

**Minutes of January 15, 2018 WESC Meeting**, held at Brunnerville Fire Station.

**In Attendance:** Eli Ebersole, Mike Flynn, Jeff Garner, Andy Greiner, Jim Hoover, Rodney May, Duane Ober, Ron Oettel, Mike Smith, Dennis Strauss, Chris Strayer, Brian Wiker, Greg Young, Sam Young and Dan Zimmerman.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Andy Greiner at 6:00pm.

**Reorganization of 2018 WESC Board:** Sam Young made a motion to appoint Herb Flosdorf as Chairman, Brian Wiker as Vice-Chairman, Andy Greiner as Treasurer and Duane Ober as Secretary; seconded by Ron Oettel and passed. Andy Greiner continued leading the meeting since Herb was absent.

Appointed Representatives and alternates were announced: Brickerville Fire Company (Dennis Strauss / Keith Rothermel); Brunnerville Fire Company (Jeff Garner / Lynn Mearig); Lititz Fire Company (Ron Oettel / Mike Smith); Rothsville Fire Company (Greg Young / Sam Young); Warwick Ambulance (Frank Kenavan / Brian Donmoyer); Rothsville Ambulance (Jim Hoover / Scott Barr); Northwest EMS (Scott Kingsboro / TBA); Elizabeth Township resident (Eli Ebersole); Lititz Borough resident (Chris Strayer); and Warwick Township resident (Don Hoover).

**Treasurer's Report:** Andy reviewed the 2017 year-end budget, showing a surplus of \$2,945.16, which was transferred to the 2018 budget. Ron Oettel made a motion to accept the year-end and current budgets as shown, seconded by Greg Young and passed.

**Previous Minutes:** The November 2017 meeting minutes were approved as written.

### **Unfinished Business**

**New WESC Vehicle** – Duane reported that the new vehicle arrived last Friday and is now being used. It still needs to have equipment and graphics installed. The Ford Escape will be sold to the Warwick Township Municipal Authority for \$7,000. These funds will be used to pay for the equipment and graphics. Any additional funds that are needed will be funded by Warwick Township.

**Brick Gables Fund Raiser** – The Brick Gables fund raiser earned \$1,044 for WESC. Dean Zeigler has plans to host the event again in 2018 and wants to support WESC again.

**Earned Income Tax / Property Tax Relief** – Duane stated that maybe the municipalities should consider alternatives to the tax relief credits for the volunteers, like sponsoring an event for the members, such as a bus trip. Instead of tracking eligibility and possibly causing rifts within the volunteers, a joint activity to give back to the volunteers could be a different approach to recruiting new members and retaining current ones.

For another idea, Mike Smith discussed research he has been doing lately that shows examples of providing housing incentives for public safety officers in other communities, as well as employees of colleges in other communities. There are programs already in place that provide “loans” for these employees to purchase homes in targeted neighborhoods, something that we should consider as an incentive to recruit new volunteers or to keep current volunteers in the neighborhoods near the fire stations. Funding could also possibly be used to provide tuition reimbursement. Funding sources and criteria would need to be established locally for this to work. This idea is currently part of the regional 5-year comprehensive plan. There was discussion about how providing this benefit to volunteers instead of employees would work, the payback schedule if someone moves or does not remain active, where the funding would come from, etc. It was agreed that more information should be collected of existing programs in the nation and how those programs compare to how we would like to use them.

## **New Business**

**Workers Compensation Coverage** - Andy shared with the group the importance of the local municipalities being aware of the work being done by the volunteers so they have adequate workers compensation coverage. The municipality should adopt an annual Resolution outlining the activities of the members. Any additional activities not included in the Resolution should be approved prior to the date. Most resolutions contain specific references to events, but it is also important to also keep the list broad, in order for the Fire Chiefs to have the ability to authorize activities that might not be listed.

**Apparatus Replacement Plans** – As fire companies begin to look to replace apparatus, it was agreed that the fire companies need to keep the WESC Board and their municipality informed of their timeline. Specifically, Warwick Township has the fire company capital funds invested, so adequate warning when funds will need to be withdrawn from the accounts needs to be known as early as possible. It was also pointed out that the WESC Intermunicipal Agreement includes a statement that capital purchases should be approved by the WESC Board, so communication of the process is very important for the support of the purchase. The plans in place can and should be reviewed frequently, which can lead to changes as the plans evolve. Brunnerville, Lititz and Rothsville have plans in place right now. Brunnerville has formed a committee to research replacing their Squad in 2019. Greg Young reported that even though the plan shows replacing their 1994 Engine in 2019, he doesn't feel it is necessary to do so due to the condition it is in and the frequency of use. Brian Wiker requested Dennis Strauss to create a plan for apparatus replacement in Brickerville so that it can be reviewed.

