

Crawford County



*County Commissioners*  
**Chairman**  
Eric Henry  
**Vice-Chairman**  
Francis F. Weiderspahn, Jr  
**Secretary/Treasurer**  
John Christopher Soff

**Fire Commission Members**  
Allen Clark, Conneautville  
Eric Coston, East Mead  
John Fuller, Vernon Central  
Robert Horvat, Vernon Township

**Fire Commission**

c/o Crawford County DPS  
632 Pine Street  
Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335

**Fire Commission Members**  
Phil Koon, Saegertown  
Joe Lamey, Titusville  
Bob McCartney, Fallowfield  
Maryann Menanno, Meadville  
Jim Pratt, West Mead #2  
Ryan Sekerski, Cochranton  
Kris Simmons, Crawford DPS/911  
Joe Smock, Meadville  
Justin Sullivan, Townville  
John Treacy, Conneaut Lake  
Bob Wimer, Greenwood

**Crawford County Fire Commission**

**MEETING MINUTES**

July 20, 2022 at 7 p.m. Crawford County DPS and GoToMeeting

**Attendance:** Eric Coston, John Fuller, Robert Horvat, Phil Koon, Joe Lamey, Kris Simmons, Joe Smock, John Treacy, Bob Wimer, Pat Wiley, Chris Thoreson, Commissioner Eric Henry, and Don Bovard

**Excused:** Allen Clark, Bob McCartney, Maryann Menanno, Jim Pratt, Ryan Sekerski, Justin Sullivan, and Greg Beveridge

**Commissioner’s Welcome:** Commissioner Eric Henry welcomed the Fire Commission members and guests in attendance. Per his request, each person introduced himself and stated the agency he was representing.

**Roll Call of Commission Members:** Per Commissioner Eric Henry’s request, Don Bovard conducted a roll call of Commission members. Nine Commission members were present.

**Testifier:** Chris Thoreson, a 16-year member of the Meadville Fire Department, was present to testify.

- Chris stated he was originally from the Cincinnati, Ohio area.
- He moved to Warren County, Virginia, where he worked for the county-run combination fire department.
- At that time, four of the nine stations were staffed with two paid personnel from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- They now have 10 stations, six of them are staffed.
- There was a county fire chief.
- They ran fire calls with an engine or EMS calls with an ambulance or medic unit.
- The home station was dispatched for fires along with the closest staffed station if applicable.
- The county contributed 50% funding for equipment if it complied with the county’s specifications.
- State retirement benefits were provided for the career personnel.
- Career personnel supplemented volunteer personnel.
- Warren County is a poor, blue-collar county approximately 60 miles west of Washington D.C.
- Property tax credits are offered to volunteer personnel.

- The fire department has a retention program.
- The 9-1-1 dispatchers have more latitude to get responders on the road.
- Southwest Ohio and Virginia are totally different than here – nobody wants to volunteer in those areas.
- Chris doesn't understand why Crawford County departments have problems working with each other.
- He doesn't know why we do traffic control. Fire departments in other states don't do traffic control.
- He doesn't know why we don't have a county pre-plan to get responders on the road sooner.

**Phil Koon:** He's interested in the Virginia model.

**John Treacy:** He asked what other types of apparatus the department operated. Tankers, ladders, rescues

**Eric Coston:** He asked if Chris still had fire department contacts. Yes. He would like to see their SOPs/SOGs. He would like them to come here or we can go there. He wants to be able to recall Chris Thoreson in the future as a subject-matter expert.

**Eric Henry:** He asked if they pulled career staff from the volunteers. Yes. Was the combination department created out of necessity? Yes – lots of the volunteers worked out of town. He stressed that we don't want to get rid of any volunteers in Crawford County. We want to “plug the holes” with career personnel. He wants to add Chris Thoreson to the Operations committee.

**Joe Smock:** He asked about training. Weekly training plus other training throughout the year, training certifications are required.

**Communications subcommittee:**

- Kris Simmons reported the committee did not meet in person, but did communicate via email.
- Some departments do not have MDTs due to monthly fees. They would like the county to pay the monthly fees.
- There's an EMS board in the 9-1-1 Center to track In Service/Out of Service status. A similar board should be instituted for fire departments to hold them accountable so as to not waste six minutes during dispatch.
- There should be minimum requirements for rescue company status.
- I Am Responding would be a great asset on a county-wide basis.
  - Eric Henry stated Greg Beveridge is getting a price for a county-wide I Am Responding.
  - Phil Koon stated training on MDTs is needed.
  - Bob Wimer stated the MDTs are great tools and Greenwood uses them immensely.
  - Joe Lamey stated Tyler has an online college.
- Departments need to get off the dispatch frequency quicker.
  - Dispatchers should assign frequencies more often.
  - A radio coverage map is needed.
  - Dispatchers need to ask departments to pick tactical frequencies sooner.

