

**LANCASTER COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**DECEMBER 2018 MEETING MINUTES**

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President Dave Gribble called the quarterly meeting of the Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. to order at 19:30 hours on December 12, 2018, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Guests / Presentations** – No guests at this meeting.

**Previous Meeting Minutes** – The September 2018 Minutes were distributed via email; no corrections or additions were needed. They were approved as written.

**Secretary Report** – Secretary Ober reported that he received a thank you card from Mrs. Susan Reese for the flowers that were sent to Chief Reese' funeral. He also reminded everyone that the 2019-2020 dues notices were mailed and should be paid now.

**Law / Legislative** - Ernie Rojahn reported that Jerry Ozog has been named as the new Executive Director of Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency Services Institute (PFESI). The SR6 Final Report has been published and can be found on the LCFA's website. The report offers 27 recommendations to improve fire and EMS efforts, with details on implementation. The Lavender Ribbon Report has been released also – this highlights the best practices for preventing firefighter cancer. Ernie also stated that the PA Fireman has printed copies of fire safety flyers that are available to all fire companies.

**Fire Marshal** – No report.

**LCWC / Communications** – (Notes from LCWC) Operations Manager Jeff Garner described the slow processing problems of the WebCAD application. The application's response time has been affected in two ways – heavy scanning of the security firewall from exterior Internet forces seeking to exploit weakness; and a corrupt file within the firewall itself. LCWC IT staff concluded the corrupt file impacted performance the most. In working with the firewall's manufacturer, IT staff was able to upgrade both the primary and back-up firewall servers and eliminate the corrupt file. Their work was not without problems. At one point, firewall maintenance severed connection with WebCAD causing field users to be without the service. Jeff said he's cautiously optimistic that the firewall work was successful.

Jeff also reported that at the request of LCWC, CentralSquare Technologies (LCWC's computer-aided dispatch vendor) is examining WebCAD in order to discuss future enhancements. The work involves the collection of statistical data that show how the application is used, including peak usage times, the most commonly used features, administrative functions, etc. Although preliminary, CentralSquare's approach is meant to examine administrative and operational functions in order to improve future performance, as agencies demand more from WebCAD.

Jeff then introduced Brett Fassnacht to the group. Brett was an assistant communications supervisor who recently joined the support services staff, as fire support specialist. Brett's primary duties include maintaining fire service data for the computer-aided dispatch system. You will also hear Brett dispatching from time to time. Brett takes over the duties once held by Troy Hatfield.

Director Mike Weaver briefed the group on Harris radios. The radios are being tested to ensure the recent software patch has fixed the problem Harris was experiencing. Within the last week, LCWC has

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received programming software and programming cables for Harris radios. Once LCWC is convinced the radios are stable, they will distribute two (2) radios to each discipline (EMS, Fire, and Police) in order to collect feedback. If all goes well, Harris will become an approved radio on the system.

Director Weaver also discussed Kenwood radios. He mentioned that Brad Shenk (LCWC radio Technician) brought both working Harris and Kenwood portable radios to the meeting in case anyone would like to see them. Mike briefed the group on his encounter with Kenwood representatives at Pennsylvania's annual 911 conference in September. Mike told the representatives that they had visited LCWC last year in an effort to sell radios, but there was no follow through on their part. Mike said if Kenwood wants to be on Lancaster County's radio system, they must provide LCWC with radios that work. Kenwood visited LCWC on October 30, 2018 and its representative provided radios, but without programming software and programming cables. Programming software and cables were provided later in November. Subsequently, Brad Shenk has been experimenting with the Kenwood equipment. Brad noticed the radios require a lot of system settings. This required the involvement of a Kenwood engineer, who spoke to Brad today (12/12). The plan with Kenwood is the same as Harris; they will distribute two (2) radios to each discipline (EMS, Fire, and Police) in order to collect feedback. If all goes well, Kenwood will become an approved radio on the system.

Mike addressed the statement made some time ago by a Kenwood salesman concerning a Kenwood radio at LGH. Mike confirmed there is a Kenwood radio used within LGH's Zetron radio console. The radio was installed in 2013, so LGH didn't have to spend \$100,000 (or so) to replace their console system. The radio was tested using requirements for the radio console, not for the needs of a public safety responder. LCWC is making sure that any authorized radios will meet the needs of the first responders, prior to any purchases being made. Their goal is to avoid any problems for the users and the system.

The Unication paging project was the next topic. LCWC continues to experiment with Unication's beta software test pagers. Mike said LCWC has not received the main test pagers. In a telephone conversation on Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, Unication said they are continuing to refine their beta software. Unication said they hope to have the latest software release available for testing on Friday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>. If that occurs, LCWC will receive pagers with the latest software. The pagers will be distributed to a test fire department, as well as EMS staff. There are a few pagers (using the "older" beta software) in the field now. The purpose of getting this equipment into the field is to find any bugs that may exist. Mike is aware some people have already purchased Unication pagers. He'll let them have their tones, but he doesn't want to do that until Unication's firmware is ready. Unication's goal is to have their software available for the distributors in February 2019.

Mike said the fire service is free to plan for the purchase of Unication pagers. Unication will recognize bulk purchases. Unication dealers will work with the fire service if they chose to leverage grants. Dealers will work with Unication on special pricing and extended warranties.

Mike said LCWC will move forward with the Unication solution and suggested no one purchase low band pagers anymore, if it can be avoided. Mike said LCWC plans to give EMS and the fire service at least two (2) years (2019 and 2020) to migrate to Unication pagers before shutting off the low band system. If more time is needed, Mike is willing to do that provided the low band system remains serviceable. He has mentioned numerous times in the past that LCWC has a finite amount of spare low band equipment available. Once that equipment is expended, due to technical failure, lightning strikes, etc., they'll be unable to acquire more equipment.

