

**Walworth County Survey Subcommittee  
of the Fire/EMS Study Committee  
April 7, 2017 Meeting Minutes  
Walworth County Government Center, Conference Room 214  
100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin**

---

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Moderator/County Administrator David Bretl.

Roll call was conducted with the following members present:

All voting members were present: Denise Pieroni-Delavan City Administrator; John Peters-Lake Geneva Fire Chief; Dave Nelson-LaGrange Assistant Fire Chief; Dale Wilson-Walworth County Human Resources Director and LaGrange Fire and EMS member.

Alternates and non-voting members present: Dr. Steve Andrews-Aurora Emergency Medical Director

**Others in Attendance**

County staff: County Administrator David Bretl

Members of the public: Jennifer Gragg, Lake Geneva Regional Newspaper

**On motion by Denise Pieroni, seconded by Dale Wilson, the agenda was approved by voice vote with no withdrawals.**

**Public Comment** – There was none

**New Business**

- Discussion and possible action concerning development of a survey document for Fire/EMS departments and local governments.

Chief John Peters followed a similar Fire/EMS study being conducted in Waukesha County. He spoke with Waukesha County officials to learn about that County's fire study and the steps they took. They conducted a survey which included a combination of questions for the fire service and city administration. Chief Peters expressed that when obtaining information everyone must be open honest. Human Resources Director Dale Wilson questioned if Waukesha County's survey addressed both fire and EMS questions. Peters stated that there was a 22 page survey that was handed out to the Waukesha participants. He thinks we should have one-on-one conversations with people to get the most accurate data. Mr. Bretl also agrees to his suggestion, adding that it builds teamwork and furthers community engagement. He continues to state that if we can develop the questions and proposals of how to do the survey then it can be brought to the whole committee. Denise Pieroni suggested that the questions be sent out in advanced so committee members can be prepared. She handed out a "Call Information" sheet that listed categories of information that she thinks should be obtained in correlation to maps from the past two years to visualize potential areas of improvement. The sheet also had different areas of focus for Fire and EMS listed separately. Assistant Chief Dave Nelson commented that the questions

should be split up in relevance to the people being interviewed, but it won't hurt if someone from another department sees the questions that we are asking other personnel. He too agreed that the surveys should be sent out in advanced because some of the questions will need to be researched ahead of time. Pieroni thinks that the survey should generate information to be able to say are there are models out there that will provide the best levels of service in the most cost effective manner. We need to look at the data and see if shows if there are different ways we can formulate and improve services? Bretl states that we can survey some communities and they might have concerns whereas other communities have no complaints. Nelson explains that the reason for the survey is to give us some directions to see where issues are and that we can get a direction and of where to focus. He thinks that once we come up with the questions, the one-on-one interviews will allow us to obtain the best data. He would like the questions in sections on the survey pertaining to each department. Pieroni was concerned that since its county-wide issue, why aren't we encouraging everyone to participate, even if they don't have an issue now, they might in the future. It might not always be sustainable, but they may have suggestions that provide value. Bretl thinks some communities may say they have problems but their Fire/EMS service doesn't believe there are problems. We don't have authority to make anyone do anything. He wonders if it's worth looking at and developing instruments for the fire side first. The subcommittee agreed to start with questions pertaining to Fire services.

Wilson questioned Waukesha's survey instrument. Peters explained that he gathered numerous of questions from other studies. The questions are in regards to service area, such as square miles, population, area make up; providing what the service area is to the group; how are they governed; staffing models and how its working for them. Pieroni thinks that by knowing that you have areas that aren't being effectively serviced it may help encourage cooperative arrangements that are based on service levels versus based on artificial boundaries. Peters states that some departments are doing well while others are really struggling. Other questions that Peters obtained are in regards to activity levels, call volume, and numbers. The last two years from the records management system from fire departments should help provide valid data for comparison. Fire incident and compliance questions are also looked at, specifically: ambulance calls in a year, costs, structure fires, inspections, public education programs, and outreach programs. Bretl stepped out to make copies for members of Peter's packet of questions. Pieroni asked if there were questions concerning average responding time. Peters confirmed that there were questions concerning response time, but he thinks it needs to be put in perspective based on area that is being served. It will obviously take longer to respond to a very rural area. What is the expectation of service for the customer? Also take into perspective based on where the customer lives. Nelson explained that there are calls that have to go through multiple transfers and could take longer to be responded to. He emphasized that response time based on type of emergency and location of emergency needs to be considered. Pieroni states that there are procedures that could still have an impact on the response and they need to be analyzed. Chief Peters explains that their PSAPS have benchmarks, audit times, and quality insurance programs that are looked at.

Nelson expressed some areas that he thinks should be questioned in the survey such as, what do the respondents want to see come from the study; how are you staffed; how do you see recruitment and the growth of it-are the numbers increasing or decreasing and its time periods;

what resources do you have available; what resources do you wish you had; and call volumes. The subcommittee decided that they will have two surveys, one for Fire/EMS personnel and one for governmental bodies. Committee begins collaborating survey questions. Nelson steps out for a phone call at 2:13 p.m. and re-entered at 2:20 p.m. Committee continues to develop questions. Nelson stepped out for a phone call at 2:39 p.m. and re-entered at 2:44 p.m. He stated that he was needed at an emergency and needs to leave at 2:46 p.m. Bretl states that we will put together a draft, but we need to incorporate government-side questions.

Peters needed to step outside for a phone call at 2:47 p.m. Peters states that he needs to leave because of an emergency.

Bretl wants to know who the committee would interview in terms of government; he thinks there should be some structure to the process. Depending on which elected official we talk to we may get a different answer; some may say they have too much equipment while others may say we don't have enough. Also some may have different opinions in response time. Perioni would like to get some feeling on communities' opinions and/or support on shared services for Fire and EMS. Wilson suggested asking, "what do you see as your top challenges to continue providing these services"- aimed more towards the government side rather than the Fire/EMS personnel. The committee went through current list of questions and eliminated which questions would not apply to governing body personnel.

Wilson recommended that committee members conduct the personal interviews, but emphasized that it's a significant task. Pieroni looked at how many units of government there are in the County and suggested that communities have the survey for a time to reach a consensus opinion. Bretl states that interviewing the Fire/EMS departments won't be as hard as the municipalities, but we should be looking to engage everyone on the committee to conduct interviews. Dr. Andrews suggests that committee members shouldn't interview their own officials/municipalities. Bretl suggests reaching out to the other people who showed interest in serving on the committee to help out with conducting the interviews. Wilson agrees with this suggestion.

It was agreed that the surveys would be mailed out 60 days prior to the one-on-one interviews so that departments and officials had time to gather the answers. Pieroni suggested mentioning that we can volunteer someone from the committee to facilitate the discussion. Members of the committee agreed with this suggestion. Bretl gave the option to send out a draft of the survey questions to the subcommittee, and if they want to make changes, then they can meet again prior to next whole Fire/EMS Committee meeting on April 20, 2017. Draft surveys will be sent out via email by April 12<sup>th</sup>, and the subcommittee will meet again on if changes need to be discussed; otherwise, the next subcommittee meeting will be canceled.

**Confirmation of next meeting date and time:** The next meeting is scheduled for Monday April 17, 2017 at 2 p.m.

**Adjournment**

**On motion by Dale Wilson, seconded by Denise Pieroni, Mr. Bretl adjourned the meeting at 3:06 p.m.**

---

---

Submitted by Emily Haas, Administrative Assistant. Meeting minutes are not considered final until approved by the committee at the next regularly scheduled meeting.