

**Minutes of the March 10, 2010
Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Association, Inc.
Quarterly Meeting at
Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center**

President Ron Oettel called the meeting to order at 19:35 hours. Following the pledge of allegiance, President Oettel appointed Bill Hapke (6-2) as Sergeant-at-Arms.

Guests / Presentation – Kathleen Weglarz from the Red Cross was in attendance to remind the Chiefs of the services provided by the Red Cross. They provide shelter, clothing and food for displaced families or individuals. She encouraged the Chiefs to call for the Red Cross as soon as possible during an incident, because in order to assemble a crew, respond and arrive, it could take up to two hours from the time of notification.

Also present was Chief Rick Kane from Manheim Township Fire Rescue to review the Strategic Plan of their department. He spoke about the fire tax in Manheim Township and how the money generated from the tax will be used. He talked about the hiring of a Deputy Fire Chief once the status of the SAFER Grant application is known, as well as the hiring of part-time firefighters. He shared with us their plans for apparatus purchases in the near future and advised that their specs for these rigs will be available for any department that may wish to review them. Rick shared with us the results of their 2009 SAFER Grant that is being used for recruitment and retention. They received \$104,000 and are using it to create a recruitment video, as well as to create an information booth that they will staff at local trade shows and community events. The new Manheim Township Fire Rescue website is www.mtfr.net.

Previous Minutes – Nelson Dagen (3-11) made a motion to accept the December 2010 minutes as written, seconded by Tim Gregg (6-4); motion passed.

Secretary Report – Secretary Ober reminded all Chiefs to pay their dues for the 2010-2012 dues period.

Treasurers Report - Treasurer Miller was not present; there was no Treasurer's report.

Law and Legislative Report - Ernie Rojahn spoke about the PESLA website and encouraged everyone to sign up and follow along with current legislation.

Ernie advised that there is legislation that was just recently introduced in the State House of Representatives that would allow the PA Higher Education Assistance Agency to create a higher education scholarship program for active volunteer firefighters, ambulance service members and rescue squad members. The program is designed to reward their service and at the same time, help to recruit and retain members.

There is a USDA Federal Grant available that is part of the Stimulus Package, but it is different than the rural Forestry Grant that is available only to communities under 5,000 people. Go to www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa.

Ernie spoke about the revised policy which allows volunteer relief associations to purchase such previously unauthorized items as a backpack blower, eight-point or round fire police hats, Pro Board and IFSAC registration fees for firefighter certification, fire detection /

sprinkler systems for fire stations, non-slip flooring in fire stations, smoke detectors for public distribution, and criminal background checks and drug and alcohol testing for proposed or current members.

There is still progress being made on intra-state mutual aid agreements and standardization.

Fire Marshal – Fire Marshal Brian Herr reminded the Chiefs to submit the Assistant Fire Marshal paperwork to his office once it is signed by Randy Gockley.

Communications - Director Mike Weaver discussed the two options that the radio committee has been working on over the past few years – an 800/700 system or using T-Band, Channel 15's former UHF channel. Things were going well to acquire permission to use the T-Band until just recently when Channel 8, WGAL, applied for use of the same channel. If WGAL is successful in acquiring the T-Band channel, we will have to go to Option B which is to build on the 800/700 MHz system. We will be able to do interoperability and departments using pyramid systems will be able to continue using them. However, it will cost the county more money to finish the preparation to go to this system, as opposed to the T-Band and it will cost the users more money as well. Portable radios are estimated to be in the range of \$1,300 - \$2,400 and mobile radios will be \$1,700 - \$2,700.

After a lengthy discussion about the negative impact on our radio system being caused by the actions of WGAL (Hearst Argyle), a motion was made by Secretary Ober and seconded by Larry Martin (3-9) to support Chief Ron Oettel and Chief Keith Eshelman, the two representatives from the Chiefs Assn. on the radio committee, to work on our behalf to continue to pursue acquiring the rights to the T-Band channel. Suggestions were made to draft letters to Channel 8 from the public safety groups, as well as possibly advertising in print media about the actions of WGAL and the impact it will have on the county's radio system and costs. The motion was passed and the two Chiefs will keep us advised of the current situation.

