

The First Meeting of the Fire and EMS Commission

Thursday, October 16th, 2014

Attendees: Fire and EMS Director Frank Davis, Supervisor David Weiss, Planning Director Brandon Stidham, Sheriff Tony Roper, Matt Hoff – EMS Representative, Jacob White- Fire Representative, Laure Wallace (Chair), Bryan Conrad, and Beth Leffel – citizen at large representatives

Absentees: None

The meeting opened at 7pm with introductions of the Commission Members.

General Housekeeping:

Brandon Stidham walked the Commission through the Freedom of Information Act and the expectations for Commission performance in adherence with the Act.

The Commission agreed to meet monthly on the 2nd Thursdays of each month.

Review of Fire and EMS Workgroup Recommendations:

Chair Wallace walked the Commission members through the recommendations from the Fire and EMS workgroup in a PPT presentation titled, “Recommendation Review Presentation Copy” and noted that the Commission will be following how the system is tracking with these recommendations and that some of these items will be imbedded in the Strategic Plan.

Under the discussion on the recommendations for recruitment and retention, Bryan Conrad informed the commission that Clarke County is now part of a \$100,000 dollar grant with Frederick County and the City of Frederick to address Recruitment and Retention. Bryan will be keeping the Commission informed about actions and successes in this initiative.

Under the initiative on volunteer company agreements, Frank Davis noted that there is a draft that will be given to each of the companies at the end of the month. He will keep the Commission informed on the status of these agreements. Supervisor Weiss noted that additional funding was provided to increase career staffing to 2 staff at all times per the workgroup recommendation on staffing support.

Bryan Conrad noted how well Pam Hess was doing now with CAD reports and said that part of the problem in the past was the transition to the new system, and that the new Clarke County Rescue Bridge is allowing for easier access to data.

Beth Leffel suggested that we keep a list of the workgroup recommendations with status updates that could be addressed at each Commission meeting.

Actions to Date:

Chair Wallace noted that the best action taken to date was the hire of Frank Davis as the new Director. She noted that there were excellent candidates to choose from but that Frank was clearly the best candidate for Clarke County.

Frank Davis provided the following update:

- He has held meetings have been held with the Chiefs of all the Departments and Mt. Weather.
- He praised the actions of the companies who responded to the tragic house fire, and said the “call was handled very, very well.” He noted that even in the immediate wake of the fire, the Chiefs were working together on how to improve things. He noted that it was a very positive discussion and that they have already started to implement some changes.
- He stated that Pam Hess has been outstanding and she is working on a response review report that hopefully will be available in November. These reports will show call volumes by day, night and weekend and failed responses. These reports will give us a baseline to track improvement in the system.
- He has met with several of the nursing home and assisted living facilities to discuss ways to decrease the non-emergency call volume to these facilities. This is already showing success. He noted that they will be trying the community paramedic program to help decrease emergency call volume at the assisted living facilities. He is also being proactive with disaster planning.
- He attended a FEMA grant workshop to identify the requirements for the next grant cycle. - SAFER grant opening up in January and AFG in November. He stated that Clarke County will be submitting for a Career staff chase vehicle to decrease wear on Ender’s chase vehicle.
- He has developed draft joint agreement between volunteer stations and county which will be handed out at association meeting in 2 weeks.
- He has had several meetings with Red Cross about training, particularly disaster drill training and support situations at nursing homes.

- He meets with career staff daily and tries to be at shift change every morning with Career staff. He is ready to implement some changes there to make them stronger and to help them operate more efficiently both physically and financially.
- He noted that lots of volunteers have been to his office to talk about the vision for the future. Frank believes that we can turn the volunteer system around and make it a strong system. He stressed that we must get away from 3 individual companies and function as one system through use of things like IMResponding.
- He is hoping to piggy back onto the Winchester-Frederick County fee-for-service contract with Valley Health, and hopes that this will speed up the processing time and have fee-for-service up and running. He also noted that every calculation suggests that this should bring in at least \$300,000 and that this will take a lot of pressure off of the system. He noted that we do not want to make companies rich, and have them not provide the service, but that this is about getting companies what they need and make them strong.

