

Warren Township Volunteer Fire Department
June 3, 2020 Minutes
Chief's Officers' Meeting

Adequate notice of this meeting was given by posting a copy on the Township Bulletin Board and sending a copy to the Township Clerk, Courier News and Echoes Sentinel as required by the Open Public Meeting Act

Present: Chief Mitchell & Linda Palumbo

<u>Mt. Bethel Fire Co.</u>	<u>Mt. Horeb Fire Co.</u>	<u>Community Fire Co.</u>	<u>Washington Valley Fire Co.</u>
M. Russo	D. Dante	A. Kachidurian	C. Boschen

<u>Police Dept</u>	<u>Fire Police</u>
Sgt. J. Cohen & Karen	K. Dalton-absent

Police Report: Lt Henschel's is getting 2 quotes on point to point analysis and would like to split cost between PD & FD. There's no annual maintenance so this will service the radios since there's noise on the phone lines and it can't distinguish between a voice or interference. Geiger Lane tower is 70% full.

A. Kachidurian would like to meet with PD dispatch so he can obtain more call info from PD to close out the fire calls going back to 2015.

Reports of Officers

Operations (Mark Russo) Are calls back to normal? WTVFD assisted North Plainfield FD with a few fires recently. Thank you for all that have helped with birthday drive bys but still have a few more. New County alarm plans not officially implemented yet.

Equipment Readiness (unassigned) need a volunteer-Chief requested for all Assistant Chiefs to poll members again who are able to help.

Company Equipment Checks: no report

Consumables: will coordinate a list. B. Gaiser checked with several vendors for TIC Bullard T1 and NJ Fire has them.

Equipment Inventory / Asset Tagging (progress report): no report

Who's Responding App: working well and A. Kachidurian added several new members.

Please contact A. Kachidurian if having any problems with it. Per Chief Mitchell, please update the list.

Drills / Training (Derek Reedman): Bloodborne Pathogens will be offered a few times this year. D. Reedman is working on Water Awareness refresher class.

Driver Qualification Status: no report

Fit Testing (and Train the Trainer progress): no report

Department Drill: M. Russo will ask around for June drill

CPR training programs are shut down so once it resumes, M. Russo will let all know.

Reporting (Aram Kachidurian) April & May

Monthly and YTD activity report (need crew response stats): 4 fires, 6 rescues, 5 service calls, 4 good intent calls, 19 false alarms

Vehicle response for **April**: 24 calls

Engine 2 - 4 calls with 0 crew	Tower 61 - 2 calls with 2 crew
Engine 3 - 11 calls with 4 crew	Tanker 61-3 0 call with 0 crew
Engine 4 - 6 calls with 2 crew	Tanker 61-4 2 call with 0 crew
Ladder 61 - 8 calls with 3 crew	Rescue 61 - 7 calls with 5 crew

Vehicle response for **May**: 43 calls

Engine 2 - 11 calls with 2 crew	Tower 61 - 3 calls with 0 crew
Engine 3 - 35 calls with 17 crew	Tanker 61-3 0 call with 0 crew
Engine 4 - 8 calls with 1 crew	Tanker 61-4 4 call with 3 crew
Ladder 61 - 32 calls with 22 crew	Rescue 61 - 4 calls with 2 crew

County Credentialing: no report

Delayed Calls: There was a delayed response for 34 Mountain Blvd. due to an elevator call, 11 Round Top & 2 Thistle Lane but had a power outage.

Vehicle Maintenance (Charlie Boschen): C. Boshen will contact D. Buro regarding annual maintenance on vehicles. Ladder 61 was out for a week for a recall for a dismantle of a feature called active dampening.

Fire Prevention Education / Public Events (Dave Dante) 82 & 84 Liberty Corner Rd, cable lines are low.

Hydrant Status Report: Chief Mitchell is working with HS kids on the hydrant flags project so different colors for different flows and this info will eventually be mapped.

