

FAAB MEETING – DELAWARE FIRE SCHOOL – NEW CASTLE – FEBRUARY 16, 2023

ATTENDEES:

Mike Shaw, Representative, District #1	Captain Kelli Starr-Leach, NCC/EMS
Eric Haley, Representative, District #2	Kenneth Phibbs, President NCCFCA N/A
Brian Reeder, Representative, District #3	Ken Dunn, County Executive's Office
Robert Weber, Representative-Elect, District #4 N/A	Councilman William Bell N/A
Dennis Godek, Vice-chairman, Representative, District #5	Karen Barlow, Councilman Bell's Office N/A
Fran Williams, Representative, District #6	Stephanie Mohr, County Executive's Office
Dave Majewski, Sr., Representative, District #7	Chief Mark Harris, Claymont Fire Company
Chief Jeffrey P. Miller, NCC/ESC	Chief Kevin Cowperthwait, Christiana Fire Company
AsstChief William F. Streets, NCC/ESC N/A	President Dan Seador, AHH&L Fire Company
AsstChief Donald W. Holden, NCC/ESC N/A	Deputy Chief Mike Edwards, Elsmere Fire Company
Chief Mark Logemann, NCC/EMS N/A	

1900 HOURS: Vice-chairman Godek called the FAAB meeting to order; there were no corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes from the January 19, 2023 meeting; **MOTION WAS MADE BY REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS AND SECONDED BY REPRESENTATIVE MAJEWSKI; MINUTES WERE APPROVED.**

EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMUNICATIONS: Chief Jeffrey Miller:

Personnel/Staffing: Chief Miller reported that Fireboard is fully staffed (four PSO promotions, one newly hired employee) creating four new vacancies in PSO area (filled two PSO vacancies by two newly hired employees). **Telecommunicator Class Information Session – March 29 and April 5 – Route #9 Library:** The information session will be held at the Route #9 Library; you must attend the information session because there is a three-weekend commitment for the voluntary telecommunicator classes resulting in having the knowledge and 40-hour certification of a basic telecommunicator; qualified for employment at any 911 Center. We will be conducting three telecommunicator classes a year (funded by County Council). Hiring from these classes results in an 80% retention rate of five years or more. We believe we will fill our present vacancies from the upcoming classes by May (flyer for the next information session will be mailed out to the chiefs/presidents). Discussions continued on the mentor program; etc. **IRP Committee:** Chief Miller spoke with Mike Edwards on a couple different items; regarding the MDT moves; will work through IRP and have them recommend a program, May 1, to expand the use of the MDT to the end-user to reduce the airtime on the radio. **800 MHz Upgrade Reminder – December 2024:** New Castle County is prepared to go; the fire companies are in good shape; discussions continued on the upgrade of the template; changes that may or can be made; adding additional agencies (complication); etc.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES: Captain Kelli Starr-Leach:

Staffing Shortages: Captain Starr-Leach addressed this issue; filling the shortages with overtime, trades, mandated shifts; shuttered a medic unit; etc. Consulted with the State/OEMS; a hybrid deployment was approved/policy; when necessary, not shuttering units but having a single paramedic at each station; we would *look into the possibility* of notification for partially staffed units. The staffing issue is so fluid that it would be an after-action notification which would not be helpful; hopefully, a temporary situation remedied by upcoming academies. **Paramedic Academy:** The fourth academy has started their field training; all 18 medics are still in it; passed final exams; all, but one, has passed the National Registry (impressive class); in field training now; will be certified paramedics within the next three to six months; for now, this temporary hybrid deployment will still be in-place. The fifth academy will start on March 6; 22 offers extended and 20 accepted. Discussions continued on single-unit situation; how many units shuttered; which units chosen; staffing being impacted by sick leave and vacations; idea of bringing back retired medics to fill shortages; etc. Vice-chairman Godek asked how can we help; Captain Starr-Leach answered *if the fire companies can bring the medic units to the hospital*; possibly having Fireboard put out a page regarding a single-medic unit; change of classifications of calls (26 Charlie card); etc.

NCCFCA:

Vice-chairman Godek asked if there were any policies from the Chiefs' Association for the board, reply from Chief Cowperthwait was no. He mentioned that he supported and was in agreement with items discussed/passed.

NCCVFA: Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS: Vice-chairman Godek:

Active Shooter Symposium: Vice-chairman Godek reminded everyone of the Active Shooter seminar on March 28 at Delaware State University; invitations will be sent out by this weekend (DEMA will be sending them out electronically); attendees will be limited; discussions centered on the incident at Amtrak yard in Bear, DE. **FAAB Reviewing Budget:** Vice-chairman Godek mentioned that we haven't received a response from our letter (last month); he has been in touch with Mr. Dunn and will be receiving an appointment date with the County Executive soon. Discussions centered on logistics of reviewing the budget before it goes to Council; presenting the Fire Service budget; process that is followed working through the budget procedure; meeting with the Finance Director/Executive staff to discuss the Fire Service budget; being a unified voice; etc.

