



# Warwick Emergency Services Commission

**Minutes of December 4, 2023 WESC Meeting**, held at the Warwick Township Municipal Building

**In Attendance (17):** Justin Cracroft, Mike Diehl, Sonny Ebersol, Brett Fassnacht, Jeff Garner, Andy Greiner, Aaron Hoover, Jim Hoover, Devin Learn, Rodney May, Lynn Mearig, Zach Miller, Duane Ober, Keith Rothermel, Mike Smith, Zach Spadaccia, and Greg Young.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Andy Greiner at 6:30pm.

**Treasurer's Report:** Commissioner Ober and Greg Young reviewed the 2023 year-to-date financial report. Justin Cracroft made a motion to accept the year-to-date report, seconded by Mike Diehl, and approved.

**Previous Minutes:** Greg Young made a motion to accept the October 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented; seconded by Justin Cracroft and approved.

**Fire Commissioner's Report:** Commissioner Ober presented on several topics including: selling his WESC duty vehicle to Brunnerville Fire Company in exchange for using funds from their Warwick Township Capital Account to purchase a new 2023 Chevrolet Tahoe to be used as the WESC Duty Vehicle (to be owned by Warwick Township); he provided assistance to Warwick Township to receive proposals to install a fire detection system in the Warwick Township Public Works building and the Warwick Township Municipal Authority building; he completed Deputy Fire Commissioner Smith's 6-month employee performance evaluation and Emergency Services Assistant Fassnacht's annual employee performance evaluation (both were favorable); he finalized this year's retention gift card program, which was nearly \$6,000 worth of gift cards (including using some cards previously purchased), totally nearly 3,000 manhours of outside fire training earned by 50 volunteers; box alarms were updated for Brunnerville, Lititz, and Rothsville fire companies; as part of the Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Assn, worked with County Commissioners to secure real estate tax credits for volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel; he submitted for this year's state grant for an extra mobile radio for his vehicle and recruitment and retention efforts; and he will be working on a regional hazard mitigation plan and the local municipal emergency operations plans in the near future.

**Deputy Fire Commissioner's Report:** Deputy Fire Commissioner Smith gave an update on the following topics: his new duty vehicle, a 2023 Chevrolet Tahoe purchased by Lititz Fire Company, was placed into service recently; he has been working on a parking issue in Lititz Borough, fire alarm issues at local commercial properties, and preplans; and he worked with Lititz Borough to update their municipal burning ordinance to closely match Warwick Township's.

**WESC Assistant Brett Fassnacht** gave a report on the fire prevention activities over the past few months. Over 1,400 children were directly taught fire safety lessons during firefighter visits to schools,

daycares, etc. Brett spoke highly of Kim Herskowitz leading the teaching and the many volunteers who helped make this year a success.

### **Unfinished Business**

**2024 WESC Budget** – Commissioner Ober and Greg Young reviewed the updated 2024 WESC budget that now includes updated costs such as IT services and employee benefits. The budget shows expenses at \$318,842.00 in 2024.

**Ambulance Service in Elizabeth Township** – Mike Diehl reported that in October, Elizabeth Township voted to not be part of the Municipal Emergency Services Authority that is being created, and selected Warwick Ambulance as their primary EMS organization at their November meeting.

**ISO Update** – Andy Greiner questioned if the new water tank to be erected in Warwick Township will improve the ISO score of the municipalities. Commissioner Ober and Deputy Commissioner Smith explained that there is a lot that goes into the scoring of a fire district and that the tank would have some impact but probably not enough to change the most recent rating.

### **New Business**

**Donation to the Penryn Fire Company** – Commissioner Ober recommended a \$200 donation be made to Penryn Fire Company from WESC for use of their rehab unit and supplies. Lynn Mearig made a motion to donate \$200, seconded by Greg Young, and approved.

**Lancaster County Real Estate Tax Credit** – Commissioner Ober reported that the Lancaster County Commissioners approved a Real Estate Tax Credit for volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel who meet the service requirements (similar to the WESC requirements). The tax credit will start in 2024 based on 2023 participation and will be \$150.

