

## LANCASTER COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION, INC.

### MARCH 12, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

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President Mason Brandt called the quarterly meeting of the Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. to order at 19:10 hours on March 12, 2025. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, there was a moment of silence for past chief officers in the county who have passed away recently: Harold Bechtold from Rheems FC, Clayton Groff from Conestoga FC, Bill Mankin Sr. from Quarryville FC, Brandy Rhodes from Manheim FC, and Larry Usner from Liberty (New Holland) FC.

**Guests** – Scott Palermo from Triangle Communications was the first guest. Triangle partnered with LCFCA to sponsor the meal for tonight's meeting. Scott advised that they are an approved Kenwood radio dealer, the only Lancaster County radio shop located in Lancaster County. He also stated that they stock accessories for all radio brands, including batteries and lapel mics. Scott's email address is [s.palermo@trianglesc.com](mailto:s.palermo@trianglesc.com) and his cell number is (717) 873-3766.

The next guests were Bill Watt and Rich Bowermaster from Beards for Brothers. Bill spoke about the mission of Beards for Brothers, raising funds to support first responders or their family members who are battling cancer. The organization is a non-profit 501(c)3 and has held fundraisers including No Shave November, golf tournaments, and clay shoots. Bill and Rich emphasized that this program is not just for police officers nor are they expecting everyone to grow a beard – it's about helping fellow first responders. To learn more about Beards for Brothers, follow them on social media or visit their website at [www.beardsforbrothers.org](http://www.beardsforbrothers.org).

The final guest for the evening was Derek Thompson, from First Responder Task Force, Armed Forces Benefits Assn. First Responder Benefit Association (FRBA) is a nonprofit founded to fill the gap of financial hardship that can often burden families of fallen First Responders. The First Responder Task Force funds all of FRBA's administrative and operational expenses so that 100% of public donations go directly to aiding those families. Originally targeted to those serving in the military and their families, it was extended to first responders after 9/11. To learn more about the FRBA, visit [www.firstrespondertaskforce.com](http://www.firstrespondertaskforce.com). Derek can be reached at [dthompson@frtf.us](mailto:dthompson@frtf.us).

**Previous Meeting Minutes** – Bill Hall made a motion to accept the December 2024 Meeting Minutes as presented; seconded by Bryan Duquin and approved.

**President's Comments** – President Brandt reported that the Executive Board met recently and established the following goals for the Association: utilize administrative controls, including a review of the Bylaws, and establishing a budget; position the Chiefs Assn. as the voice of the Lancaster County fire service; continue to engage with local, county, and state elected officials; provide value to those attending our quarterly meetings; advise of grant opportunities available to the fire companies; and provide opportunities at our meetings for after-action reviews of notable incidents in the county. He also asked that due to many new chief officers in the county, to improve identification and networking opportunities, that any chief officer taking the floor to speak, should state his name, fire company, and position. Duane Hagelgans and Phil Colvin have been appointed as the Chiefs Assn. representatives on the Training Center Foundation board. They have been asked to provide an update about the Foundation at a future Chiefs Assn. meeting. Lastly, Dave Wiker has been appointed as the Chiefs Assn. representative to the EMS Training Advisory Board.

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**Secretary Report** – Secretary Ober reported that the following fire companies have not paid their membership dues yet – Strasburg, Brickerville, Manheim, Mastersonville, Christiana, New Danville, Lancaster Township, East Hempfield, Bainbridge, and West Hempfield.

**Treasurer's Report** – Treasurer Rick Harrison provided his report – since the last meeting, \$1,590 in income from dues and a check for \$575 to Training Center for food at September 2024 meeting. Balance in the checking account is \$17,566.89 and \$93,836.45 in the Money Market account, for a total of \$111,403.34.

**Law / Legislative** – Darryl Keiser spoke about the two recent emails that everyone should have received. The first one, about the closing of the National Fire Academy and all related training opportunities. He encouraged all fire chiefs to contact Dave McCormick and Lloyd Smucker to get their support to re-open the NFA.

The second email was about the competitive grant program. As part of Governor Shapiro's 2025-26 budget proposal, a new competitive \$30 million dollar grant for fire departments has been added for consideration by the legislature. This would be a separate funding pool in addition to the \$30 million annual grant we have today. It is only in its first draft and feedback is being requested.

