

EMERGENCY SERVICES BOARD

MINUTES OF JANUARY 26, 2012 MEETING

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ed McLellan, Chair
Sonny Vincent
Bob Browning
Rick Harding
Paul Harmon
Duane Stein
Brad Frantz

GUESTS

Steve Smith, Communications
Dwayne Kitis, MIEMSS
Wayne Tiemersma

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman McLellan. The minutes of the September meeting were reviewed and one correction noted to include Bob Browning as being in attendance. The minutes were approved as amended with a motion by Sonny Vincent and a second from Bob Browning.

Brad presented information regarding the impending FCC regulations regarding “narrow-banding” of certain frequency ranges that will impact the public safety sector. Essentially, narrow-banding will allow the FCC to split frequencies into more narrow bands that will require radios to be able to be tuned more precisely. Many older radios using analog technology will not be able to be tuned that fine and will become obsolete. Garrett County Public Safety has endeavored to provide as many radios as possible to local fire, EMS, and police agencies utilizing Homeland Security grant funding. However, many radios still currently in service will cease to function on January 1, 2013 and it is the responsibility of the individual company to maintain their radio systems, including base, mobile, portable radios and paging systems. Brad suggested that the ESB representatives from Fire/EMS take the information back to the individual companies and stress the critical nature of this, given the 2013 deadline for compliance. (table)

There was discussion regarding LOSAP and the ESB request to the Commissioners to maintain the current point system rather than the new process which will require more auditing by the individual companies. No formal decision from the Commissioners has been given at this time. (carryover)

There was discussion regarding the request of the ESB to the County Commissioners to send a letter to the local delegation regarding MFRI training requirements. The GCFRA Association, the Chief's Committee and Garrett College have all expressed concerns to MFRI about the training requirements (class size, location, etc.) that are prohibitive to Garrett County. The ESB is seeking to intercede through the political process to get some resolution to this issue. (carry over)

Chairman McLellan raised the issue of solicitation letters from Fire and EMS companies to residents, especially those who are in areas of overlapping coverage. This causes confusion to residents and especially second home owners who don't know how to best direct their donations. This was further compounded by Southern sending out a second funding letter. It has been suggested in previous discussions that some consolidated approach to fund drives would eliminate the confusion. The EMS representatives assured Chairman McLellan that they have and will continue to honor each other's subscriptions. It is suggested that the EMS companies continue to investigate a consolidated approach. (table)

Brad updated the Board on the activities of the Emergency Services Clubs at Southern and Northern High School. SHS has completed the CERT training and is now providing the Maryland First Responder curriculum to students. NHS will continue with CERT throughout the school year. Upcoming activities include: A field trip to Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh is planned for late April; students are participating in the County Full Scale Exercise at the Airport in May; a plaque for each High School is being developed that will honor an outstanding Emergency Services student each year. (carryover)

Steve Smith provided a report on the Public Safety 9-1-1 Center. Grant funding has been obtained for the added radio position in the 9-1-1 Center. Steve gave a report on total calls for the year. There were 14,938 total 9-1-1 Calls and 80,086 other calls received on police and administrative lines. Overall total was over

95,000. All Communications Staff are presently taking the required training to fully consolidate dispatch to utilize EMD (Emergency Medical Dispatch) and EPD (Emergency Police Dispatch). Protocols for each must be reviewed and approved by the Medical Director and the Sheriff before implementation. There was discussion regarding response times and it was noted that Garrett County Average response time had improved significantly. This can be attributed to the leadership of the volunteer squads and the assistance provided by paid personal. There was some discussion regarding Medevac helicopter response issues. Dwayne, Wayne, and Steve continue to push for better adherence to established protocols and changes to those policies as necessary. (Table)

Wayne Tiemersma provided a detailed report on Quality Assurance activities. (Drop)

A boundary dispute issue between Goodwill Fire Department and Eastern Garrett Fire Department was discussed. The GCFRA Association had indicated that they did not feel they had authority to render a decision as outlined in county legislation because Goodwill is not a member of the GCFRA and is not physically located in Garrett County. However, because the boundary area is within Garret County, the Board concluded that it is the responsibility of the parties to resolve their dispute through the mediation process. If this is unsuccessful, the parties may appeal their dispute to the ESB. The Board recommended that Chairman McLellan send a letter to the respective parties and the GCFRA to this effect. (Carryover)

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is March 8th at 4:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Conference Room.