

Minutes of May 15, 2017 WESC Meeting, held at Elizabeth Township.

In Attendance: Sonny Ebersole, Herb Flosdorf, Mike Flynn, Jeff Garner, Jim Hoover, Frank Kenavan, Rodney May, Duane Ober, Mike Smith, Jeff Strauss, Chris Strayer, Brian Wiker, Greg Young and Sam Young.

Meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Herb Flosdorf at 6:05pm.

Treasurer's Report: The 2017 year-to-date budget was reviewed by Brian Wiker with no comments. Sam Young made a motion to accept the current budget as shown, seconded by Brian Wiker and passed.

Previous Minutes: Frank Kenavan made a motion to accept the March 2017 Meeting Minutes as written; seconded by Sam Young and passed.

Unfinished Business

Earned Income Tax / Property Tax Relief – Duane reported that Randy Gockley just sent an email with an update on the status of the tax relief progress, in which that email was forwarded to all Board members. There was discussion on the bullet points of the suggested tax credit criteria and some additional questions, such as who manages the program when fire and EMS are a combined agency; are both spouses eligible for the real estate tax credit; and will volunteers be able to seek a credit for both the earned income tax and the real estate tax or just one? Duane asked that if anyone has any additional questions about the tax credit to contact him with those questions so he can share them with Randy Gockley. A big concern of the leaders is the oversight of the program and being able to fairly provide the benefit to all the volunteers. The amount of time and effort that will go into managing the program for the Fire Chief, plus the actual amount of the tax money that is rebated, will not prove to be a valuable tool in recruiting or retaining members.

Emergency Management Exercise – Duane reported that he hopes to have an exercise planned for late Summer or early Fall.

Medical Exams – Duane reported that he and Arielle Weidner met with Dr. Latif, an Oncologist affiliated with the Heart of Lancaster Hospital, to discuss the physicals and lab work that we are providing for our members. Dr. Latif shared that the tests that we are doing are appropriate for the ages of our members and the reasons we are doing it. Any additional testing would be based upon patient and family history, which would then fall back on the personal insurance of the member. Duane also shared that some members are starting to go through the physicals for the second time based upon their ages.

New Business

Regional EMS Concerns – Mike Flynn from Northwest EMS shared a story from York County in which the hospital-based ambulances were going to cease providing service to three communities due to lack of funding and support from the municipalities. The hospital did not feel it was a financially-viable solution to stay in business in that area so a decision was made to stop providing service. The contract went out to bid and SVEMS from Lancaster County will now service that area. If no one had bid on the contract, ambulances from all surrounding communities would ultimately be tasked with serving those communities, creating a domino effect that could be detrimental to their primary response areas.

This led to conversation about the funding and reimbursements of our three local ambulances. All three spoke of how their unpaid bills are handled. Balancing the number of paid crews on duty at one time compared to the number of responses is constantly monitored. Jim Hoover stated that Rothsville Fire Company Ambulance would not be able to sustain service to the community if it weren't for their volunteers. They cannot afford 24/7 coverage of paid staff; currently, they only have paid staffing from Monday-Friday 6am-6pm. Currently, none of the three rely on municipal funding to assist in their operating budget, but it's possible that will be needed in the future to sustain coverage.

New Electronic Billboard – Duane reported that there is a new electronic billboard on Route 501, just north of Bomberger's Store, able to be read while traveling south. Part of the zoning approval for the billboard was that Lamar Advertising would allow free time for public safety messages. Currently, a firefighter recruitment ad is being displayed, created by the Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Association's recent grant award. Our account rep stated that he needs a topic and artwork, or they can create the artwork for us. Duane asked for ideas to share with the account rep, with hopes that several emergency services messages can be rotated through, such as recruitment ads, fund drive support ads, fire prevention or fire safety ads, business recognition ads, etc.

Hometown Heroes – Duane would like to bring back the Hometown Heroes articles in the Lititz Record, with the goal of promoting our lesser known volunteers, with a biography of them and a photo. Duane will create an interview template and will be asking for names from each company to highlight.

Private Hydrant Maintenance Program – Duane shared that Dan Zimmerman had spoken to him about leading a program to create and initiate a maintenance and inspection program for the private hydrants in the township. The Warwick Township Authority has a three-year maintenance program, in which they attempt to do a 1/3 of the hydrants each year. Currently, there is no standard or requirement in place for the owners of the private hydrants in the township to maintain their hydrants, so it is important that we create a requirement. Private hydrants in the area would be any that are beyond the water meter, such as the hydrants in the parking lots of the Shoppes of Kissel Village or ones in the streets of Traditions of America. The main water lines that follow the public streets are served by municipal fire hydrants, but once they go onto the private property, it is the responsibility of the owner (developer) to maintain the system.

Additional Comments

Brickerville – Jeff Strauss shared they are currently hosting an Essentials of Firefighting class. A regional exercise will take place June 24-26 in the State Gamelands in Elizabeth Township by DCNR to train for forest fires and wilderness emergencies.

Brunnerville – Jeff Garner also reported that several members are currently taking the Essential of Firefighting training. They also have an acquired structure on Chestnut Street in which they will be using it for a live fire training on June 10th. Jeff also spoke about Lt. Josh Martin, who was recently hired in Goochland County, VA as a career firefighter-EMT and the impact that has on his fire company. Duane also stated that their fund drive is taking place right now with very good initial support.

Lititz – Mike Smith shared information about an issue that they are involved with in Penn Township right now in which the township supervisors are considering reassigning fire districts, which could result in Lititz Fire Company losing some of its first-due coverage area to either Penryn or Manheim Fire Companies. The areas in question are much closer for Lititz to respond to, so it is a question of public safety.

Mike also spoke about the heavy-vehicle rescue training that just took place this past weekend in which firefighters from Lititz, Brunnerville and Brickerville participated in at the Lititz Fire Station and at Gerhart Trucking Company in Brunnerville.

Rothsville – Sam Young mentioned that they just held a breakfast fund raiser this past weekend. Rothsville also has several junior firefighters going through the Essentials of Firefighting class right now. They have applications for three fire police officers right now and two applicants for the ambulance.

Northwest EMS – Mike Flynn reported that their call volume for the Brickerville unit was 310 for January 1st through April 30th.

Rothsville Ambulance – Jim Hoover said their fund drive is out right now and the initial response is very positive. They have also been reaching out to businesses about helping with teaching CPR to their employees and they have received requests to do so.

Warwick Ambulance – Frank Kenavan said their current call volume is slow compared to the first quarter. They have been going to the local nursing homes, participating in health fairs and have presented stroke awareness classes at local businesses, along with representative from the Heart of Lancaster.

Sonny Ebersole – Sonny stated that he really likes the idea to promote the Hometown Heroes in the paper. He knows firefighters who should be recognized for their service and this is a great way to do that.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.

Next meeting is **July 17th at Warwick Ambulance at 6pm.**

Minutes submitted by Duane Ober, May 17, 2017.