

Walworth County Fire/EMS Study Committee
October 19, 2017 Meeting Minutes
Walworth County Government Center, County Board Room 114
100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dale Wilson at 1:00 p.m.

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum of members was present: Chair Dale Wilson, Vice Chair John Peters, Dave Nelson, Denise Pieroni, Bruce Vander Veen and James Weiss. Lowell Hagen was excused. A quorum was declared.

Dr. Steven Andrews, County Administrator David Bretl and Emily Haas-County Administration Office, were also in attendance. Dr. James MacNeal was excused.

Members of the public in attendance: Village of Darien Administrator Rebecca LeMire; Delavan Fire Chief Tim O'Neill; Justin Schuenke, Darien Fire/EMS; Kevin Kennedy, Mercy Walworth Hospital; and Sean Marquis, Mercy Health EMS

John Peters made a motion, seconded by James Weiss, to move item 7. b. under Unfinished Business for consideration after the first public comment period, and to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried 6-0.

John Peters made a motion, seconded by Dave Nelson, to approve the September 21, 2017 meeting minutes. Motion carried by voice vote.

Public comment period – There was none.

Unfinished Business

- Discussion on additional publicity efforts to promote survey
Chair Dale Wilson thanked Nicole Hill for her research on survey questions and obtaining quotes for the postcard mailings to registered voters. If duplicate addresses were removed from the registered voter list, the cost could be reduced to \$11,400.

- Final Approval of Citizen Survey
Chair Wilson said the survey was approved at the last meeting; however, some committee members approached him with concerns about some questions after the meeting. Ms. Hill met with Polco and obtained answers to the questions the committee had at the last meeting: Polco does not have a feature where questions can be linked; the closing date of the survey can be extended, even after the survey has been closed; and survey results will be broken down by age, gender and supervisory district. Polco offered a one-month free trial for additional breakdowns by income level and municipality. Denise Pieroni said the question on countywide EMS services wasn't included on the survey, and suggested that it be combined with question 13 ("on a countywide basis") or listed separately. Bruce Vander Veen said he feels more in depth explanations are needed for citizens. Dave Nelson thought the questions posed to the community should be more generic, especially after reviewing responses received from professionals. Pieroni suggested testing the survey before it is published. Chair Wilson asked the Committee if they wished to approve the survey as is, refine it further, or send it to the subcommittee for recommendations. Vander Veen suggested using social media and newspapers to promote the surveys, which would be inexpensive and reach a good mix of younger and older adults. **Peters made a motion, seconded by Vander Veen, to authorize committee members to take sample surveys from the community to gauge whether the questions will be understood and produce the desired information.** James Weiss said responses have been received from municipalities and fire/EMS professionals. He recommended

analyzing those surveys first to draw conclusions from common issues identified. **Peters and Vander Veen withdrew their motion. Committee consensus was for members to solicit citizens who are not involved with fire/EMS to complete sample surveys for discussion/action at the next meeting.**

New Business

- Review results of Governing Bodies Survey

Chair Wilson noted the responses were similar to the fire/EMS surveys. Staffing issues and cost were the primary problems identified. He talked to the City Manager in Whitewater, and Mr. Peters contacted the City of Lake Geneva to encourage them to return the surveys. Peters has spoken to fire/EMS professionals who haven't responded. Peters and Emily Haas of the County Administrator's office met to compile data on the survey results. He felt some of the survey questions were challenging to answer. Ms. Haas reached out to the municipalities who hadn't responded and said some don't want to respond, some are asking for assistance to complete the surveys, and some didn't answer the questions as thoroughly as was hoped. She feels results would have been more productive if committee members had interviewed the participants and assisted with survey questions. Pieroni suggested that committee members offer assistance to those who haven't responded.

- Review results of Fire/EMS Personnel Survey

Chair Wilson noted the results echoed some of the sentiments expressed by municipalities: staffing shortages, retaining personnel and economic constraints. Peters said that the data points were difficult to extract from the responses, as some departments didn't completely answer all of the questions, and some surveys were completed by the same individuals who did the Governing Body surveys. Ms. Haas said that six departments haven't returned their surveys. County Administrator David Bretl stated that out of 30 municipalities, 24 responses is a good representation, and encouraged the committee to compile pertinent data and move forward.

- Report/discussion from City of Delavan on private partnership for EMS

The report was postponed to the next meeting.

- Discussion regarding next steps

Chair Wilson asked if the Committee was still interested in surveying private providers. Peters suggested processing information already received from the departments and municipalities and developing options to consider for resolving common issues first. He recommended preparing a summary of the survey results and sharing the information with respondents. Vander Veen said one of the needs identified by departments was improved dispatch, and suggested that the County investigate some type of countywide mutual aid system. Bretl said he could ask the Sheriff to come to a future meeting for discussion on the topic. Discussion ensued on surveying private EMS services, and prioritizing problem areas identified by survey respondents.

The next meeting agenda will include discussion/action on the citizen surveys, development of a potential questionnaire to send to private EMS providers, and the report from the City of Delavan on private partnership for EMS. Wilson, Peters and Pieroni will meet as a sub-committee to develop topics for committee focus as a result of the Governing Bodies and fire/EMS Surveys, and present the topics at the next meeting.

Public comment period – There was none.

Confirmation of next meeting date and time: November 16th at 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment

On motion by Weiss, seconded by Nelson, Chair Wilson adjourned the meeting at 2:01p.m.

Submitted by Becky Bechtel, Administrative Assistant. Meeting minutes were approved on November 16, 2017.