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Mike urged the group to consider replacing receiving equipment used to activate their station sirens, or accessories like lights and doors. One fire station is working with B. Moyer Communications to test a Unication pager to serve as a method to “trip” their fire station equipment. Digital pagers may also be used to perform these tasks. Currently, this is also done on Low Band and that too will be decommissioned in the same time period as the paging bases.

Dean Gantz asked if Mike would entertain programming Unication pagers already purchased by fire service members. Mike said once Unication resolves the firmware issue we will entertain requests. Dean asked if member-purchased Unication pagers will have to be reprogrammed once Unication resolves the firmware issue. Mike said those pagers may need to be returned to dealers in order to receive the firmware update.

Tim Hoerner asked Mike to clarify LCWC’s programming role for Unication pagers. LCWC will create base software settings in order to aid everyone, but people will be able to program their own pagers.

Chiefs from Adamstown Fire Company asked about the range of a pager into Berks County. Mike said the range on the Unication pagers is the range on the radio system. Mike said dead spots should mirror the dead spots you currently have with your radios.

Mike informed the group that once low band is turned-off, individual station alert tones will be greatly shortened as they will be digitized. The benefits will be realized on larger box alarms with multiple stations.

Currently, you may notice tones on the new radio system are a lot louder than the dispatcher’s voice. That is a console requirement due to low-band paging. Once low-band paging is turned-off, tone audio will be reduced.

**Lancaster County Emergency Management** – Phil Colvin reported that Tammy Snedeker has been hired to be LEMA’s Training and Exercise Coordinator. He will also be posting a job opening for a Public Affairs and Volunteer Liaison position soon.

**Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center** – Todd Kirkpatrick reported that the new forcible entry trailer is finished and will soon be available for use. He reported that 2018 was a very busy year at the Training Center. The 2019 schedule is now posted online. They will soon be adding another outside fire prop – a dumpster.

Ken Weber reported that he is doing his best to schedule all classes that are requested. He has had many requests for officer development classes and they are on the 2019 calendar. The ICS 300 and ICS 400 classes in early 2019 are full; he might try to schedule another class of each in the fall.

**Lancaster County Fireman’s Association** – Randy Gockley reported that the Pequea Lane training facility has been shut down for the year. A new air compressor fill station has been ordered for the facility. They have also disbanded the burn facilitators at Pequea Lane; most likely new facilitators will be coming through the facilitator training program offered at LCPSTC.

**SAFER Grant** – Secretary Ober reported that the LEMA / Training Center trailer has been wrapped with the logo to help recruit volunteers. The trailer has been towed in farm show parades in Solanco, New Holland and Manheim. If any fire department is interested in displaying the trailer at a community or fire company event, or to position it at a fire station, please contact Secretary Ober.

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Recruitment banners can also be made through the grant. Please contact Secretary Ober if you want one for your fire station.

The Fall Fest event in October went very well. Bill Hall and several volunteers from Blue Rock Fire Rescue participated at the event, handing out flyers and other goodies to those in the audience. We were also able to purchase an EZ Up with the Chiefs logo on it from the grant that was used at Fall Fest and can be used for other Chiefs Assn. events, such as the golf tournament.

Our grant runs through November 2019. Amendments to the original application have been approved and we are still waiting on some reimbursements from FEMA from recent bills.

**Standards Committee** – No report.

**Golf Committee** – Kurt Gehman reported that the golf tournament will be July 19, 2019 at Fox Chase Golf Course. We are still in need of a Commissioner's Club Sponsor (top sponsor).

**EAST Committee** – No report.

**Radio Advisory Committee** - Dean Gantz Jr. reported that the committee is continuing to work to get all fire chiefs in the county to sign a letter of support for voice paging to send to the County Commissioners. The committee is also discussing future agenda items that the Radio Advisory Committee can work to address. Their next meeting is Wednesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Unfinished Business** – The forcible entry trailer has been completed, and the Chiefs Assn. is responsible for 1/3 of the cost, approximately \$3,700. The LCFA and the Training Center Foundation were the other contributing partners.

**New Business** – Secretary Ober read the names of the members nominated for the 2019-2020 offices: Dave Gribble for President; Duane Hagelgans for 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President; Dean Gantz Jr. for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President; Rick Harrison for Treasurer; Duane Ober for Secretary, and Tony Groff and Craig Rhineer Jr. for Directors. Jared Artus made a motion to accept the nominated members as the new elected officers; seconded by Ken Bechtel and approved.

Currently, there is no Chiefs Training weekend scheduled for late winter 2019.

The 2019 meeting dates are March 13<sup>th</sup>, June 12<sup>th</sup>, September 11<sup>th</sup> and December 11<sup>th</sup>.

President Gribble asked the members for their opinion about starting the quarterly meetings at 7:00pm, instead of 7:30pm. Bill Hall made a motion to change the meeting time to 7:00pm; seconded by Jared Artus and approved.

**Treasurer's Report** – Secretary Ober provided the following report for Treasurer Harrison: \$19,882.26 in the checking account and \$63,606.89 in the Money Market account. One bill was for the EAST Committee to buy binders for its members; the balance of the bills are payments for the SAFER grant efforts. There are still some reimbursements to come from FEMA yet. Tim Hoerner made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as read; seconded by Nelson Dagen and approved.

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**Good of the Order** – No report.

**Roll Call** - Roll call showed (57) in attendance with (17) Fire Chiefs, (8) Deputy Chiefs, (12) Assistant Chiefs, (14) Past Chiefs and (6) Guests, representing 30 fire departments.

The next meeting will be on March 13, 2019, beginning at 7:00pm, at the Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 20:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane Ober  
Secretary  
Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Assn. Inc.  
December 28, 2018