**Fire Services Planning Study** – Dan Zimmerman shared that Warwick Township, in order to have a fire services contingency plan for the future, will be initiating a study to take a look at the local fire services model for the next five to ten years. While the current situation with the fire services is in good shape, Warwick Township desires to take a “no-pressure” look at the pros and cons of a variety of options for the fire services, including a regionalized fire department. Speaking on behalf of Lititz Borough and Elizabeth Township respectively, Andy Greiner and Brian Wiker also expressed interest to be involved in the study. Dan stated that he and Duane met with Rob Brady, a former DCED employee who has been involved with WESC in the past, who now has started his own consulting firm. They met with him to explain to him their purpose for the study and to request an estimate from him to conduct the study. Many other members of the Board have met Rob in the past and agreed with selecting Rob to provide the study. Andy Greiner then made a motion to pursue the study, contingent upon the final approval of the three municipalities; seconded by Ron Oettel and passed.

Further discussion continued, in which a meeting will be held prior to our next Board meeting for Rob Brady to meet with the Board to explain his role in the study, our needs and to answer any additional questions. Duane will schedule the meeting with the Board and Rob, which will require a Public Notice of the meeting to be advertised.

**Rural Water Supply Signs** – Duane stated that a \$2,000 grant was received to purchase rural water supply signs and posts, to be placed near creeks and ponds that are easily accessible for use during a fire. Warwick Township and Elizabeth Township offered to help with providing the posts and installation of the posts, where needed.

**Current Building Projects** – Duane informed everyone that he has been involved with plan reviews and other construction projects in the area, such as the Wilbur Redevelopment in Lititz Borough, Lititz Land Trust (Breezy Heights) apartment buildings off of Highlands Drive, Lititz Bend development off of West Millport Road, and the Rock Lititz Hotel. Duane encouraged everyone to visit these sites when time allows to look at the progress taking place.

**Annual Performance Review** – Andy pointed out that Duane’s annual performance review needs to be evaluated by the municipalities and the Fire Chiefs and EMS leaders. It hasn’t been done since the end of 2015. Dan stated that he has an evaluation form that can be used to do this, the same form that is used by the police commission for Police Chief Dave Steffen’s annual evaluation.

### **Open Comments**

**Brickerville** – Dennis Strauss is the Fire Chief for 2018 and he reported that they have a good group of younger members getting more involved and taking a lot of training.

**Brunnerville** – Jeff Garner reported that their apparatus committee has met two times and their committee has acknowledged that they need to be considering the region, not just their fire company, as they plan their direction.

**Lititz** – Ron Oettel reported that they have had a very busy start to the year, with 37 calls in 15 days. Their fund drive in 2017 was very successful. There will be an article in the Lititz Record soon about how an \$11,000 donation by the Rotary Club helped to purchase a new rescue tool, which was used to free a recent accident victim, the daughter of the family who held a recent special fund raiser for the fire company. Ron also reported that Mike Michael stepped down as the Assistant Fire Chief, which is now filled by Zach Miller. Steve Sweigart was promoted to Captain to replace Zach.

**Rothsville** – Greg Young reported that their staffing levels have been very good at recent incidents. A very active daytime firefighter will be unavailable for a few months due to health reasons. A former Lieutenant, Earl Oberholtzer, moved to the Brunnerville area and resigned his office at the end of the year. Firefighter Matt Purnell was promoted to fill the vacant Lieutenant spot.

**Rothsville Ambulance** – Jim Hoover reported that they will be voting at the ambulance meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup> to purchase a new ambulance and then will have to get the approval of the fire company.

**Northwest EMS** – Mike Flynn reported that they just recently placed a new Ford Transit ambulance in service and one of their 4WD ambulances is being rechassied. Northwest EMS is ending their wheelchair van transport service. Mike reported that they were losing money in the business and when taking staffing out of service to provide the resource, it ultimately resulted in missed calls and revenue. The Brickerville unit ran about 800 calls in 2017, as a medic or ambulance, either from the station or as the in-between unit (staged in Elm). Mike also reported that this will be his last meeting, as he and his wife are moving to Vero Beach, Florida. Mike was thanked for his service to WESC.

**Elizabeth Township** – Brian Wiker congratulated Dennis Strauss on becoming the new Brickerville Fire Chief. He also praised how well he has seen WESC change and improve in the past five years. The improved communication and dialogue among members is a very positive sign.

With no other business, Ron Oettel made a motion to adjourn at 19:45, seconded by Greg Young and passed.

Minutes submitted by Duane Ober, January 16, 2018.