~~Fire Prevention Planning: no report~~

Fire Inspector / Fire Prevention (Al Shjarback): Per M. Russo, a proposed development on the corner of King George/Mountain Ave; 2 buildings with a parking deck in the middle. If approved 120 unit hotel on that corner. Hydrants need to be increased & need a driveway for the aerial device. King George Inn site building with start shortly. And a 3rd site is 3 Mountainview's parking deck which is under construction. Traffic and out of town member response to station was discussed as it relates to new construction.

Radios / Communications (Brian Burkhardt)

Battery Status: let B. Burkhardt or M. Russo know if you need radio/pager batteries.

Radio Survey/Inventory B. Burkhardt is working on this and will be giving recommendations for the budget.

Pager Survey: any charging stations? M. Russo will program 3 pagers soon. Let M.Russo know of any dead spots; top of Hillcrest is a dead spot.

Safety (Dave Dante):

Traffic safety policy review progress: making progress and working with Megan on the format.

Chief Items:

Chief's 6 month review:

The 2020 budget has been approved however, Capital items will require a bond ordinance vote scheduled for mid-June. The town has elected to support requests for modest increases in apparatus maintenance, software and computer asset upkeep and PPE wear and tear items. Our request to hire a full-time employee to perform equipment maintenance, track all our inspections and preventative efforts with PPE and pro-actively maintain the apparatus was not funded. There appears to be no willingness to support any fire service staffing as it relates to mandatory documentation, upkeep and repair of safety gear and apparatus.

- All department apparatus will get a light box refresh this year and saws will be purchased where needed.
- PPE updates will be made to ensure all interior and some equipment operators are upgraded to NFPA compliant gear.
- Command incentive for incident commanders will be funded for calls in this year
- Modest radio updates will be made to ensure tankers and mutual aid vehicles are able to communicate and commanding officers have 'trunking' capable radios.

The ISO inspection conducted in the spring of 2019 has resulted in a change to the townships rating. Warren now has a split rating for homes and businesses farther than 1,000 feet from a hydrant. The new rating is 4/ 4Y (previous was a flat 4). The 4Y rating was previously known as an 8B rating and will likely result in increased fire protection insurance costs for those homeowners and businesses.

The town has changed considerably the process of rating. In my opinion, the new process is much more accurate.

The following are some of the findings which we should focus on as opportunities to improve.

- The town was rated as having an average staffing response of 17 firefighters for major incidents. ISO requires 36 volunteers or 12 full time firefighters to get the full credit for this category. (possible 15 points in this category, we earned 2.69)

ISO inspection continued:

- Firefighter monthly training was rated as inadequate. The ISO is looking for 16 hours per month of in-house training (NFPA 1001) and an additional 18 hours of training facility use per year for full credit. Some companies performed better than others, but the average of the four companies was below what was needed. The creation and maintenance of preplans is also part of this evaluation; we have none. (possible 9, we earned 1.93)
- When reviewing coverage of the township, the ISO looks at risks within 1.5 road miles of a staffed engine and within 2.5 miles of a staffed truck company as 'covered'. We had a number of apparatus that regularly do not respond or respond without a crew. (possible 10, we earned 5.12)
- Dispatching -gaps in VOIP, no GIS mapping, gaps in continuing education and quality controls, and shortfalls on how alarms are handled as it relates to NFPA 1221 all contributed. (possible 10, we earned 6.76)
- Water supply, we gave up 4 points because we do not have an annual hydrant flow testing program.
- We gave up between 1-3 points for a category entitled "fire investigator certification and training". I believe this is due to the fact that we do not perform regular, practical training for our existing fire investigators and restrict who can become a fire investigator.

Mitigations

Staffing

Staffing is a major issue and we absolutely will need our Township Committee and Township Administrator to expand discussions with the Fire Department on how we are going to get our census to double, or we need to start paying people to staff our units. We are operating ~50% staffing as per the ISO assessment. This issue cannot be solved internally since we are already giving our all.