**Government subcommittee:**

- Rob Horvat reported the committee discussed municipal funding for fire departments.
- Municipalities need to be educated regarding their obligations.

**Operations subcommittee:**

- Eric Coston stated the county fire departments should accept the standards/guidelines already in place for rescue, dispatch, etc. (NFPA, state).
- There should be county-wide SOGs.
- There should be standards for training.

**Stakeholders subcommittee:**

- Eric Henry stated outside retired people are being recruited to provide assistance to the subcommittee.
- Active Aging received a grant. Some of the funds will be used to address lift assists.

**Cumberland County \$250 Firefighter Tax Credits:**

- Eric Henry stated Cumberland County adopted a firefighter tax credit.
- There are minimum criteria.
- The fire chief or designee provides a list to the county treasurer in November each year.
- Some municipalities also give tax credits.
- The Fire Commission should drive this idea in Crawford County.
- The county would need to find money for this in the annual budget.
- The program would not benefit renters.
  - Rob Horvat stated businesses should be involved. They should get a tax credit if they let their personnel leave for calls.

**Action Items for Next Meeting:**

Eric Henry asked the subcommittees to meet again before the next meeting on 09/21/22.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

## **Crawford County Fire Commission Members**

Joe Lamey, Fire Chief, City of Titusville Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:firechief@cityoftitusvillepa.gov">firechief@cityoftitusvillepa.gov</a>
Phil Koon, President Crawford County Firemen's Assoc.	<a href="mailto:philk1977@yahoo.com">philk1977@yahoo.com</a>
Joe Smock, Captain, Meadville Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:joe_smock@hotmail.com">joe_smock@hotmail.com</a>
Bob Wimer, Asst. Chief, Greenwood Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:wimer@windstream.net">wimer@windstream.net</a>
Justin Sullivan, Asst. Chief, Townville Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:bluetick_22@hotmail.com">bluetick_22@hotmail.com</a>
Bob McCartney, Fire Chief, Fallowfield Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:rmccartney4012@gmail.com">rmccartney4012@gmail.com</a>
Ryan Sekerski, Asst. Chief, Cochranon Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:rsekerski3@gmail.com">rsekerski3@gmail.com</a>
Eric Coston, Captain, East Mead Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:emvfc1@gmail.com">emvfc1@gmail.com</a>
Jim Pratt, Fire Chief, West Mead #2 Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:lathehermit@hotmail.com">lathehermit@hotmail.com</a>
Maryann Menanno, Manager, City of Meadville	<a href="mailto:mmenanno@cityofmeadville.org">mmenanno@cityofmeadville.org</a>
Robbie Horvat, Manager, Vernon Township	<a href="mailto:roberthorvat@zoominternet.net">roberthorvat@zoominternet.net</a>
John Fuller, Asst. Chief, Vernon Central Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:jfuller@crawfordctc.org">jfuller@crawfordctc.org</a>
John Treacy, Fire Chief, Conneaut Lake Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:johnt3737@yahoo.com">johnt3737@yahoo.com</a>
Allen Clark, Asst. Chief, Fellows' Club Fire Dept.	<a href="mailto:aclark@co.crawford.pa.us">aclark@co.crawford.pa.us</a>
Kris Simmons, Shift Leader, Crawford County DPS/911	<a href="mailto:ksimmons@co.crawford.pa.us">ksimmons@co.crawford.pa.us</a>
Eric Henry, Commissioner, Crawford County	<a href="mailto:ehenry@co.crawford.pa.us">ehenry@co.crawford.pa.us</a>
Greg Beveridge, Director, Crawford County DPS	<a href="mailto:gbeveridge@co.crawford.pa.us">gbeveridge@co.crawford.pa.us</a>
Allen Clark, EMA Coordinator, Crawford County DPS	<a href="mailto:aclark@co.crawford.pa.us">aclark@co.crawford.pa.us</a>
Don Bovard, Ops/Training Officer, Crawford County DPS	<a href="mailto:dbovard@co.crawford.pa.us">dbovard@co.crawford.pa.us</a>