

Berks County Fire Services Working Group

January 22, 2026

Officers: Chair Colin Hackman, Vice Chair Chris Schaeffer, Secretary Blair Miller

The meeting was called to order at 1800 hours with 22 people in attendance. There were no additions or corrections to the previous month's minutes (November 2025), they stand approved as read.

Attendance:

Zone 1: Jesiah Newsome, Josh Young

Zone 2: Rusty Wagner, Blair Miller, Dean Dalious

Zone 3: Bob Martin, Stephen Weaver

Zone 4: Colin Hackman, Lance Parmer

Zone 5&6: Brian Sierocinski, Josh Trate, Michael Blevins, Jon Matthews

Zone 7: Andrew Getka

BCFA: Roger Weidenheimer

BCFT: Jeff Reinert

BCFPA: Tim Goodhart

Forestry: No Attendance

DES: Brian Gottschall, Christina Wood, Matt Stairiker, Michael Smith, Philip Salamone

Additional Attendance: Matthew Stitzel, Berks County Coroner, Daryl G

Communications: Matthew Stitzel introduced himself as the new Berks County Coroner and looks forward to working with the Fire Service.

Chair Hackman advised new WG Representatives were provided for Zone 2, 5&6, and 7

Zone 1: Jesiah Newsome nothing to report

Zone 2: Rusty Wagner nothing to report

Zone 3: Bob Martin introduced Stephen Weaver (CHF52) as the new WG representative taking over for Lester Feick which retired

Zone 4: Colin Hackman nothing to report

Zone 5&6: Brian Sierocinski nothing to report

Zone 7: Andrew Getka advised the new Lieutenants were doing well, working on run cards, and advised if there are any questions regarding run cards or responses for the city to contact Andrew directly.

BCFA: Roger Weidenheimer requested that Departments update the Association with new officers lists, winter meeting will be held Saturday January 31, at 1400 hours at the Fire Training Center, and membership dues are due by March 31.

BCFT: Jeff Reinert reported that the 2026 Essential class is full and in 2025 18 classes ran with 376 students.

BCFPA: Tim Goodhart advised the Association was working with DES to clear FP County Wide of operations and that County Wide only be used as a hailing talkgroup. Director Gottschall requested a document come from the WG to go to Departments to address this issue and that when Fire units clear and Fire Police Remain on scene to transfer Command to the Fire Police in Charge for accountability. Chair Hackman ask if Tim and Lance could draft a letter up for the WG to review and then send out to the Zones electronically and verbal discuss / explain at the Zone meetings.

Forestry: Dean Dalious advised that Greg Reese was the District 17 Wardon and he is in the process of meeting with all the Zones and doing a good job.

DES: Director Gottschall advised DES will eventually be able to push information out from CAD to NEIRS for certain benchmarks at fire like Under Control, Water on The Fire, Overhaul Completed, etc. which would autofill with time into Departments RMS. This is a work in progress and would need to be transmitted to DES in a single message.

Director Gottschall provided a Power Point Presentation into a County Radio refresh program for Departments wishing to purchase new radios. DES is currently in negotiations and will finalize. The refresh would be a one for one radio and Motorola representatives will meet with Departments interested when the negotiation is finalized. This will include portables and mobiles. Director Gottschall advised that the current radios will continue to work, but are no longer supported for repairs or updates to accommodate new accessories.

Old Business: Nominations and voting for officers was presented by Chair Hackman. Bob Martin made a motion to keep it as is. Chair Hackman noted that we could keep Chair and

Secretary but we are unable to keep Vice Chair as Chris Schaeffer is stepping down. A motion was made to nominate Jesiah Newsome as Vice Chair. All were in favor, making Jesiah Newsome the Vice Chair for 2026.

New Business: Zone 1/Jesiah Newsome asked for clarification on the rest of the FSWG on what was agreed upon for the High Water unit - whether it was voted on as being a unit designation or not. A lengthy discussion ensued about what was actually discussed and voted on. Jesiah noted that Zone 1 does NOT agree to this vote and wished the record to be reflected as such. Chair Hackman re-read the meeting minutes from September's meeting; *High Water Vehicle Discussion: Chair Hackman inquired how many of these vehicles are in the County. Jesiah noted that they are looking for unit designation as some apparatus that are currently in service won't meet these needs. Director Gottschall noted the difference between unit designation versus capabilities, versus pseudo types and inquired if everyone was ok with the pseudo type model.* Chair Hackman asked if anyone would like to change their vote.

Zone 1 - Changed their voted to no

Chair Hackman inquired if there were any other zone that wanted to change their vote. Only Zone 2 Rusty Wagner noted that this does not change anything for Zone 2.

DES/Gottschall believes DES met the legitimate justification to address this practice of asking for a special unit, DES has given that capability. Gottschall noted that DES is not going to make a High Water designation for one unit in the county.

DES confirmed there were only 2 (3 including 66) companies that have notified DES that they have apparatus that would meet the requirements of a High Water vehicle. DES Gottschall noted communication difficulties - particularly 2-way feedback. Gottschall cited DES has had minimal response for the High Water vehicle and run card/call type changes. Chair Hackman noted that communication has been a long standing issue. Zone 4 Lance Parmer inquired if it would be better if these communications were sent to municipal leaders? Gottschall asked the Zones what we could do to facilitate better communications.

Zone 2 Rusty Wagner brought up Total Visibility. Gottschall, while not committing to anything, mentioned that down the road it may be a possibility for DES to fulfill special requests for those who have a capability on an existing unit. A discussion of Total Visibility and the ability of DES to fulfill special requests for capabilities ensued. Gottschall advised that Total Visibility can be revisited by the FSWG in the future if the FSWG wanted to. Zone 2 Rusty Wagner inquired how to move forward to get a "resource list" where they can call Berks and make the request. Gottschall made suggestions on how this could be accomplished outside of FSWG or the involvement of DES. Rusty questioned how we can accomplish this with the involvement of DES - Gottschall interjected and advised the FSWG they can drop off if they didn't have anything else for the FSWG, Chair Hackman agreed.

Good of the Order: Andrew Getka Thanked DC Tom Kemery (Zone 7) for his years of service in the WG.

Next meeting will be Thursday March 26, 2026, at 1800 hours via Teams.

Meeting adjourned at 2010 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Blair Miller

Blair Miller, Secretary