Lastly, Chief Keiser stated that Compleat Restorations will again offer (2) \$1,000 scholarships. The applications are due April 15<sup>th</sup> and are open to any high school senior who is a first responder or a child of a first responder. The application has been emailed to the Chiefs Assn. members.

**PSP Fire Marshal** – PSP FM Corporal Ryan Gehman was present and reminded all chiefs to make sure their fire company or members are not posting photos from incidents onto social media accounts that could be jeopardizing active fire investigations or invading the privacy of the victims.

### LANCASTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY -

**Emergency Communications Center (ECC)** – Brett Fassnacht introduced changes to the Lancaster County Department of Public Safety, including a review of the updated organizational chart, and highlighting that the communications center will now be known as the “ECC” – Emergency Communications Center. The other three divisions are the Training Center, Technology, and Emergency Management. Training for ECC staff will now fall under the Training Center. Brett reviewed the goals for the DPS and will send the information to the chiefs. For now, box alarm changes and agency access are still taking place, but no major changes to the CAD features will be considered.

Sara Sloat gave an update on the new CAD demonstrations that are taking place right now. Hexagon and 365 Labs have shown their products. There is one more to review – Tyler. The number one priority is deciding on a new CAD product and working towards implementing it.

Brad Shenk stated that moving to the Phase 2 radio system is still being planned for early 2027. All radios will need to be upgraded by then. A reminder of the approved programming vendors for radios – BMoyer – Tait, BK, and Harris, Radio Maintenance – Kenwood, and Capital Area Communication – Motorola.

Comments were made from chiefs in the audience about the need for competitive pricing and more options of vendors for purchasing and servicing the radios. A question was also asked about the number of times the radios need to be programmed for Phase 2 upgrades and how many “touches” would be required. Brad stated that he would be researching these questions and providing answers soon.

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**Emergency Management (EMA)** – Ben Herskowitz advised there are minimal changes to the EMA department and that Crane Clean Energy Center, the new name for the former TMI, which will be opening again. He said that training and exercises for this facility will begin again.

**Training Center** – Ken Weber shared that the State Fire Academy (SFA) and Bucks CCC have revised their vehicle rescue training curriculum. The SFA program is available now and will require Haz Mat Operations and a TIMS four-hour class to be completed prior to the start of the class. The total course will be three levels again – Awareness, Operations, and Technician, for a total of 60 hours. Students will be able to test for Pro Board certification at the completion of the class. Bucks is also updating the curriculum, which will be one full program for 40 hours, and will also be for Pro Board. Haz Mat Awareness Pro Board is a prerequisite for the Bucks class.

Ken also reminded everyone that to have the cost of a hazardous materials refresher class covered, the class must be registered through the Training Center before the class starts.

Todd Kirkpatrick shared the Lancaster County salary board and the Commissioners approved the hiring of two full-time instructors, following Ken's request to them. Todd also shared that the LCFA was asked for their financial support, and they agreed to provide funding towards the positions for the next three years at 75%, 50%, and 25%. Lancaster County has a hiring freeze in place right now, but advertising for these two positions should be soon. Three job descriptions have been created for these positions, including suppression-level, non-suppression level, and entry level instructors. The goal of hiring the two positions is to hold three fire academy courses per year, with a minimum class size of 20 students, and a maximum of 30 students (with an additional assistant instructor). It is also the goal to offer more classes in addition to the fire academy classes.

Ken also spoke about the new “blended” instruction Essentials pilot program that the SFA has approved for Lancaster. The lectures will be online, requiring interactive attendance, and homework. The students must then attend in person for the skills portions of the classes.

**Lancaster County Fireman's Association** – Randy Gockley added that the LCFA Board of Directors voted unanimously to financially contribute towards offsetting the start-up costs of the full-time instructors positions.

The \$1.3 million renovation to the LCFA headquarters is now finished. The LCFA will be hosting a Grand Opening on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and is inviting all fire companies to attend. They also have a new fire safety trailer on order.

Lastly, Randy reminded everyone that the LCFA Fire Expo will be held on May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> at the Harrisburg Farm Show. Help is needed at the event. Admission is \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door.

**EAST Committee** – Craig Rhineer stated that the three new American flags have been purchased and are in service now. The committee, along with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, is sponsoring an educational class on Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at the Training Center, titled “Taking Care of Our Own”. Emails have been sent with information about the class and registration.

