

Northampton County Fire/EMS Commission
February 26th 2008
Eastville Fire Bingo Hall

Following Dinner the Meeting Called to Order: 19:20 hours

Minutes of the January meeting will be received for acceptance at the March meeting

Roll Call – Representative from all Stations present!

Also Present: Ms. Hollye Carpenter, NCEMS Director,
Mr. Jimmy Rowley; Eastern Shore 911 Center

Absent: Representative from Northampton Co. BOS

Treasurer's Report:

Account balance stands at: \$794.35, Commission received a check from Town of Cape Charles for \$381.37

Fire – Related Issues

1. The Commission welcomed Ryan Kellam; Assistant Chief of Station 13.

EMS Issues

1. There is still no word of contract renewal between Eastern Shore Transport and SMH.
2. Hollye said currently there isn't a significant issue for county EMS stations concerning transport. The prevailing issue came about by an error by hospital personnel who did not understand the procedure.
3. The EMS representatives concurred with Hollye by common consent.
4. Cathy said county stations are only involved when the patient does not have insurance.
5. This issue is complicated since all three southern stations are fire only, with no EMS responding from their station, requiring clarification for Station 19.
6. Hollye mentioned staffing concerns in Machipongo due to health of personnel causing extended leave caused by injury, or sickness. There may be days when she will not have two people on duty.
7. Cathy requested to know when Hollye knew she would only have one person on shift in order to assist.

Communication Issues

1. The Accomack County Fire/EMS Commission decided to table approving the new 911 manual. Jimmy expects this will come to a vote at their next meeting.
2. There is still a problem with the Townsend tower due to a lightning strike. Hollye was told by a source that the tower would be fixed by the end of the week. Cost approx \$7500.00
 - a. Given the possibility of future lightning strikes, Chief Eder asked Jimmy if there was a way to monitor the tower in case the same problem should reappear, secondly, if the county has a maintenance contract for the 911 system. The answers given were affirmative and negative respectively.
 - b. The center received a grant for a backup system for \$197,000. Jimmy encouraged the Commission to petition the BOS to update the towers located in the county.

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Communication Issues, continued

3. Second Due District Concerns

- a. Hollye asked to receive more regular reports from Jamie Collins. She also made the commission aware that Melfa Station has assigned Community Fire & Rescue (Exmore) as its second due for their area, Lower Accomack county.
 - b. EMS representatives present were outraged that Northampton EMS units would be pulled out of the county to serve Accomack constituents when other Accomack EMS stations were within closer proximity. Chief Eder was concerned that a unit from 13 could possibly respond leaving Northampton County short one unit with Station 13 unit responding as far north as the northern end of Melfa – Keller Pond Road. President Eder said he would contact Mike Rudder and Greg DeYoung, (chief 13) to address this issue.
4. 911 Center hopes to receive a grant to update the Rip& Run System. Station 15 reported the system has yet to go back online.

Training Center

1. Chief Wilson said paperwork has been filed to build a new Burn Building. Funds are not meant to repair or maintain the current facility. There was a possibility of A/N Fire Association purchasing a fire trailer than can be transported. The cost of the trailer was read at \$49,900.00.
2. Hazardous Technical Rescue, Fire Officer I, and Pump Officer class registrations are coming due.

Old Business

1. REHAB policy – No firefighter should go beyond 2 bottles, or 40 minutes total (in 20 minute increments) in a hot zone. Members were asked to prepare to vote on this at the March meeting.
2. Accountability - President Eder asked the Commission members to read the draft Chief Wilson passed out a handout for members to acquaint themselves in time for a vote at the March meeting.
3. Hollye requested outstanding financial reports not turned in from Cheriton (FY 2006 & 2007) and Community 2007. Chief Bailey (14) said he would alert his treasurer.

New Business

1. Flat Tax
 - a. Chief Wilson MADE the MOTION to petition the BOS to implement a county-wide Flat Fire Tax to support funding for future apparatus, training, and supplies associate with the county's volunteer fire service, Chief LeCato SECONDED the MOTION. During discussion Chief Eder shared he did not believe the BOS would not implement a tax for Fire without including funds simultaneously going to EMS. He also mentioned he would not be in favor of this proposal because he felt it would hurt recruitment, drastically change the way stations perform fundraising, and create unwanted accountability pressures that are not present in its current state. Station 19 President Leggett said he does not see the need for an EMS tax, that billing is carrying the financial need for Station 19
 - b. Five stations voted in favor of the motion, and Station 19 abstained. MOTION PASSED.

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- c. EMS Director Carpenter said some clarification was needed to emphasize that the Flat Tax would go to implement the volunteer fire service in this county. Chief Eder shared that it is imperative to select the most optimal rate to maintain the current. Carpenter said \$.01 creates \$200,000.00 in annual revenue. She suggested the commission determine a final figure than estimate a rate per \$100.00. President Leggett (19) encouraged the establishment of a Five Year capital plan in order to budget for apparatus needs.
- d. MOTION WAS MADE by Asst. Chief Zieger (17), and SECONDED by Chief Wilson (15) to request income from the Flat Fire Tax to bring \$80,000 in revenue per station, for a Commission wide total of \$400,000.00 per year. MOTION passed with one abstain (19.)
- e. Chief Eder (17) requested Asst. Chief Zieger (17) and Chief LeCato (16) to present this to the BOS. Chief Eder also encouraged all chiefs and line officers to stand in support at the meeting.
- f. Chief Wilson (15) asked Chief Eder (17) to provide commission members with expected costs for dispensable equipment FY 2008.

2. Tax Break for Fire/EMS Personnel

- a. Asst. Chief Zieger (17) MADE MOTION for a Northampton County Personal Property Tax Break for Fire/EMS Volunteers at increments of \$50.00 per five years of service, beginning after one year, capping at \$400.00. MOTION Passed unanimously.

1 Year – 5 - \$50.00

6-10 years - \$100.00

11- 15 years - \$200.00

16- 20 years - \$400.00

- b. Ms. Carpenter suggested it was best to arrive at the meeting with some cost projections for the BOS. Some chiefs felt this would not be difficult to provide.
- c. President Eder (17) appointed Chief Wilson (15) as chair of committee to define active verses inactive status for commission stations. This would help determine cost to the county for petitioned tax breaks. Also serving will be Rescue Captain Ulrich (19), Chief LeCato (16), and Secretary Gardner (14). They will meet at Station 16 this Sunday at 14:30 hrs.

Station News

1. Cape Charles purchased a walk-in rescue unit (Rescue 15) with a Cascade system, and Hurst Tool from Maryland. It will be ready for service in a few weeks.
2. Cheriton (14) will hold a Clam Chowder Dinner Fundraiser tomorrow from 4:30 – 7 PM.

Changes to By – Laws

1. President Eder appointed Rescue Pres. Leggett (19), Asst. Chief R. Kellam (13), N. Sparrow (19), and Recording Sec. Gardner (14) to review the By-Laws at a date yet to be determined.

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Motion to adjourn at 21:20 hours.
Next meeting March 25th 2008 - 17:00 hours
Eastville Volunteer Fire Bingo Hall
With Dinner Provided

Respectfully Submitted
The Revd. Ernest Leatherbury Gardner, III