

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

May 18, 2022, 7:00pm Crawford County DPS and GoTo Meeting

Attending:

Allen Clark, Conneautville Fire Dept.
Eric Coston, East Mead Fire Dept.
Robert Horvat, Vernon Township
Phil Koon, Saegertown Fire Dept.
Joe Lamey, Titusville Fire Dept.
Bob McCartney, Fallowfield Fire Dept.
MaryAnn Menanno, City of Meadville
Jim Pratt, West Mead #2 Fire Dept.
Ryan Sekerski, Cochranton Fire Dept.
Kris Simmons, Crawford DPS/911

Joe Smock, Meadville Fire Dept.
Justin Sullivan, Townville Fire Dept.
John Treacy, Conneaut Lake Fire Dept.
Don Bovard, Crawford County DPS, West Mead
Eric Henry, Crawford County Commissioner

Excused:

Bob Wimer, Greenwood Fire Dept
John Fuller, Vernon Central Fire Dept.
Greg Beveridge, Crawford DPS Director

I. Commissioner’s Welcome

A lot of the people that are in this room have spent time in this room with me before, under a different name, the Fire Taskforce. The actual idea of a Fire Commission is to put some teeth behind some of the ideas that we have to generate them into some solutions.

For those of you that are new to the room, you may not always agree with everybody in the room, and that's OK. We sat in this room, and not everybody agrees with some of the ideas. But we kept trudging forward, and we're not going to go backwards.

I ask you, just like I did then, that you keep an open mind, and at the end of the day, our goal is to find solutions for the future. If that means coming up with solutions that don't cost money, that's great. If that means goals do cost money, we have to find some money to do that. We have a unique group of people here.

II. Introduction of Commission Members

- a. Phil Koon: Saegertown Fire Dept. Assistant Fire Chief involved in fire, EMS, and HazMat. He is the President of the Crawford County Fireman's Association. Recruitment and retention of members is a big concern. Jobs need to stay in Crawford County for people to stay in the county. Some businesses are being sold to companies that are not within the county so they lose that home town pride. We are all competing for the same funding from residents and businesses.
- b. Ryan Sekerski: Cochranon Fire Dept. Assistant Fire Chief and Cochranon Borough Council. There is a lack of personnel joining fire departments which has been happening for several years now.
- c. Joe Lamey: City of Titusville Fire Chief. Just here to help.
- d. John Treacy: Conneaut Lake Fire Dept. Fire Chief. The fire service needs to move to the future. Personnel are needed. Funding for equipment has increased along with the time to receive the equipment. Some of the public have misconceptions coming from larger cities to vacation at the lake that all fire depts. are paid in the county which is not true.
- e. Bob McCartney: Fallowfield Fire Dept. Fire Chief and on the Crawford and Venango Fire School Committee. Manpower is his greatest need. It is wrong that firefighters have to raise funds to pay for the apparatus and equipment needed to save lives.
- f. Jim Pratt: West Mead #2 Fire Dept., State Fire Instructor, and Assistant Chief of Crawford County SCUBA Team. There was two Essentials of Firefighting Courses held recently with almost 50 students in the two classes from three counties. The status of the EMS System is having it's affects on the fire service. There is a great need to get people to join the fire service. More businesses are not letting firefighters leave work to respond to calls compared to a few years ago.
- g. Kris Simmons: Crawford County Dept. of Public Safety 9-1-1 Shift Leader, West Mead #2 Fire Dept. Officer. Sometimes it's difficult dispatching some departments, knowing that they do not have daytime staffing for emergencies.
- h. MaryAnn Menanno: City of Meadville Manager. Recruitment is a difficulty even with the paid service. Funding is a difficulty and some grants and programs exclude paid fire depts. They are purchasing a new fire engine for 1 million dollars.
- i. Robert Horvat: Vernon Township Manager. He feels the solutions should involve and support keeping our fire depts. open and operating.
- j. Eric Coston: East Mead Fire Dept., President and Officer. Every day is a new day. We were warned about the situation we are in now years ago. We have to have a plan to go forward with applying for grants and funding.
- k. Don Bovard: Crawford County DPS Operations and Training Officer, West Mead #1 Fire Dept. President/Past Chief, and West Mead Township Supervisor Chairman. He is here to help and support the Fire Commission and the fire system in the county.

