



BERRIEN COUNTY
FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION
BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN



Call to Order: 0830-1050

Date: June 21, 2023

Old minutes: Old minutes emailed out. Motion to accept old minutes by Chief Jesswein, and seconded by Chief Knisley. Motion passed. None opposed.

Treasurer's Report: Starting Balance: \$6247.00. No changes. Ending balance \$6247.00. Have check to deposit from BCFA. Motion to accept treasurers report by Chief Harper and seconded by Chief Knisley. Motion passed. None opposed.

Communications/Bills: None

New Chief/Visitor:

Committee Report:

Red Cross: None

Great Lakes Drone: Matt Quinn discussed the Three Oaks call. Great Lakes was never dispatched to call. Matt stated GLR heard the request and got ready to respond. When never dispatched Matt stated he contacted dispatch and was advised GLR was disregarded. Matt stated water rescue issues with third party vender will no longer be an issue. GLR has purchased a boat and it is now in service. 171 calls so far; Averaging 2 drone calls per day; Now have 5 trucks spread through out the region. 18 thermal drones.

DNR: None

EMS:

Medic-1: All going good.

S.M.C.A.S.: None

Med Flight: None

Med Control: New ER is now open. Construction is continuing.

Funeral: Returning to Berrien Springs.

Dispatch/911: Jennifer stated now have 1 out of training. 2 still in training. 5 openings still. South County Tower is still moving forward. The ground study was pushed back as the person who needs to do the study was sick the day is was to be completed. Chief Chiarello wanted to thank Dispatcher Chris Burks for the hydrant notification on Lincoln Twp. structure fire.

BCFA: Car show Next weekend. The car show is a fundraiser for the county firefighters and Sheriff department. Next meeting July 05, 2023, Buchanan Township.

Training: Wildland fire training at SJ Twp. Station 1. Grain Bin and manure pit training from MSU extension center. See fliers. MSU extension center is trying to get a grain bin class here locally.

HazMat: Assisted Chikaming at the Sawyer TA for unknown issue.

Emergency Management:

LEPC: Next meeting September 19, 2023

Sheriff: Sheriff's department here to assist. Thank You from the Sherriff for FD member from Berrien Springs on hazmat team. Will have 14 through police academy by end of the year. Eau Claire and Lake Michigan College have requested resource officers for next school year. Had 1 issue at Silver Beach so far this year.

MITRT5: None

MABAS: None



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Other Comments: Discussion on bees. Resource directory has one vender to deal with bees. Gerry to follow up to see if still in business. Chief Myers stated he is now part of a club that can assist with bees as well. Contact Chief Myers if need assistance with bees.

Discussion on communications committee meeting. (see attached)

Old Business: Request to have Cache radios programed has been submitted to MPSCS and waiting on programing.

Chiefs Input list. Discussed at beginning of meeting. (see attached)

New Business: None

Next Meeting: July 19, 2023.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn and seconded. None opposed. Meeting adjourn: 0950hrs.

Communications Committee

Discussion Topics:

- 800 was supposed to make things easier for everyone, and all it has done is made it more complicated for us but easier for dispatch. (Not my words)
- The need to make using 800 simpler for FD's
- The need for dispatch to start assigning a fire ground. (Is FG needed for every call)?
After very long discussion the best recommendation for all agencies and to keep consistency and ease of use, is as follows: Agency clears the call, goes enroute, and on scene, on 11F911. Agency asks for an 11FG as needed. Scene moves to 11FG. THIS TO IMPLEMENT IMMEDIATELY.
- The need to dispatch all agencies involved in the call in one dispatch vs. multiple dispatches.
Can be done but staffing/training issue. Multiple dispatchers working on the call and not always feasible in all situations. Ultimate goal when enough dispatchers is everyone dispatched at same time. Dispatchers are trying to dispatch the call in most efficient manner and as soon as possible.
- Dispatching Fire/EMS before notifying local PD that they are sending Fire/EMS on a call. (Why can't PD monitor 11BCPAGE for notifications)?
PD has 11BCPAGE in their radios. Scan is not perfect. Depending on situation in dispatch it may be quicker to tell PD while other dispatcher is selecting all the paging talkgroups.
To get faster dispatches everybody gets agency having jurisdiction as initial dispatch. If you want faster dispatches that's the answer.
- Will Medic-1 and S.M.C.A.S move to 11E911 for medical calls that will involve MFR agencies?

Currently Medic-1 and S.M.C.A.S. are staying on their own talkgroups. MFR agencies on 11E911 to ease the traffic on 11F911 and keep consistency among agencies and dispatch. Medic willing to try to monitor 11E911. The goal is to have ALL EMS agencies on 11E911 for interoperability.

- AEP Physical or remote response.

AEP can now remotely disable the meter. Do agencies still need a physical response from AEP?

All felt both a remote and physical response to the scene for AEP.

Homeowners can opt out of remote meters.

