SARATOGA COUNTY FIRE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 22, 2021

7:00 PM – Zoom meeting

City/Town Representatives:

**Present**: Bill Crawford - *Ballston*, Aaron Dyer - *Charlton,* Patrick Champagne - *Clifton Park*,

Kevin Barkley Jr. - *Galway,* Robert Williams - *Greenfield,* Art Hunsinger - *Halfmoon*, *Pete* Shaw - *Malta,* Kevin Krogh - *Milton*, David Houston - *Providence,* Joseph Dolan - C/O *Saratoga Springs*,

Brian Myers - *Saratoga,* Tom Rinaldi - *Stillwater*, Don Baldwin – *Waterford,* Bill Morgan – *Wilton*

**Excused:** Alex Rockwell - *Edinburg*

**Absent:** Graham Champagne – *Corinth,* Billy Winslow – *Hadley,* Matt Dunn - *C/O Mechanicville*,

John Smith Jr. - *South Glens Falls*, Tom Wood - *Northumberland*

**Present**: Fire Coordinator Ed Tremblay, Commissioner Carl Zeilman - OES,

Director Steve Gordon - Sheriff’s Department, Mike McEvoy - OES, Kevin Barkley Sr. - OES

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm and attendance was taken.

Bill Crawford made a motion to accept the January minutes second by Art Hunsinger, unanimous.

Commissioner Zeilman

* I have not heard back from the state regarding the release of grant funds for the new burn building or the mobile communications vehicle.
* Frank in our office has been working with departments programming some of their radios. If you have any minor issues or questions, contact Ed or me.
* Three departments so far are on the Field OPS platform off the CAD system. Contact our office if you have any questions or are interested in getting on it.
* Bill M. – Is the LEPC going to have a Tabletop for the HazMat Team? Carl – We did check into grant funds to pay for this. I will check with Marilyn Rivers from the LEPC and get back to you.

Fire Coordinator Tremblay

* We have two full classes for the Blended Learning and two out of counties on stand-by.
  + Online class starts tonight.
  + Round Lake starts tomorrow night.
* National Certification
  + HazMat Ops – Wednesday and Thursday – 9 signed up
  + FF1 – starts in 2 weeks -12 signed up
  + FF2 – starts 2 weeks after that – 12 signed up
* State Training
  + I sent out an email questionnaire today to departments looking for Daytime Blended Learning needs.
  + FF2 – received authorization to go ahead – I’m working on dates.

Director Gordon

* The statistics you asked for were sent out. That gives you an idea of every call type included in the CAD system. Hopefully it helps explain why we sometimes categorize calls the way we do as well as why the box alarm assignments that you work with with Mike Stanley, why they fall in the criteria that they do. We don’t necessarily break those stats down any further as has been asked. For example, we don’t separate chimney fires from structure fires; we have no need to report that type of data. That gives us benchmarks for total fire calls that we handled in the County.
* There have been issues, primarily on the EMS side, but it also involved the Fire Service, where they went to the wrong address because the wrong address came out on IaR, that was incorrect, but it was correct when it was paged and subsequently corrected in Field Ops. In working with Mike McEvoy, we decided to go back to the way it used to be when field units called en route to the address that they are responding to. We implemented that a couple of weeks ago and it seems to be working well on the EMS side. We have not historically had an issue on the fire side, but if Communications asks you to repeat where you are en route to, especially medical calls, that would be why. This will help catch errors on our side or the fire side.