**Columbia Borough School District Tax Credit** – Commissioner Ober explained that Columbia Borough Fire Department Fire Chief was able to lobby their school district to provide a real estate tax credit for the volunteer firefighters. Commissioner Ober and Deputy Commissioner Smith will review and consider using a similar approach locally.

**Review of new volunteers in 2023** – Commissioner Ober reviewed the results of 28 new volunteers in the WESC region in 2023. Brickerville Fire Company has brought in 10 new members (6 firefighters, 2 junior firefighters, 1 fire police officer, and 1 support member); Brunnerville Fire Company has brought in 7 new members (3 junior firefighters, 2 firefighters, 1 fire police officer, and 1 support member); Lititz Fire Company has brought in 5 new members (4 firefighters and 1 support member); and Rothsville Fire Company has brought in 6 new members (2 EMT's, 2 junior firefighters, 1 firefighter, and 1 fire police officer).

**Fire Escrow Act** – Commissioner Ober spoke about the Fire Insurance Escrow Act, Act 93 of 1994, that permits municipalities to require an escrow payment from the property owner’s insurance company after a fire loss. This escrow amount is set aside and can be used to pay back taxes prior to repairs, erect barriers around a damaged property, demolish a damaged property, etc.. More research will be done on this topic.

**Review of 2024 WESC Goals** – Commissioner Ober and Deputy Commissioner Smith reviewed the 2024 WESC Goals with the Board.

**Recognition of Outgoing Board Members** – Commissioner Ober presented Andy Greiner with a Thank You card and gift certificate in recognition of the time he served on the WESC Board, as he did not seek re-election to Borough Council. Andy has served for 8 years as the Lititz Borough Council representative and is interested in staying on the WESC Board as the Lititz Borough citizen representative. Chris Strayer, while absent, was also recognized for his 6 years of service to the WESC Board as the Lititz Borough citizen representative.

### **Comments from Agencies**

**Brickerville FC** – Keith Rothermel shared that they will be hosting a Basic Fire Academy near the end of the year. They will have close to 40 students in the class, and multiple volunteers from the WESC companies will be participating. They also have a committee researching a new fire engine and working with vendors right now.

**Brunnerville FC** – Lynn Mearig advised that they had numerous pieces of equipment damaged from use at a fire in Penn Township recently, including damaged hose, air packs, SCBA masks, and radios. They have submitted a claim to their insurance company for nearly \$75,000/.

**Lititz FC** – Zach Miller reported that the two new duty vehicles are now in service. There has been no recent update on the status of their new ladder truck from the factory.

**Rothsville FC** – Greg Young reported due to the decision of Binkley and Hurst / Agriteer to move to Leola in late 2024, they will be losing at least three active daytime responders. Greg also spoke about the low return rate of their fund drive this year – about 23%. Out of the \$64,500 they have raised, nearly \$40,000 has been spent already on only two expenses – their annual insurance premium and mechanical repairs to a fire engine. Greg then shared about correspondence he has received from a local resident who wanted taken off their fund drive mailing list. Greg stated he feels it’s time that we start considering a fire tax.

**Warwick Ambulance** – No report.

**Rothsville Ambulance** – Justin Cracraft spoke about their concerns to have adequate volunteers to staff their ambulances. They continue to look at ways to recruit more volunteers.

**NWEMS** – No report.

**Elizabeth Township** – No report.

**Lititz Borough** – Andy Greiner gave an update on the culvert repair project taking place on East Lincoln Avenue at Water Street.

**Warwick Township** – No report.

Rodney May continued the discussion about the need to start considering a fire tax. Input was provided by many in attendance, asking for this topic to be in our future discussions.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:35pm. Next meeting is February 5, 2024, at the Warwick Township Municipal Building, starting at 6:30pm.

Justin Cracroft made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Lynn Mearig, and approved.

Minutes submitted by Fire Commissioner Duane Ober, December 15, 2023.