

## **Berks County Fire Services Working Group**

**May 22, 2025**

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

The meeting was called to order at 1800 hours with 18 people in attendance. There were no additions or corrections to the previous month's minutes, they stand approved as read.

### **Attendance:**

**Zone 1:** Jesiah Newsome, Josh Young

**Zone 2:** No one in Attendance

**Zone 3:** Bob Martin

**Zone 4:** Colin Hackman, Lance Parmer

**Zone 5&6:** Brian Sierocinski, Chris Schaeffer

**Zone 7:** Andrew Getka

**BCFA:** Roger Wiedenheimer

**BCFT:** Jeff Reinert

**BCFPA:** No one in Attendance

**Forestry:** Gregory Reese

**DES:** Michael Smith, Matt Stairiker, Christina Wood, Philip Salamone

**Additional Attendance:** Scot Landis, Michael Herbert – Red Cross, Sydney Carey – Red Cross

**Communications:** Michael Herbert and Sydney Carey provided a PowerPoint presentation on services the Red Cross provides (PowerPoint attached).

Dean Dalious provided a flyer for Smokey's Birthday Bash Saturday August 9, 2025, from 1000 – 1400 at the Berks County Heritage Center.

**Zone 1:** Jesiah Newsome questioned if it is true the State Fire Academy flashover simulator is not allowed at the Fire Training Center. Matt Stairiker confirmed that is correct per County Legal due to liability. Matt advised if there is a push to have this changed, to contact Brian Gottschall with a letter request for review.

Jesiah Newsome questioned the structure fire dispatch based off brush burning within 10 feet of a structure. Matt Stairiker and Michael Smith advised that it was created through the Working Group and County Fire Service and DES provides additional information to the first responding units for them to make additional requests for the response. Jesiah also questioned Lockouts being dispatched as a structure fire even though there is no reported smoke or fire. Michael Smith advised that currently a lockout with the stove on is dispatched as a structure fire. Jesiah stated these dispatches are sending too much apparatus and create a liability. Chair Hackman

recommended if Zone 1 is proposing a change, to submit the requested information to be sent out to the Working Group and their Zone Department's for feedback and recommendation which can be discussed at the July meeting.

Jesiah questioned radios not working or being compatible with out of County mutual aid. Matt Stairiker advised Lehigh County radios are compatible and would need to be programmed by Lehigh for Berks code plug. Matt Stairiker advised there is a Federal Inter-Op available to create inter-operability between Counties, but the radios need to be programmed with those talkgroups by each County. Matt Stairiker stated non-Motorola radios are currently not compatible with Berks, and DES is currently in negotiations with Motorola regarding this.

**Zone 2:** No attendance / Report

**Zone 3:** Bob Martin advised Dean Dalious messaged him to report he was not able to log onto the meeting. Bob Martin questioned dispatches involving iPhone crash notifications and the possibility to send PD only. Matt Stairiker advised that due to areas with State Police coverage, DES is dispatching the incident as a motor vehicle accident.

**Zone 4:** Chair Hackman ask if DES would consider acknowledging the first apparatus and Chief responding on Crew Force over the radio to allow non-Crew Force agencies to know units are responding. Christina Wood advised this is not possible as the dispatcher would need to open each individual incident to see when apparatus is responding. Lance Parmer questioned if DES would consider allowing Captain's Lieutenant's and Duty Officers the ability to have Crew Force access. Christina Wood advised that allowing additional officers access would add additional lines to the incident which would take up space and prevent dispatchers from seeing more important information. Christina Wood advised DES could discuss allowing view only access to line officers to allow them to see the information and apparatus responding. Lance Parmer questioned what the time frame for an Incident History Audit Request is from the County. Michael Smith advised usually 3 to 5 business days. Matt Stairiker advised if the request is urgent, for the requesting agency to complete and submit the appropriate form and follow up with the on duty watch officer to advise of the urgency.

**Zone 5&6:** Chris Schaeffer advised Zone 5/6 agrees with Zone 1 regarding brush fires being dispatched as structure fires within 10 feet of a building is too much. Chris Schaeffer questioned if Structure Investigation could incorporate oven fires out and items burning in close proximity to a building. Chair Hackman requested Chris Schaeffer send Zone 5/6 request to be sent out to the Working Group and their Zone Departments for feedback and recommendation which can be discussed at the July meeting.

**Zone 7:** Andrew Getka reported the current probationary class is going strong and a Lieutenant will be added to each Ladder Company in January.

**BCFA:** Nothing to report.

**BCFT:** Jeff Reinert reported four different classes are being set up to include Firefighting Operations at Apartment Fires, Chimney Fires and Heating Appliances in October, Hoarding Conditions in November and a joint coordination with the Training Committee and the Fire Police Association for Fire Service Leadership October 10, and 11.

**BCFPA:** No attendance / Report.

**Forestry:** Gregory Reese reported DCNR has a multi-tier plan, and they are working to present it to the County Fire Service, working on standardization, preparedness, and clear communications, and providing training to the fire departments. Gregory Reese also ask that when personnel complete the online S130, S190, and L130 they notify DCNR so they can plan for the practical portion of the training.

**DES:** Matt Stairiker advised DES had nothing to report.

**Old Business:** Christian Wood advised EMS proximity dispatching is idle and DES has engaged Tyler for training on proximity dispatching within the next month.

**New Business:** Lance Parmer asked what the status of the County Radio Refresh was. Matt Stairiker advised there is no current commitment from the County Commissioners and DES is actively in negotiations with Motorola.

Next meeting is Thursday, July 24, 2025, at 1800hrs.

There being no further business to come forth, Chair Hackman adjourned the meeting at 1905 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

*Colin D. Hackman*

Colin D. Hackman, Chair