

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

**Crawford County Fire Commission  
MINUTES**

March 15, 2023, 7:00pm

- I. Commissioner’s Welcome – Crawford County Commissioner Eric Henry welcomed those in attendance to the bi-monthly Fire Commission Meeting.
- II. Commission Members attending were: Clark, Coston, Horvat, Lamey, Koon, McCartney, Pratt, Sekerski, Smock Treacy, and Wimer with Crawford County DPS Director Greg Beveridge and Operations and Training Officer Don Bovard. Kurt Dennis from Greenwood Township attending and Jim Brown from Titusville Fire Department. Motion by John Treacy and second by Jim Pratt to recommend Jim Brown to represent Titusville Fire Dept. and Joe Lamey a Member At Large, motion passed. These names will be voted on by the Crawford County Commissioners at their next meeting.
- III. Subcommittee Reports
  - a. Communications: Chair John Treacy, Jim Pratt, Joe Smock, Kris Simmons, and Greg Beveridge. John Treacy reported that IAR is going better and the more the fire departments use it the better they becoming. Greg Beveridge reported that the number of questions on the use of IAR is diminishing. They have started to send messages through IAR which is an easier process for the dispatchers. The dispatchers are sending regional messages three times a date at 0800, 1200, and 1800 on which departments are on limited and out of service status. This provides greater situational awareness for all fire and EMS departments to know who has staffing and who does not.
  - b. Government: Chair Maryann Menanno, Rob Horvat, Eric Coston, Don Bovard, and Justin Sullivan. The French Creek Council of Government will hold a meeting Thursday, March 16 at 11:30 at the Vernon Township Building for anyone to attend to learn about the fire service situation. Fire Commission members will be speaking at this meeting. The French Creek COG has also encouraged the Crawford County Association of Township Supervisors to submit to the PA State Association of Supervisors a Resolution to work on improving fire and EMS in the Commonwealth.
  - c. Operations: Chair Ryan Sekerski, Bob McCartney, Eric Coston, and Phil Koon. The Subcommittee held a meeting at Townville Fire Dept. on February 20<sup>th</sup> with thirteen

eastern fire departments attending. They were able to answer a lot of questions. Cell tower coverage in north eastern Crawford County continues to be inadequate. A lot of departments mentioned they have limited staffing during the daytime and mostly for EMS calls. Their biggest need is help staffing for EMS calls. The subcommittee will host another meeting for the center part of the county. The western region will have a meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm at Conneaut Lake Fire Dept. It was suggested that a report be created showing the amount of funding each of the 51 municipalities give towards their fire protection.

- d. Stakeholders: Chair Allen Clark, Eric Henry, John Treacy, and Phil Koon. The three school superintendents met to discuss Middle School Recruitment options. The incentive of school tax forgiveness would be up to the school boards but they are in the same position as municipalities and need those funds for school operations. Other incentives such as free athletic passes were suggested and a request for any other ideas that the fire service could think of. For EMS and fire courses to be held and the PA Dept. of Education to fund there must be a shown demand for the occupation, a need in the community, and is a life sustaining job. School buildings can be used to host training. EMT training was held in high schools but were canceled due to low enrollment. There will be a meeting on April 11<sup>th</sup> at 8:15am at the VoTech to speak with the three Superintendents again.

- IV. Legislation Updates: Please review the below legislation and contact your state legislator and encourage them to support or make changes to legislation that will benefit fire and EMS.

SB501 Baker, Allowing counties to create EMS authorities  
SB502 Kearney, Allowing Counties to create fire service Auth  
HB182 D. Miller, State grant for turnout gear  
HB187 D. Miller, Connecting firefighters with phys/mental health  
SB144 Yaw, Restricting PFAS from firefighting foam  
HB68 Roae, \$5 County vehicle fee for EMS  
HB130 Bizzarro, Community paramedicine services act  
SB341 Brooks, Funding for EMS certification  
SB354 Dush, Fire department reimbursements

- V. Crawford and Venango Fire School – The Fire School Committee is looking at various training options for their 2023 fire school. They can move most of the classes back to Cambridge Springs High School, continue to let fire departments throughout the two counties host classes that weekend, or see if the Crawford County Fairgrounds would meet their needs. The burn building on the fire school grounds is unable to be burned in due to the condition of the materials of the building. Funding for fire school is listed in the County Code as an allowable expense. The fire school is a 501C3 organization. Members of the fire school committee will take a site visit of the fairgrounds March 22<sup>nd</sup> to see what the possibilities are. A new burn structure would cost between \$170,000 and \$900,000. County governments can also apply for Federal Assistance to Firefighters Grants.
- VI. Recruitment and Incentives Campaigns – Commissioner Henry asked the group is recruiting new members is still a viable option. ARPA funds could be used to help develop media programs and advertisements put up on billboards and in the movie theatre. Incentives were discussed and a county tax credit mentioned.

- VII. Action Items for Next Meeting – a few members will meet with a marketing subject matter expert to work on recruitment advertising. The Fire School Committee will meet at the fairgrounds next week. The Government Subcommittee will meet and discuss tax relief for fire and EMS.

Each of the Subcommittees should meet prior to the next meeting in May.

- VIII. Next Meeting, Wednesday, May 17, 2023, 7:00pm at Crawford County DPS

- IX. Adjournment – Motion by Joe Smock and second by Ryan Sekerski, the meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.