The State House of Representatives approved a bill to collect 9-1-1 fees on pre-paid wireless phones at the point of sale. The bill is now headed to the Senate for consideration.

EMA – Randy Gockley thanked everyone for their assistance during the recent snow storms. He asked if anyone has any recommendations for the County for how the situation(s) were handled to contact him. There is financial assistance available from the Federal Government to assist with snow removal costs. Fire departments can also apply for assistance; however, most departments receive their snow removal from their local municipalities, who are eligible as well for the assistance.

Randy reminded everyone of the LEMA survey that Eric Bachman sent to all departments needs to be returned in the near future.

Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center - Jim Kimes reported that classes are filling quickly. He also shared that Structural Burn classes now require the state to issue a burn permit 45 days in advance, so it is very crucial that you register as soon as possible so that he knows the class has a sufficient number of students and will be held. The burn permits do not apply to company level training burns.

Jim advised that he is working with neighboring counties to develop a multi-county

company level burn session policy to address the important requirements, such as 7 instructors for every 20 students.

Lastly, Jim advised that the payment schedule through Bucks County may change in July.

LCFA – Bareville and Upper Leacock will be hosting the 2010 LCFA Convention on Friday, June 4th and Saturday, June 5th. Ernie also advised that new IFSTA manuals and prices are on the website now.

South Central Regional Terrorism Task Force – No report.

Apparatus Report – Steve Gribble reported that Engines 7-15-1, 2-3-1 and 1-11-1 have been inspected and approved.

Standards Committee – Dave Wiker reported that the committee met on April 24th and are currently reviewing the apparatus checklists, comparing them to NFPA Standards and updating the equipment lists. They are also revising the Chiefs Handbook and working on developing a Boat Standard.

Golf Tournament – The tournament will be Friday, July 16th at Fox Chase Golf Course. Registration begins at Noon, with a 1PM start. Registration forms and sponsor forms will be sent out shortly.

Rescue Task Force – No report.

Unfinished Business

Since last meeting, there has been several Hero to Zero programs scheduled – April 12 at Manheim, April 19th at New Holland, April 26th at Bird-in-Hand, June 21st at Mount Joy / Rheems, a date to be announced at Highville and a September date to be announced at Ephrata Pioneer.

There was no update from the committee on the Line of Duty Death supplies.

President Oettel spoke briefly about the ISO Training Class that was held on March 6th for the Chiefs Weekend and thanked the Association for sponsoring the food.

Work is still being done on the scholarship program offered by Compleat Restoration.

New Business

Vice-President Harrison asked the Chiefs Association to sponsor the Fire Dispatcher of the Year Award like we have done the past two years, to include a plaque and a cash award of \$100. Keith Eshelman (6-5) made a motion to do so, seconded by Bill Gross (2-11) and passed.

President Oettel spoke about the death of Past Chief Charlie Welcomer, who was also a Past President of the Chiefs Association. After some discussion, a motion was made by Tim Gregg (6-4) to purchase a brick at the Memorial Garden at the National Fire Academy in his memory, seconded by Mike Ditzler (6-2) and passed.

As a follow up to this discussion, President Oettel spoke about a policy he has drafted that would give the President or the Board of Directors the ability to authorize the spending of the Association's money between meetings for unforeseen issues that arise. His idea calls for the

President to be authorized to spend up to \$100 and for the Board of Directors to approve up to \$500 in expenses without having to wait for approval at the next meeting. Tim Gregg (6-4) made a motion to accept Ron's proposal; seconded by Rick Harrison (2-4) and passed.

Good of the order

No report.

Roll Call - 29 departments were represented with 48 people in attendance.

24 Fire Chiefs, 7 Deputy Chiefs, 7 Assistant Chiefs, 7 Past Chiefs and 3 Guests

Officers present – President Oettel, 1st VP Harrison, 2nd VP Martin, Secretary Ober, Director Weaver and Director Gregg.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. will be held at the Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center on Wednesday June 9, 2010 at 19:30 hours.

Larry Martin (3-9) made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Bill Gross (2-11); motion passed. Meeting ended at 21:50 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane Ober
Secretary
Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Association, Inc.