Mike McEvoy

* I sent out a link on the IaR regarding the website set up for those interested in signing up for the vaccine as potential recipients (www.saratogacountyny.gov/vax/). The County will use this 1) if we become aware of some place having the vaccine and if someone is eligible to go, we can notify them or 2) starting this week, we will be using that list as a lottery for the limited number of vaccine received for certain groups. Each week the Department of Health tells us whom we can/cannot vaccinate. We don’t have a way of randomly pulling names, so this list will help us at the County level.
* We did not receive any vaccine last week due to the power outages down in Texas.
* We borrowed vaccine to run the PODS last week and need to pay those back this week.
* We will be running PODS this week, with one tomorrow in Clifton Park for Police, Fire and EMS that could not be vaccinated a few weeks ago.
* We have another POD Saturday, which is where ambulances went out and administered home vaccination. Supervisors from the various towns had picked elderly people from their community and sent them to the county; this will be their second dose on Saturday.
* We are also vaccinating schoolteachers through an agreement with BOCES, where BOCES nurses and nursing instructors are vaccinating the schoolteachers and all school employees in the county. Each week we send them an allocation for that.
* We have agreement with AIM Services, which runs many group homes for OPWDD, where AIM Services will be administering the vaccinations at the group homes, both staff and residence.
* We have several other agreements with Stewarts, Saratoga Hospital and larger companies like Four Winds where they will be administering vaccine to their staff and health care workers in the county.
* We believe we have vaccinated everyone that wanted the vaccine in law enforcement, Fire and EMS. If you have people that need a vaccine, let me know, as we are maintaining a list of those folks that need the vaccination. We will take care of those people with some of the vaccine we receive each week to catch up on anyone that had not received the vaccine or has changed their minds and now wants it. The link for Firefighters and support personnel who need a vaccine is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FDvax>.
* We anticipate sometime around mid-March, the UK variant of COVID will be the primary variant spreading around the United States. We anticipate it to be in our area by mid-March. We expect to have more of those cases here. It is much more contagious than the version of the virus we have seen up until now. It spreads 30-70 times more easily than what we are currently seeing and there is some suggestion in the last couple of weeks that it may cause more illness.
* Although the numbers are down, we had a 2.1% positivity rate in our County last week; we expect to see a spike sometime around the middle of next month. We are not sure if our vaccinations will be able to keep the numbers down.
* Please share the link to the website. We encourage everyone who has not received a vaccine to sign up on the County web page saratogacountyny.gov.
* We also are planning to set up a call center in the future for those who are not able to get on the internet. We will be taking their information and entering it into the database. We are not sure exactly then that will happen. Added note: call center now operational at 518-693-1075.
* Pharmacies will be getting the vaccine for 65+. There is a list of pharmacies on the Public Health web page. If you go to the county webpage, saratogacountyny.gov there is a section that shows what pharmacies have the vaccine.
* Tom R. – Why hasn’t the County put numbers on the dashboard the last couple of weeks? Mike – The dashboard crashed last week, but I believe it was running this morning. We know there is an issue with the ARC GIS system and we are working on it. If you have any concerns trying to get up to date information, send me an email and I will get you the current stats. Email for Mike is mmcevoy@saratogacountyny.gov.

Chairman Shaw

* I met with Ed on Committee assignments and will forward the list to the FAB members. If you have any input, let me know.

Vice Chairman Rinaldi

* no information to bring forward

*Committee Reports*

* Hazmat – Bill M.
  + I spoke to the Commissioner and he volunteered to run a Tabletop in September with the LEPC. We’ll be reaching out to people in Saratoga as well as the team to start planning what we need for that.
  + We have been doing some online training. I have not received any feedback from the membership.

Chief Dunn sent information out last week; guidebook training where members can do some practice.