- l. Joe Smock: Meadville Fire Dept., Past Chief of Blooming Valley Fire Dept. The 9-1-1 Center needs to send the closest fire dept. to the emergency rather than what fire chiefs have preplanned. The problem is some departments do not call the next nearest department to assist due to poor relationships.
- m. Justin Sullivan: Townville Fire Dept., Assistant Chief, Townville Borough Council, and Crawford and Venango Fire School Committee. Joined via GoTo Meeting.
- n. Allen Clark: Fellows' Club Fire Dept. (Conneautville) Assistant Fire Chief, Conneautville Borough Mayor, and Crawford County Emergency Management Coordinator. The lack of daytime personnel is the biggest struggle at his department. Their active members are relatively new with only a couple years of experience.

III. Purpose, Scope, Responsibilities, and Administration

- a. Lift Assist calls have increased exponentially due to the lack of staffing at long term care centers and home healthcare agencies. Commissioner Henry reported that a Social Services Task Force has been established to address that situation. If any department has a resident that continually call 9-1-1 for helping getting up to please let Commissioner Henry know. These lift assists calls are now classified as Alpha Calls and there is Omega Calls requiring lower medical response.
- b. Testifiers have been invited to come and speak to the Fire Commission from their point of view of the fire delivery system in the county.

IV. Review of DCED Fire Study – Allen Clark walked the Fire Commission through the report completed by DCED which was e-mailed to the members earlier.

- a. County Commissioners facilitate meetings with municipalities to address public fire protection issues and encouraging them to meet their legal obligations, including funding, page 5
- b. County Commissioners facilitate county-wide Community Risk Reduction Plan to include; Education, Engineering, Enforcement, Emergency Response, and Economic Incentives or Impact, page 7
- c. County Commissioners encourage fire departs to participate in shared service agreements, page 8
- d. Fire Departments look into opportunities for merger or consolidation, page 9
- e. County should explore opportunities to expand public water systems, page 11
- f. County-wide Organization established; council of governments, alliance, authority, etc., page13

V. Commission Objectives – Ryan Sekerski facilitated a discussion of the key objectives facing the fire service in Crawford County.

- a. Recruitment and Retention efforts need to be county-wide with outside personnel to help develop a plan with funding to implement.
- b. Funding in Fireman's Relief Associations is declining due to people not purchasing fire insurance. Some mechanism of funding needs to be identified. The Crawford County Planning Department could assist fire depts. with grant applications.

- c. The lack of personnel especially during the weekday is the greatest need in the fire service. Some other county 9-1-1 centers use I Am Responding or similar software to determine if any personnel are responding to the fire station or if mutual aid depts. should be dispatched. It was suggested college live in programs have helped increase personnel in some fire depts. and Allegheny College does have an EMS Club.
- d. Vehicle rescue equipment, personnel, and training are varied throughout the county and there are no minimum standards to maintain.

VI. Committees Established

- a. Communications: Chair Kris Simmons, Jim Pratt, Joe Smock, John Treacy, Greg Beveridge, and Joe Lamey
- b. Government: Chair MaryAnn Menneno, Rob Horvat, Eric Coston, Don Bovard, and Justin Sullivan
- c. Operations: Chair Ryan Sekerski, Bob McCartney, Eric Cost, and Phil Koon
- d. Stakeholders: Chair Allen Clark, Eric Henry, John Treacy, and Phil Koon

VII. Action Items for Next Meeting

- a. Subcommittees need to meet in person or virtually before the next meeting in July. They need to come up with the top five objectives to address the fire service system in Crawford County.

VIII. Next Meeting, July 20, 7:00pm at Crawford County DPS

IX. Adjournment at 8:30pm

GoTo Meeting Webinar Log In Information:

Computer, IPAD, or Smart Phone: <https://meet.goto.com/963230741>

Phone Only: 571-317-3122 **Access Code:** 963-230-741

Crawford County Fire Commission Members

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Joe Smock, Captain, Meadville Fire Dept.	joe_smock@hotmail.com
Bob Wimer, Asst. Chief, Greenwood Fire Dept.	wimer@windstream.net
Justin Sullivan, Asst. Chief, Townville Fire Dept.	bluetick_22@hotmail.com
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