Fireboard Sub-committee: Vice-chairman Godek reviewed the progress of the sub-committee working with AsstChief Holden and QAC Snyder; Chief Miller and Vice-chairman Godek explained/displayed/commented/discussed the spreadsheets created regarding December 2022 and January 2023 fire calls, structure fires, and EMS. *We identified concerns with call-processing times, especially from coding to dispatch; the committee will be continuing its work with Communications.* Discussions centered on capabilities of the CAD (inability to capture from time of answer to dispatch time); reports will be generated each month; comments on standards and accreditations; NENA and APCO standards (determining what is an emergency); explaining the FirstWatch® records management system; how to remedy the situation; etc. Reports will be e-mailed to board members. Discussions continued on obtaining a more precise amount of actual ProQA time; reference to HB332; etc. **Law Department Response to Additional Funding for District #3 sub-stations:** Vice-chairman Godek reported that the response was, *until the Fire Commission approves those buildings as sub-stations, the County will not recognize them as additional stations.* Representative Reeder reported that he has e-mailed the County and a meeting date will be chosen. Discussions (Mr. Dunn) centered on reaching back in Land Use files regarding Impact Fees/Permit Fees/Volunteer Fire Assistance Fee (Clayton/Smyrna issue); how many permits are issued in that area; should Kent County be compensated for library service and/or the paramedic service; etc.

NEW BUSINESS: Vice-chairman Godek: nothing to report.

IMPACT FEE REQUESTS: Impact Fee Chairman Haley; Co-chairman Majewski: no requests. Vice-chairman Godek requested Chairman Haley and/or Co-chairman Majewski call Chief Bailey regarding the current rate of impact fees.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT: Ken Dunn and Stephanie Mohr, County Executive's Office: Mr. Dunn reported that we have rapid Covid test kits available.

DISTRICT REPORTS:

District #1: Representative Shaw; nothing to report.

District #2: Impact Fee Chairman/Representative Haley; nothing to report.

District #3: Representative Reeder; nothing to report.

District #4: Representative-Elect Weber; N/A

District #5: Vice-chairman Godek reported that he will talk to the chiefs about IRP; nothing to report.

District #6: Representative Williams; nothing to report.

District #7: Impact Fee Co-chairman/Representative Majewski reported that he was approached by Chief MacKenzie (Delaware City) regarding an issue with an ambulance being in and out of service; recommended that he go to the on-duty supervisor in Fireboard to resolve the issue; haven't heard anything further; Vice-chairman Godek reminded that all issues need to be reported and report in writing to give Fireboard an opportunity to resolve the issue.

REPORTS FROM GUESTS:

President Dan Seador of AHH&L: Mr. Seador delivered a report on the history of the Funding/Revenue Committee (August 2021); discussions mentioned this committee is a part of the DVFA; engaging/funding a lobbyist to speak directly about this issue (not done yet); elected officials not knowing where fire service monies come from; drafted/proposed legislation, *enabling legislation for the counties to allow the counties to attach fees/taxes so that the counties can raise money to support the fire service*. Kent and Sussex counties are not on-board with this (don't want to raise taxes); this is at the State level; etc. Also, the DVFA has been trying to redo the grant aid distribution from the State; we have not met with New Castle County yet (presentations have been made to Council and the Executive's office) with no results. Mr. Seador mentioned that these requests should go through the FAAB (liaison to County Executive's office). Discussions at State level have been supported for EMS; efforts that being made by Rich Perillo. *Had a two-hour meeting with Director Bond and Mike Smith (Finance) regarding billed money/invoices from EMS; money that's been basically written off; what's the net accounts receivable from that; what are we actually paid (spreadsheet 2019/2020): using ARPA monies (a million dollars is available for the fire service but you must show a business loss of revenues)*. Just between Aetna and Christiana fire companies, there is a loss of \$1.5 million; everyone is losing money on EMS. Discussions continued on what is being done in Bordentown Township, NJ . . . voting on privatizing EMS) and Lancaster County, PA, eight/nine boroughs that are merging to charge the boroughs fees to consolidate their EMS; (mentioned to Director Bond) *there are fire companies on the brink of collapse; money from the County, is not keeping up; Newark may have at least three years before bankruptcy; if one or two companies goes out of the EMS business, the domino effect will be huge*. Asking if the County could support only the EMS side of the operation (try to close the gap between accounts receivable and what we are actually getting); discussions

continued on more ARPA money; Medicare/Medicaid/no insurance calls on east side are 80%-90%; answer may be meeting with the associations and speaking in one voice united to ward off the collapse of services.

Meeting was adjourned.

**NEXT FAAB MEETING MARCH 16, 2023
AT DELAWARE STATE FIRE SCHOOL - NEW CASTLE
FAAB MEETING WILL START AT 1900 HOURS**

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