- Dispatch auto requesting utilities on structure fires.

All felt continue with dispatch auto contacting utilities on structure fires.

- Faster dispatches to agencies.

Do we need some of the wording that dispatch is using in dispatches? Can the dispatcher shorten up the dispatch? All agree shorten up the initial dispatch and dispatcher gives more information after agency answers up.

- Boxcards: Clarification, apparatus or agency on box alarms?

Discussion on boxcards. Initial alarm is dispatched by agency. Box alarm is dispatched by apparatus. MABAS suggests use of apparatus in box alarms.

Not unit numbers but type of apparatus. Discussion on boxchiefs.

Boxchiefs are not necessarily a chief, may be agency officer. Boxchiefs are additional resource and need to respond separately from any other apparatus.

Trying to keep consistency.

REMEMBER THESE ITEMS CAN AND SHOULD BE REVIEWED/UPDATED AS NEEDED AND AS THINGS CHANGE.

Chief's List Breakdown

Meetings

- Daytime only meetings are difficult/impossible for some Chief's to attend.
- Consider Zoom Meetings
- Consider Evening Meetings
- The biggest input I have is for someone that isn't a full-time Chief, it's very difficult for me to participate. The meetings used to alternate between day and night and I was able to participate. It's my opinion that the full-time guys didn't want to come in when they were off, and since they were in charge, made the change to only have the meetings in the morning.
- Consider a Quarterly In-Person meeting or monthly Zoom meetings – no sense in 2023 that all meetings are face to face. – There are plenty of platforms that could be used for hosting
- We will research being able to Zoom current meetings. Gerry to moderate
- We will be sending out a pole to see if there is interest on moving the meeting times to 4pm to allow for more attendance.

Outside Agencies

- Work to amend the hurt feelings of the EMS agencies when we kicked them out of the association. Bring them back into the association as voting members. Jason Wiley said it best at a previous meeting – “We need to tear down the walls that have been put up”.
- EMS feels shunned since the by-law change eliminated their voting rights.
- Due to this JUST being voted on for the bylaws, we will look at this at a further date, after we have had time to evaluate how it is working.
- Reevaluate the guest list of the Fire Chief's Association Meetings:
 - o Do we need organizations like DNR, Red Cross, Great Lakes Drone, multiple reports from the Sheriff's Department Ect.
- The following agencies will be removed from the regular agenda. However, if these agencies are present, and would like to speak at the meetings, they will have that opportunity under the “Other Communications” part of the agenda;
 - o DNR
 - o Red Cross
 - o Med Flight
 - o Funeral Kit
 - o MI-TRT 5
- In addition, we will be consolidating the Sheriff's Department reports under the label of Emergency management.
- Understand the validity of the Great Lakes Drone Company as emergency responders
 - o We will be asking Great Lakes Drone to do a short presentation on their operations in our county, including but not limited to their liability insurance.

Coordination of Efforts

- Consider forming a County-wide Fire District
- The first step in any county-wide fire district is to ensure the departments are WILLING to consolidate. There have been issues in the past with consolidation, so the recommendation of the Executive Board is that if departments are interested in consolidation as a county, they should try first to merge with neighboring departments. If this is unsuccessful, then we have not wasted the time of getting all 26 departments consolidated as one.
- Research grant opportunities for our member departments
 - o 800 Radios – ongoing maintenance and future replacement
 - o Bunker gear
 - o Hoses
 - o Mobile Data Terminals for fire trucks
 - o Tablets
 - o Tools
- County-wide recruitment and retention efforts
- Sharing of SOGs/SOPs via a shared folder
- Establish common standards throughout the county as it relates to fireground operations
- My second thought would be to create a group that could do the same thing with policies and procedures. It would be nice to have policies developed that we could share as “best practices”. Departments could obviously choose to use them or not use them, but at the very least, they would be available to use for examples.
- Develop common SOPs/SOGs – no need to reinvent the wheel – and there are plenty of examples available online
 - o Communications
 - o Interstate Highway Response
 - o RIT
 - o Others?
- Coordinate activities/group purchases for cost saving and/or information sharing measures
 - o Apparatus planning
 - o Hose/equipment purchases
 - o Health screenings
 - o Pump Checks
 - o Hose/Ladder Testing
- Establish a roundtable or workgroup that could meet and review the software applications that different departments are using. Specifically, I would like to discuss various technology solutions related to scheduling, apparatus inspections, daily truck checks, incident reporting, training, training records, and preplanning, among others.
 - o This could be nothing more than an educational opportunity, or it could develop into creating a technology committee to research software, develop recommendations, and/or identify ways to share information among area departments.
- Research ways to better coordinate training to reduce duplication of efforts.

All of this can be coordinated through Texcom if the Chief's Association chooses to go that route.

