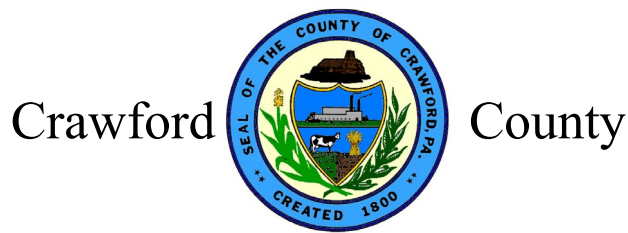


**County Commissioners**  
**Chairman**  
Eric S. Henry  
**Vice-Chairman**  
Scott T. Schell  
**Secretary/Treasurer**  
Christopher R. Seeley

**Fire Commission Members**  
Eric Coston, East Mead  
John Fuller, Vernon Central  
Robert Horvat, Vernon Township  
Chuck Lawrence, Saegertown Borough



## Fire Commission

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

**Fire Commission Members**  
Phil Koon, Saegertown  
Bob McCartney, Fallowfield  
Jim Pratt, West Mead #2  
Ryan Sekerski, Cochranon  
Joe Smock, Meadville  
John Treacy, Conneaut Lake  
Bob Wimer, Greenwood  
Jim Brown, Titusville  
Josh Manuel, Townville  
Brad Johnston, West Mead #1  
Peter Albaugh, Summit Twp

### Crawford County Fire Commission MINUTES

June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 7 p.m.

- I. Welcome and Attendance: Crawford County Commissioner Scott Schell welcomed everyone to the June 2024 Fire Commission Meeting. The members and guests in attendance were Pete Albaugh, Jim Brown, Eric Coston, John Fuller, Rob Horvat, Brad Johnston, Phil Koon, Chuck Lawrence, Josh Manuel, Jim Pratt, John Treacy, Bob Wimer, Commissioner Eric Henry, Commissioner Scott Schell, Chief 23 Donie Grinnell, DPS Director Greg Beveridge, and DPS Operations and Training Officer Don Bovard.
- II. Committees
  - a. Communications:
    - i. P25 Digital Radio Study and Presentations: DPS Director Greg Beveridge stated the consultants finished conducting the study. Presentations of the findings will be conducted as follows:
      1. June 26<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at Conneaut Lake VFD
      2. June 27<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. at Crawford County DPS
      3. June 27<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at Townville VFD
  - Commissioner Scott Schell stated the consultant did a great job with the study and he is looking forward to the presentations of the findings.
  - ii. I Am Responding (IAR): John Treacy asked DPS Director Greg Beveridge if he knew which departments were not using IAR. Director Beveridge stated he did not know, but he can investigate. John Treacy said it is a waste of county funds for departments not to use it. Brad Johnston suggested reaching out to departments not using it to determine their reasons. Jim Pratt stated he uses it all the time and he can see neighboring departments' responders too, which is beneficial in determining whether or not additional mutual aid is needed.
- b. Government:
  - i. Municipal tax forgiveness program developed: Commissioner Scott Schell stated the county will issue property tax refunds up to \$500 to firefighters

whose municipalities have a property tax forgiveness program. Rob Horvat reviewed Vernon Township's program. Commissioner Eric Henry stated the municipalities need to contribute to their fire departments. Chuck Lawrence asked if any of the school districts had been approached. Rob Horvat stated Crawford Central was approached and may implement a program similar to the county's program. Commissioner Schell stated the Fire Commission should develop standards for the program. Jim Pratt stated there should be one set of standards used across the county. Chuck Lawrence made a motion to use Vernon Township's program as the minimum standard for the county. John Fuller seconded the motion. Bob Wimer asked that Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs) be included. Chuck Lawrence amended his motion to include EMRs. John Fuller seconded the amended motion. The motion passed.

c. Operations:

Review rescue surveys submitted: Jim Pratt provided a brief review of the rescue surveys received so far. The Operations Committee will follow up with the departments which submitted surveys. A discussion was conducted regarding establishing minimum standards for rescue. John Fuller stated the Fire Commission does not have the authority to establish rescue standards. He added the PA Department of Health already established rescue standards. Commissioner Eric Henry stated the 9-1-1 Center has to follow PEMA standards, but DPS Director Greg Beveridge has some latitude regarding dispatch procedures in Crawford County. The goal is to ensure properly equipped and trained fire departments are dispatched for rescue when necessary. Eric Coston stated the Fire Commission should develop minimum standards for rescue that will be recommended to municipalities.

d. Stakeholders:

i. Allegheny College conducting a study with Active Aging on Lift Assists:

1. DPS Director Greg Beveridge stated a meeting was held with Krista Geer from Active Aging, Dr. Caryl Waggett from Allegheny College, and an Allegheny College student in regards to conducting a lift assist study. He said a meeting regarding lift assists should be conducted with administrators at Meadville Medical Center.
2. Commissioner Scott Schell stated the Commissioners are exploring alternatives, including funding for daytime assistance.
3. Commissioner Eric Henry discussed phone numbers to be used during lift assists for patients over 60-years-old and under 60-years-old, which will be provided to the county's fire departments and EMS agencies. The over-60 number is for Active Aging. The under-60 number is for Crawford County Human Services. Commissioner Henry stated the county's social service agencies need to be more involved.
4. Chief 23 Donie Grinnell requested fire departments without QRS not be dispatched on lift assists. He stated lift assists are medical calls, not fire calls. His personnel are not medically trained and are not qualified to

assess fall victims. Chief Grinnell argued it is wrong for his department to be placed into “limited” status for failing to respond to a lift assist call. He suggested lift assists be exempted from the procedure for placing fire departments without QRS into “limited” status.

- a. DPS Director Greg Beveridge stated lift assists are categorized as fire calls according to the protocols used by the 9-1-1 Center. Also, he stated the procedure for placing departments into “limited” status is uniform for all departments and exceptions for individual departments would be inappropriate.
- b. Commissioner Eric Henry stated Meadville Area Ambulance Service will handle lift assists in Department 23’s area when available.

III. County Organization Updates:

- a. Crawford and Venango Counties Fire School Committee: Pete Albaugh stated the brochures are almost ready to be sent out. There are 11 or 12 classes scheduled.
- b. Crawford County Firemen’s Association: Phil Koon stated applications for the \$1500 scholarship are being accepted until July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.
- c. Eric Coston mentioned PENNCREST School District just passed a budget with a 4-mil tax increase. He stated if people are willing to fund schools, they should be willing to fund paid fire and EMS personnel. Rob Horvat stated it is a balancing act between funding a volunteer fire department and eventually having to pay personnel. Commissioner Eric Henry said there are municipalities that will not fund fire departments and/or EMS agencies. He said the Commissioners are willing to fund paid personnel, but need a municipal partner to run the program. Brad Johnston suggested applying for a SAFER Grant to fund paid personnel.

IV. Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 at 7 p.m. at Crawford County DPS, but that is during the Crawford County Fair. It was suggested a different date be selected.

V. Adjournment: With no further business, the Fire Commission Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.