Chair Wallace noted that Director Davis is planning to go out and talk with community groups about the Fee-for-Service Program. She asked Commission members to provide names and contact information to Director Davis for groups that he may want to talk to about the proposed new program. The following were suggested: Nursing Home, Senior Center, Clarke County Rotary, Lions Club, Ruritan, homeowners associations, and school system. Beth will talk to the Superintendent about options to reach into the schools. It was suggested that we develop a pamphlet of frequently asked questions that could be handed out in the community and in the fire companies and that we also need to educate the volunteers and career staff, and the Board of Supervisors. Supervisor Weiss stated that it is important for citizens to understand that it will be done in a way that it will not hurt anybody and that all this information should be put into a presentation for the board will be important. It was noted that this is also a way to help county citizens understand that most of their services are provided by volunteers and that these volunteers are primarily supported by community contributions. It was suggested that once the message is crafted, all of the Commission members can help spread the message and give presentations and that it would be important for Frank to be at the presentations.

Supervisor Weiss stated that the County has put \$250,000 into the system to cover the salary and full time staff. County has made a significant commitment to the new Department and system performance.

Brandon suggested that we get with Val for an article in the Star and the Observer. It would be nice to have a featured interview.

David Weiss asked if we are not going to pursue a safer grant for a recruitment/retention person. Director Davis and Bryan Conrad suggested that they need to assess where the

current program is going before they can answer the question. Supervisor Weiss noted that there is currently money in the system to support recruitment and retention efforts that they put there as potential matching funds.

Text Amendment Review:

The Commission reviewed the entire document and the recommended changes added by the BOS. After extensive discussion, the Commission agreed to the changes made by the BOS.

The Commission agreed to recommend a change to Section 17-3 C-7. Sheriff Roper moved to amend the section and this was seconded by Matt Hoff. All Commission members agreed by voice vote. The recommended language would be: "Support and promote annual emergency preparedness exercises."

The Commission had extensive discussion about the role of the Director/Commission in regard to enforcement of policies. While not recommendations were made to the text amendment, David Weiss clarified this role in the following statement: "Technically he (the Director) works for David Ash who works for the BOS. Just as Brandon is staff for the planning commission or Alison Teeter is staff for the Easement Authority he is staff for this commission and we direct him as to what to do. He brings us the issues, he brings us the information, but he works for us. This Commission works for the BOS. His (the Director's) enforcement is an action of this committee's creation of the laws and how that fits into the direction that the supervisors have set down in their edicts of how they want to run it."

Next Steps:

The Commission spent a period of time reviewing the role of the Commission as laid out in the text amendment. A considerable time was spent on the process of strategic planning.

Brandon suggested getting copies of good strategic plans from other localities. With a picture in mind we can then decide what we already have and decide what we need to collect. We can use stakeholder groups to collect targeted information.

The meeting closed promptly at 9 pm on motion of Sheriff Roper and seconded by multiple members of the group with agreement that we will strive for meeting lengths of 1 ½ hours.

ACTION ITEMS:

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	DUE DATE	STATUS
Provide monthly updates on the recruitment and retention initiatives in the joint program with Frederick County and the city of Winchester.	Bryan Conrad and Director Davis	Monthly	
Develop a chart of recommendations from the Fire and EMS Workgroup whose status is updated monthly	Laure Wallace and Director Davis	Monthly	
Provide names and contact information to Director Davis for groups that he may want to talk to about the proposed new fee-for-service program.	All Commission Members	ASAP – NTE the Nov. Commission meeting	
Talk with the School Superintendent about ways to reach into the school system to educate about Fee –for-Service Program	Beth Leffel	ASAP – NTE Nov. Commission meeting	
Help Director Davis put together a flyer and presentation on the proposed Fee for Service Program	Bryan Conrad	Per a timeline set up by Director Davis	
Develop a Complaint/Grievance process in coordination with Director Davis to ensure due process of complaints.	Commission	Not defined	
Develop a new organizational flow chart of reporting relationships.	Draft – Laure/Frank	TBD	
Develop questions that the Director can use at fee-for-service presentations that start to engage the citizens in a conversation on their expectations for the future of Fire and EMS in support of strategic planning efforts.	Laure and ??	ASAP	
Research strategic plans for similarly situated counties. Frame the scope of strategic planning effort and the stakeholders. (Refine spider web diagram) Consider division by informational, operational, and policy roles.	Frank and Laure	ASAP	
Contact Val Van Meter to do an article for the Winchester Star on the proposed F-F-S program and also see about an article for the Observer.	Frank	ASAP	