* Mutual Aid
  + no information to bring forward
* Personnel – Patrick
  + no information to bring forward
* Fire Training Center – Bill C.
  + We have about 50 bales of hay.
  + Main burn building needs –
    - Two south rooms
      * both have rot in the frame areas
      * ceiling panels that are dropping
      * wall panels coming loose
* Ed – I will look at it and contact a contractor.
* Legislative – Tom R.
  + 9,800 bills have been introduced so far in the new session.
  + There are several items under United Concern
    - VFBL increase
    - Removal of carcinogenic materials in upholstered furniture. It includes fire retardant chemicals in furniture including electronic cases such as tv’s etc.
    - Chapter amendment regarding communicable disease plans, volunteer fire departments/districts are included – signed by the Governor.
    - Prohibits selling and displaying symbols of hate by municipal corporations, fire districts, volunteer fire companies, police departments and schools.
    - Unfunded mandates –
      * Requiring minutes of meetings of a public body be posted on its website if the agency in which the public body function maintains an updated website and has high speed internet.
      * Bill that requires inclusion of diversity and inclusion training in the basic training for police, correction officers and firefighters.
      * Volunteer Fire Protection Reimbursement Account diverting County 911 funds into a newly created fund by the state. Unknown how funds would be distributed.
      * Bill requiring each local government, including Fire Districts, to live stream and post video recording of all open meetings and public hearings.
      * Assembly bill # 4232 diverting 911 funds to NYS Auxiliary fund.
      * Require Office of Fire Prevention and Control to establish and maintain a centralized reporting system and database that would name firefighter organizations of all firefighters in the state.
      * Requires the election of Fire District Commissioners to take place on the same day and location as the election of school board members.
    - Building and fire code related bills signed by the Governor into law –
      * Provides that in addition to any other applicable remedy or penalty, where a building has been altered in violation of any provision of the uniform code, or any lawful order obtained thereunder and such alteration impedes a person’s egress from such building during a fire or other emergency evacuation, the owner of such building and any builder, architect, contractor, subcontractor or construction superintendent, or agent thereof, who has knowledge of such alteration, or an owner who reasonably should have had knowledge of such alteration, based on either an inspection or repair of a leased premises with consent from the tenant, shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to $7,500.
      * Temporary and permanent dwellings in the state shall have installed an optical combustion gas detector that wirelessly connects to the gas company and the gas company will release an annual report of the frequency of gas leaks by county.
      * Establish a water based fire protection licensure act with licensed installation of sprinkler systems, but we need to take out NFPA 13D requirements for private homes, it will drive up the cost.
      * Requires owners and agents of multiple residences maintain contact information of residence and emergency personnel.
* It’s been a very busy session with 17 pages of Legislation involving the Fire Service.
  + - * The scorecard is sent out every week with updates.
      * This is the link to the NYS Senate bill search: <https://www.nysenate.gov/search/legislation?searched=true&type=f_bill&bill_session_year=2021&page=1>

Once you land on this page, the bills will be listed in numerical order. When you click on the bill, the full text of the individual bill will be displayed. On the right side of the page, a box will appear that will ask if you support this bill and you can vote aye or nay.

* + - * Using the scorecard, you can read the narrative and get a good idea whether or not the Association of Fire Districts supports the bill.
* Budget
  + Art - We need to get together to work on getting the Training Tower position put back into next year’s budget.
* Radio – Art
  + We scheduled a meeting for March.
  + If you have something for us on Fire Ops, please send it to us before the March meeting so we can promote it.
* Recruitment & Retention – Art
  + FASNY plans to hold Recruit NY virtually April 24th and 25th.
  + As of our last meeting, we had 22 departments signed up. If you are interested in participating, go to the FASNY website for material.
  + We need to remind everybody to encourage firefighters who are going to college, or plan to go next year, that FASNY has scholarship money available. There is a big push now for housing especially in Onodaga if you go out to Syracuse for college even if it’s at OCC you can do bed in and you would only have to volunteer so many hours a month. I just visited Elsmere Fire about a month ago and they bought an apartment building behind them, four units that they use for that. If you are on social media, they are putting the word out on that. If there is anyone looking for an apartment for next year and can give 20 hours a week, they can house in with Elsmere, something they are doing to help with recruitment.
  + I received notification from my Senator that the Governor has extended the Task Force while waiting to assign his appointees. That went through by vote and is waiting on the Governor to finalize his appointees.

Guests

* no information to bring forward

Old Business

* no old business to address

New Business

* Art – There are concerns about the LODD in Washington County with workers compensation and the coverage we have. Carl – I would suggest checking with Human Resources at the County on workers comp and asking what coverage you have for you folks that are running into dangerous situations when the alarm drops. I am aware of some of the references on social media and I have seen messages about that. It would be a good idea to compile that information and perhaps have someone from that office be available on next month’s call to give us information and guidance. Ed – I will contact Wendy. It’s in the law that you should be covered. Discussion took place on this.

Good and Welfare

* Next meeting - 7:00 pm March 29, 2021, to be held via zoom if still not able to meet in person.
* Art Hunsinger made a motion to close the meeting, second by Bill Crawford, unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Cook

Saratoga County Office of Emergency Services