

Northampton County Fire/EMS Commission  
March 25<sup>th</sup> 2008  
Eastville Fire Bingo Hall

**The Meeting was Called to Order:** 19:12 hours

Minutes of the February regular meeting were sent to members via email. A Motion the minutes to approve Made by Chief LeCato (16) , Seconded by Chief Wilson (15). Motion passed unanimously.

**Roll Call**

Representatives from all stations *including all station Chiefs* provided a quorum. .

**Also Present:** Ms. Hollye Carpenter, NCEMS Director;  
Ms. Maryann Fitchett EMS Captain;  
Mr. Jimmy Rowley; Eastern Shore 911 Center

**Treasurer's Report:**

Account balance stands at: \$625.01

**Fire – Related Issues**

No Fire Related Issues.

**EMS Issues**

1. EMS Director Carpenter provided statistical information concerning call volumes.
  - a. Call volume increased 10% over the last half of 2007.
  - b. Call volume increased 16% for January & February, with February up 21% itself.
  - c. Overall, for all 2007 calls, 8% took more than 20 minutes to respond.
  - d. For 2008, 10% of all calls took more than 20 minutes to respond.
  - e. Overall, for all 2007 calls, 18% were handled by another agency.
  - f. For 2008, 20% of all calls were handled by another company.
  - g. Stations 13 & 16 have not met the 90% rule for 4 consecutive quarters, with 13 reaching 22% and 16 reaching 15% for January & February 2008.
2. The Director entertained discussion to remedy these issues. Chief DeYoung (13) asked if there were reasons to explain why units responded so late.
3. The Director stated that the purpose of the Zone program has changed for the worse. She inquired commission members for alternative solutions.
4. Currently 79% of the calls that are transported, the Zone provided staff support. At the end of 2007 this was true for 75% of all calls.
5. Rescue Captain Wilcox (16) said the purpose of the Zone was to supplement the volunteers, not to replace the volunteers.
6. Chief DeYoung (13) said this was part of the risk by putting the Zone in place.
7. The Director said the final budget FY 2008 has not been finalized. At this time there is little, or nothing to cut as the budget stands.
8. The Director said she would share her statistics with President Eder (17) (and has done so.)
9. President Eder encouraged the Commission to submit a letter to the County Administrator, and the BOS to request no cuts to the Fire/EMS budget FY 2008-09. He continued by stating that all Fire/EMS stations are challenged by the lack of personnel; this is not a station issue, but a countywide issue.
10. The Director feared that the first cuts to be made would come from the Zone staff. She said there were personnel available to serve as part-time EMS, but she did not have the funds.
11. EMS Captain Fitchett reported she has a record of calls when only the Zone responded.
12. Chief Bailey (14) asked if hiring part-time personnel would remedy the issue, and then why billing patients does not resolve the issue.

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**EMS Issues; Continued**

13. The Director shared she has received comments concerning the lack of personnel. That these problems should be addressed beginning with station leadership.
14. Station 19 President Leggett shared he would be glad to implement any changes necessary, but given past experiences, he does not foresee ways that would enhance the current situation. He ended saying that stations could at least begin with better driver training.
15. All in attendance agreed by consent that there exists a serious problem. This challenge involves “paid” and “volunteer” personnel. President Eder directed that the Zone personnel, and volunteer personnel meet in order to arrive at a mutual agreement for optimal service. He admitted the final answer may include greater assistance from fire-only stations, i.e. lifting assistance.
16. President Eder requested that the EMS Liaison committee meet to resolve this issue as best as possible before the next meeting and to report their findings at that time.

**Communication Issues**

1. Townsend Tower Issues in relation to an MVA in Capeville
  - a. Townsend tower repairs; Wind and weather issues have prevented a more speedy repair. March 31<sup>st</sup> of April 1<sup>st</sup> will be the next likely repair day, weather permitting.
  - b. A phone issue occurred last month and the phone went down one hour. The system reverted to the back up system. The backup power supply was replaced.
  - c. Chief Eder asked if 911 can determine if and when the Townsend tower would shutdown. Currently there is no way to determine this.
  - d. Jimmy Rowley (911 Center) encouraged President Eder to send a letter to the 911 Commission concerning complaints with the Townsend Tower.
  - e. Chief Eder asked if the microwave signal serves as the best backup system.

**Other Communication Issues**

2. The Communications Committee meets next Monday at 14:00 hours.
3. Applications for the 911 Director will be presented this Thursday night at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be opened to the public at Hollye’s office in Machipongo.
4. Chief DeYoung (13) shared that the quality of calls, and consistency of professionalism at the 911 Center has decreased since the director’s office was vacated.
5. EMS Captain Fitchett asked if a code existed that meant a personnel is “down.” Chief Eder said, it would be either <signal 1, or signal 2.>

**6. The Rip &Run System.**

- a. Chief Eder (17) said he would provide at the April meeting records, which shows a discrepancy between the Rip & Run times, and the 911 Center.
- b. Other than this detail, all fire companies concurred that the current Rip & Run system is an improvement. The text messaging system remains only available to the line officers because of software limitations. Once the new software is in place, it may be required to store, and call, upwards of several hundred numbers a day.

**Training Center Issues**

1. Discussion opened concerning a \$11,500 grant from the Va. Dept of Fire Programs grant was received to pay for repairs the Burn Building.
2. The EMS Director shared a communication from the Accomack County Administrator Does the Commission endorse Accomack County’s interest in seeking a grant for a new building?
3. Chief DeYoung (13) was in favor of funds for a new building.

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**Training Center Issues; continued**

4. Members felt that repairing the current building would only postpone the inevitable. It would be better to use funds toward a new burn building.
5. Chief Wilson (17) MADE MOTION to endorse Accomack County's interest in proceeding with a grant for the new fire center. Chief LeCato (16) seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

1. Asst. Chief Zieger (17) reported his presentation to the BOS at their last meeting. The EMS Director forwarded questions from the County Administrator. Following up on the Commission's tax break request, all stations were requested to provide an itemized list of the names of their personnel along with their corresponding years of service.
2. Ms. Carpenter said EMS personnel would not perform accountability. EMS will maintain Rehab, accountability is the responsibility of fire personnel.
3. Chief Wilson (15) MADE a MOTION. To accept the Rehab and Accountability Policy presented at the previous meeting. Rescue Captain Amy (16) seconded the MOTION. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

**New Business**

**1. The By-Laws subcommittee**

Station 19 President Leggett presented the proposed changes. Changes reflected the following: The official list of officers; Definitions of: a quorum; meetings, and majority. These changes will be voted on at the April meeting. The Commission shares its thanks to this subcommittee for their hard work.

**2. Miscellaneous New Business**

- a. Chief Wilson (15) asked why a second HURST tool was called at the Capeville incident. This concern was remedied in discussion.
- b. Jimmy Rowley (911 Center) asked for a draft to send to the 911 Center concerning how to assist if EMS personnel arrive at a dangerous situation without law enforcement protection. President Eder said if a unit does not answer within 5 minutes, 911 should continue to attempt making contact every five minutes.
- c. The EMS Director suggested that all members read the report on the Accomack County EMS website. President Eder encouraged members that no Fire/EMS personnel respond to a dangerous situation without law enforcement person on the scene.

**Station News**

No station news

Motion to adjourn at 21:41 hours.  
Next meeting April 29<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 17:00 hours  
Eastville Volunteer Fire Bingo Hall – Dinner Provided

Respectfully Submitted  
The Revd. Ernest Leatherbury Gardner, III