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- Expand on existing Fire Investigation Workgroup
- We are looking for someone who has more information on this.
- Focus on operations – we have almost never spoke OPERATIONALLY at these meetings.
 - o In the end – WHY do we exist? We do not exist to talk about car shows and the funeral kit.
- The Chief’s Association is not a governing body for operations. However, we will be accepting input for a mission statement for the Chief’s Association that we hope use in guiding the organizational direction.
- The Chief’s Meeting is currently being driven by some strong personalities and is being used to push initiatives for those departments and not the county firefighters as a whole.
- All Chief’s have a vote in the organization. If anyone feels they are not being represented, they are more than welcome to speak up at a meeting. In addition, members are always welcome to contact any one of the Executive Board members if they feel they are not being represented properly.

MABAS

- Work to make the MI-MABAS agreement our county wide mutual aid agreement
- MABAS should have no report at the meetings since most departments are NOT MABAS members due to the way Michigan MABAS has strayed from what MABAS really is.
- There is a lot of moving parts to MABAS. In addition, there is some history with MABAS that we would like to address and clean up prior to moving forward with any changes. This will be a longer term project that we will keep you updated on.

Various

- Evaluate Frank’s participation in the executive board.
- Frank has been in this position for 4 years and no one has challenged the position. In addition, he has carried a unanimous vote each time. If someone would like to fill his position, they are more than welcome to throw their hat in the ring at the next election of officers.
- Fire Departments providing traffic control at emergency scenes needs to be addressed. Fire recruits do not receive traffic control training. Police officers do receive this training.
- In reality, most fire departments get more traffic control training (through VFIS) than law enforcement does. We believe this is a local issue to be ironed out as individual departments with their local law enforcement agencies since everyone approaches this differently.
- Invite other organizations to give presentations that may be of the benefit of our organization and fire departments.
 - o I was recently asked “what is victim services and how do we access them”
 - o We are bringing in a Victim Services representative for a presentation. We also always invite suggestions for presentations that would benefit the organization.
- STOP focusing all the conversation on dispatch and radios
- As the radio grant winds down, we will be narrowing the conversation about them. However, one of the biggest issues in most NIOSH reports is problems with communications. This is a life safety issue that needs our utmost attention.

- STOP letting DISPATCH dictate to us how things will be done – The Fire Chief’s Association should make our need clear and direct dispatch accordingly.
 - The communications committee has reconvened to address any issues that may arise, and to address any problems that come up that don’t necessarily need to be discussed in a Chief’s Meeting.
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- The Chief’s Association Executive Board would like to thank you for your input on some very important details of what we are all about. Please know that we will continue to work on these issues as well as any others that may arise along the way. We would again like to thank Chief Ted Chase of the Galien Fire Department for assisting in consolidating this list to address these issues.

Grain Bin and Manure Pit Rescue Training Program

GRAIN BIN RESCUE

Date: Tues, July 25, 2023

Time: 6:00 to 10:00 P.M.

Location: Michigan Agricultural
Commodities, 7115 Maple Valley
Rd., Brown City, MI 48416

MANURE PIT RESCUE

Date: Wed, July 26, 2023

Time: 6:00 to 10:00 P.M.

Location: Clinton County
Fairgrounds, 800 W. Sickles Street,
St Johns, MI 48879

Date: Thur, July 27, 2023

Time: 6:00 to 10:00 P.M.

Location: Berlin Fair, 2008 Berlin
Fair Drive, Marne, MI 49435

REGISTRATION FEE

The training is free, but class size
is limited to 30 participants.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Charles Gould at
gouldm@msu.edu or 616-834-
2812.



WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Michigan State University Extension and Michigan Farm Bureau, along with ag commodity organizations who serve the Michigan agricultural industry, are sponsoring grain bin and manure pit rescue training programs for first responders. Personnel from the [National Education Center for Agricultural Safety](#) (NECAS) will provide the training.

DESCRIPTION

Grain bin rescue training: Participants will learn about grain bin design and structure, as well as the four most common ways that people become entrapped in grain bins. The hands-on portion of the training covers lockout/tagout procedures and extrication of a fully engulfed and partially engulfed victim. Full NFPA compliant gear, hearing protection, and safety glasses are required to participate in the hands-on portion of this training.

Manure pit rescue training: Participants will learn procedures for safely entering the confined space of a manure pit to perform rescue operations in low oxygen situations, including the importance of air quality monitoring before, during and after rescue, proper use of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), harnessing, rope rigging for below grade rescue, and the use of a rescue tripod. Participants will have the opportunity to work through several evolutions in various roles with NECAS one-of-a-kind training prop. Full NFPA compliant gear with SCBA is required to participated in the hands-on portion of this training.

HOW TO REGISTER

There is no registration fee for this program, but because of the nature of hands-on training offered, classes will be limited to 30 participants. Registration is required. To register go to <https://events.anr.msu.edu/RescueProgram/>. Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by contacting Charles Gould at 616-834-2812 by July 1 to make arrangements. Requests received after this date will be fulfilled when possible.

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