**Golf Tournament** – Rick Harrison reported that the committee has decided to move the tournament to Crossgates Golf Club, in Millersville, to save more money and maximize our profit. The tournament will still hold 144 golfers and the date this year is one week earlier than normal – Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup>. Player costs will remain the same and we're hoping to have the same sponsors for this year's event.

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**Leadership Development (Training) Committee** – Jason Topper asked for more volunteers to help with this committee. The goal is to have a Fall event, possibly with hands-on training and seminars. Contact Chief Topper if you would like to join the committee – [jtopper17@gmail.com](mailto:jtopper17@gmail.com).

**Radio Advisory Committee** – Dean Gantz Jr. stated that two new members joined the committee – Dan Bezek and Dave Keens. The committee had a meeting with the ECC staff in February, in which a decision was made to return to a roll call of dispatched units on the hailing channel and that dispatchers will advise first responding unit and chief officer of the additional information for the call. They continued a discussion of adding the Duty Officer role and automatic 20-minute timers on specific incidents. These requests have been passed onto the CAD technician to check the feasibility of it. If anyone has ideas or feedback for the committee, please reach out to Dean ([dean\\_gantzjr@mountvillefire.com](mailto:dean_gantzjr@mountvillefire.com)) or a committee member. The next RAC meeting is March 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Standards Committee** – Josh Pfeiffer stated that Engine 301 was recently inspected. Tanker 59 and Engine 33-1 will be inspected soon. He also reminded everyone that all units going into service need to be inspected; please schedule the inspection before placing the unit in service. Currently there are seven members on the committee. Their goals are to review / update the standards in place and to update the procedures for revising standards. Regarding the rural arrival instructions for apparatus, Josh stated they are trying to keep the procedures similar and simple. They plan to present these instructions soon, with just some minor adjustments to the standards in place. The committee is also working on a standard for reporting staffing upon response. A question was asked about who inspects Traffic Units and the answer is those inspections are handled by the Lancaster County Fire Police Association.

**Sustainment Committee** – Secretary Ober advised that the submission date for the Lancaster County Real Estate Tax Credit for volunteers is March 30<sup>th</sup>. The representative from Lancaster County advised that so far 160 applications have been submitted from 20 fire companies. President Brandt stated that a recruitment and retention goal of the Chiefs Assn. is to keep the dialogue with the county commissioners continuing. Scott Ryno reminded everyone of the option to pursue school district tax credits for volunteers. Also, the State Firefighter's Association has a one-page application for a Recruitment and Retention grant – a \$5,000 award. More information can be found at <https://www.becomeapafirefighter.com/grant-request/>.

**Unfinished Business** – None

**New Business** – Tim Hoerner made a motion for the Chiefs Assn. to recognize two Career and Technology Center students in the Protective Services Program with \$500 awards at their annual awards event – one for Outstanding Student and one for Award of Merit. Don Boyer seconded the motion, and it was approved.

Mike Smith made a motion for the Chiefs Assn. to purchase (50) \$25 gift cards for National Telecommunicators Week, to be presented to employees at the ECC. The motion was seconded by Bill Hall and approved.

**Open Discussion** – Bill Hall stated that he would like to see every fire company represented at each Chiefs Assn. meeting. He encouraged chiefs in attendance to reach out to their neighboring fire chiefs to invite them to our meetings.

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**Good of the Order** – President Brandt read from a communication that he received honoring Assistant Chief Chris Lerrick from New Danville Fire Company, and his wife Emily, for their life-saving actions in January while heading home from the PA Farm Show. They came upon a vehicle accident involving fire and entrapment on Route 283 shortly after it happened. The two of them were able to use a fire extinguisher to control the fire and extricate the mother and children from the burning vehicle. Chief Lerrick received a standing ovation for his efforts from those in attendance. The chief explained that one child has been hospitalized since the accident but will be discharged from the hospital soon. President Brandt encouraged the New Danville Fire Company to nominate Chief Lerrick and his wife for a life-saving award at this year's LCFA Convention.

**Roll Call** – Roll call showed 72 in attendance with (27) Fire Chiefs, (12) Deputy Chiefs, (14) Assistant Chiefs, (16) Past Chiefs and (3) Guests, representing 41 fire companies.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at 7pm, at the Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center.

With no other business, Rick Harrison made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Phil Colvin. The meeting was adjourned at 20:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane Ober, Secretary  
Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Assn. Inc.  
March 28, 2025