The issue of training

Effective immediately, the fire companies that have ceased conducting company drills must resume them. The monthly department drill, company drill and apparatus/equipment night should add up to the required 16 hours of NFPA 1001 training required each month.

Effective as of January 2020, the Warren Fire Department has begun conducting professional development training immediately after each Chief's meeting. The goal is to accrue 12 hours of leadership training each year for chief officers through this expansion. The Somerset County Fire Academy is located at such a substantial distance away from Warren as to make it very difficult to attend regular training there. The department seeks to conduct one live fire training session at the burn town every year. The remaining 12 hours of facility training will best be met through the purchase and operation of a micro site within the township. I suggest we seek funding to create a vent roof prop, a SCBA confidence course and a forced entry/cut station in the 2021 budget.

Preplanning

In the 2021 budget, there will be a request to subsidize the creation of preplans and the maintenance of same. I will also seek to split the work and have the Fire Prevention division prepare 50% of the preplans in any given year. We will start with the highest risk occupancies and all new commercial construction.

Chief's 6 month review continued:

Coverage

This issue is complex and requires coordination with the Township Committee and all involved companies. We must staff all deployed apparatus and these units must respond. Future apparatus purchases should seek to acquire multi-role units as our volunteer census declines.

I will also explore first due mutual aid to cover areas where we do not have a 1.5 road mile staffed engine or a 2.5 road mile staffed truck.

Dispatching

I will address all mentioned gaps and work towards better integration between CAD and responding fire units. All options will be reviewed. The WTVFD will develop a comprehensive needs assessment and drive toward 100% compliance.

Water Supply

We need paid staff or the water company to conduct annual flow testing of all township hydrants annually.

With regards to the new split rating (4Y / 8B), the WTVFD needs to acquire a first due capability to establish and maintain a continuous 1000 GPM flow to all points in the township. This will likely require (3) first due tanker pumpers, which will be sourced via shared services or realignment of township apparatus.

Fire Investigation training

I will ask the Fire Marshal to develop a program to attract additional members of the department that will attend 'fire cause and origin' training. The Fire Marshal will also seek to implement internal investigation training to maintain skills and we will look to send all our investigators to maintenance and recertification programs as they are made available in the state.

A few positives from the ISO review.

The WTVFD was able to demonstrate the ability to produce adequate firefighting flows from a number of locations in Warren that were then included in the conventional 4 rating and excluded from the 4Y zone. Many thanks to the folks that conducted the turbo draft proofs needed to secure this milestone

Our driver training program and documentation was rated excellent and retained all points. Thanks to Chris Young and Mike LoSapio, and possibly others that worked on that program

We received full credit for our ICS / NIMS 400 qualified leadership cadre, and our published SOG's.

We managed to obtain nearly 75% of the points for ladder service, even though we had not properly conducted an NDT test on Tower 61 and were overdue by two years. Thanks to the quick work by Tom Byrne in lining up a test and remediation, working with DPW. We earned a non-specific number of points as the result of a review of our written PPE standards, our apparatus equipment alignment and our radio communications plan.

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General Discussion: A. Kachidurian calls sheets are updated & closed out. Incident Commanders who don't complete the report within 30 days will have command incentive withheld.

An excellent job on closing the fire call reports so far in 2020 but still have 38 calls outstanding. A. Kachidurian is available for assistance with reports if needed. Chief announced incentive paying Incident Commander; complete run sheet, submit to state and will earn incentive per call. Reports need to be accurate, fraud needs to stop and can cost you financially.

Dispatching Tracking of Fire Incidents & Vehicle: Per M. Russo, we didn't make progress on this issue yet but need to have more choices of fire calls such as "water problem". Times have vague documentation.

PD Officer Klapp retired and appreciates the WTVFD over the last 25 years.

FD should be doing both certified & in house training.

Fire investigation is handled by law enforcement/Eric Task & Fire Marshal.
16 hrs per person per month for training to meet NFPA regulations.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm



Linda Palumbo



Chief Mitchell