike. You might want to get on it.”

Question Asked: “Chief Jewell, could you e-mail that out to the nine representatives, the ones you have and the ones you don’t have?”

Chief Jewell answered that he could

CE Gardner summarized that the battalion chiefs are going to talk to the companies within their battalions. President Smothers is being asked to form a committee to set some kind of standard consequence system, and interns can be utilized to try to purge some of the lists.

After further discussion regarding consequences with company money, CE Gardner voiced having a problem with it being operational money, because they need to be operational. It has to be a county decision.

CE Gardner also stated that she preferred there be an incentive in place to reward the companies that do everything they are supposed to do all the time and to make the reward enough that other people want to conform. Chief Owens suggested the possibility of giving companies \$100 for every set of gear they turn in.

Revocation of Mandatory Residential Sprinkler Legislation

Both Chief Owens and President Neary felt that this discussion had been completed earlier in the meeting.

B. New Business

Member Database Demonstration

Chief Jewell declined demonstrating the database because of some privacy issues but indicated he would be happy to show anybody individually.

House Bill 1481: Immunity from Liability Entering Property to Provide Emergency Assistance/Medication

Chief Owens informed the board that this bill was introduced by delegate Young in the House. There was also a companion bill introduced by Senator Young in the Senate. These bills are an effort to try to close a loophole related to the protection of responding personnel – personnel entering a property during an emergency medical type of incident. The law is pretty clear about our right to force entry during fire emergencies, but it's pretty gray when it comes to a medical emergency. The bill is intended to protect the liability of individuals that take forcible entry action and find nothing amiss. Chief Owens stated that he checked before the meeting and found that the bill had been reported unfavorably out of committee in the House.

This bill was apparently part of a national movement. There was a woman whose daughter died because EMS did not force entry due to concerns regarding liability. This family has taken it upon themselves to say, "Okay, well maybe what we need is legislation that takes care of that problem." Chief Jewell further stated that Frederick County has a pretty comprehensive insurance program that protects individuals from liability for such actions.

Multi-band Portable Radio Issue

Chief Owens drew the Board's attention to a separate document that was distributed. The Apex-7000 UHF radios that were purchased with the Fire Act Grant money will no longer be manufactured by Motorola after July 31st, and they intend to stop providing technical support for this radio within 5 years.

Chief Owens and Jack Markey immediately took issue with this and contacted the sales representative. This was something that was happening at the corporate level of Motorola and the sales force wasn't apprised of this when they sold us the radios. Jack Markey and Chief Owens jointly wrote a letter to Motorola, essentially stating after spending \$2.2 million of Federal and County money combined on these radios. We have a Federal grant that was submitted based on a fifteen-year service life that is now going to be obsolete in five years. That was not acceptable, and we wanted to know what their remedy was going to be.

Chief Owens had a copy of a letter dated March 3rd from Motorola attached to the packet, which set forth the remedy. Motorola agreed to exchange out all the radios for the Apex 8000 series radios, (a comparable replacement) at no cost to the County. It is the new radio that they are manufacturing in place of the 7000s and will be supported to the anticipated 15-year service life. The only problem is, they will not begin rolling these radios out until May 2016, which means by the time they are received, go through our local programming and get out into the field, it will be June or possibly July before these radios are in the field ready for service. Motorola has stepped up to the plate in order to make this fix. The only negative impact is the delay before we have units in the field.

X. ACTION ITEMS

Fire and Rescue Advisory Board Terms Expiring June 30th, 2016

Chief Owens announced the three members whose terms are expiring: Chairperson Randy Williams, Battalion 5 Tim Clarke, and Citizen Representative Carroll Jones. He stated that if they intended was to seek reappointment, they would need to e-mail a letter of intent with a current resume to Joyce Grossnickle, at Winchester Hall, by 4pm on Friday, March 18th.

Testing For Recruit Firefighter Eligibility

Chief Owens wanted to make the Board aware that this announcement has been opened. Applications are being accepted for the next round of testing. The point of the process is to get candidates through the competitive elements of the hiring process in order to qualify them for the list so that there is a ready pool of candidates if positions are gained in the budget. If the SAFER Grant is awarded and accepted, the lead time will be able to be cut the hiring process by better than half by having an eligibility list ready to go. This testing will go back to being an open test with no prior training or experience required.

Question Asked: “Is there any consideration of a fast academy for somebody that’s already got a Firefighter training, an EMT training, kind of fast-track them through?”

Chief Owens answered that he had looked into that option when he was here before. As part of that analysis, he talked to some of the surrounding jurisdictions that have done those, and the feedback received from them was that it was not a good experience, so they opted to stay away from that.

Question Asked: “How is the current recruit class doing?”

Chief Owens answered that they have lost one more recruit since the last meeting, for a total of two.

Marc McNeal reported hearing that the LOSAP Chairman stated that if they were not in the new system from January 1st to March 31st, they would be locked out, even if there was data prior to March 31st. Chief Jewell disagreed and said they were still good.

Volunteer Recruiter Position

Suzy Nicol made a motion to support the county funding of the volunteer recruiter position. Tim Clarke seconded. Career voting members abstained. Motion carried.

VOTE: YES: 7 NO: 0 ABSTAIN: 2 PASSED

Officer Standards

President Neary brought up a concern about two sets of standards found for Officers, calling for a review to determine which set of standards is to be used. After much discussion, it was agreed that we already have a pathway forward to address this issue, and it will be taken up when the policies are revised.

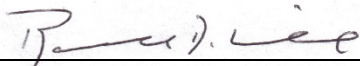
XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Tim Clarke to adjourn. Dave Remsburg seconded. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

VOTE: YES: 9 NO: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 PASSED

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

APPROVED

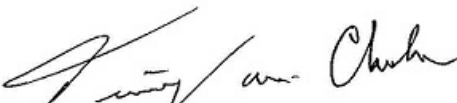


Randy Williams, Chair

APPROVED

3/14/2016
Date of Approval

APPROVED



Tim Clarke, Vice-Chair

APPROVED

3/14/2016
Date of Approval