

**FIRE PROTECTION TASK FORCE**  
**March 26, 2015**

**Call to Order:**

Gay Dunne called the Thursday, March 26, 2015, meeting of the Fire Protection Task Force together at 6:00 PM.

**Members Present:**

Gay Dunne, Bellefonte Borough Council Member;  
Walt Schneider, Code Enforcement Officer/Logan Fire Company Chief  
Tim Schreffler, Fire Department Chief  
Randy Brachbill, Council Member

**Members Absent:**

Tom Wilson, Mayor  
Vana Dainty,  
Karen Harvey, Council Member  
Tom Mensch, Logan Fire Department

**Staff Present:**

**Guests:**

**I. Approval of Minutes:**

(?) made a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2015. (?) seconded the motion. Mr. Brachbill stated when he gave the report on the Fire Prevention Master Plan Update at the January 22, 2015 meeting a review was given of what he and Tim came up with for planning. The forms her reviewed were to be used for planning - whether short range goals, mid-range, long range. It is a tool that will provide information back to Borough Council and also provides a tool for the departments to use in planning their needs. A voice vote was unanimous to approve the minutes as presented.

(I didn't actually hear the minutes get approved. I just heard Mr. Brachbill provide his information.)

**II. Reports of Subcommittees:**

**A. Education** - Walt Schneider reported the staff is developing their request proposal for a new Fire Safety Trailer. They anticipate the cost to be higher than what was budgeted so they are searching for additional funds. Two staff members made a trip to B(?) in New York to talk

with them and see what is available. This trailer is designed to be multi-generational so the idea is this is not only for kids or aged adults - it's across the board. It's multi-dimensional with respect to the learning experience. It is not just for the general public but will have fire safety for commercial kitchens, etc. It looks like they will be able to get what is desired, but it will require additional funding. In conjunction with the request for Chief Shreffler there were arrangements to be at the fire training facility on April 23rd in the afternoon in conjunction with "Bring Your Child to Work Day" to be able to show off fire safety efforts. They are also in the middle of doing some hiring also, which is taking some time.

Tim Shreffler works at Supelco and for Bring Your Child to Work Day they have a theme. This year they are going to spend the afternoon at the fire training site with fire apparatus and talk about fire prevention; exit drills in the home; what fire is; what kids can do; the 911 approach; and they will be able to get on a piece of apparatus. The intent of this is to build an interest so they may be interested in joining the Junior Firefighters Program. There will be a special photographer. Every kid will get a DVD with the fire prevention activities on it.

There is \$100,000.00 in the 2015 budget. The capital investment of \$40,000.00 was made two years ago for a truck to pull the Fire Safety Trailer. The anticipation is that the RFP will go out this year, possibly May or June, but until the procurement process is gone through delivery may be in January/February 2016. Hopefully it will be onsite within a year.

Tim feels public education needs to get planned and started as soon as possible. Tim said they have yet to address the numeric's on buildings. There hasn't been much publicized about that. Spring Township and Benner Township publicized this. It is on the Borough website. Tim said they aren't seeing things changing. He feels they need to talk to the Business Associations. The Chamber of Commerce setting would be a good setting to share this. Ms. Dunne will see if this could be presented at a Chamber Luncheon.

Randy stated when you look at what firefighters do as volunteers in training, in meetings, in station work...it's impressive what they do. He doesn't think people know the fire company - they don't understand where the money comes from or where it gets spent. Walt stated many people in this town think Bellefonte has paid firefighters.

Ms. Dunne stated there could be discussion about having a public meeting at another time. She and Vana tried to organize a public event with bringing in companies that make fire equipment for demonstration and they had trouble getting the salesmen and representatives to come in on a Saturday so those plans were put on hold. Walt feels you want to do something outside of Fire Prevention Week because you should be focusing on fire prevention every day. Mrs. Dunne said another Old House Fair is being organized by BHCA. It will be in the spring of 2016. They would be happy to have some presentation about fire protection. They hope people will come from out of town for this event.

**B. Manpower/Marketing/Statistics** - Karen Harvey is going to take over this slot. Mrs. Dunne will look for another member for the Task Force from Borough Council. Walt cautioned her that if a fourth person joins the Task Force the meetings will need to be advertised in accordance of the Sunshine Law. Randy suggested having someone from the community at large or someone from the Chamber, Kiwanis, Elks, etc.

**C. Historic Preservation** - Mrs. Dunne said this is a fundamental committee. There was a meeting on March 12th and they discussed criteria development and making it simple enough

that it could be applied with just a little bit of information about a specific building. They decided to do the whole Borough and not just the Historic District. By crafting criteria in certain ways one can weight more heavily those buildings that are in the downtown and are historic. They haven't gotten to the end yet. There is more discussion to do. They will meet again on April 9th. They are looking at community significance of a building. It's a complicated issue to look at your community and try to read it as what makes a building significant; what makes a building significant to Bellefonte. Because it has been a groundbreaking effort the work has been inspiring and frustrating.

If the Task Force wants to see a copy of what they are working on at the time she will do that.

They need to craft the criteria and then test them on a building to see if it works. The question was raised as to how the criteria will happen. She stated that Don would like them to apply the criteria to all the buildings and see what comes up as number one, without knowing if they would be financially eligible.

The Sprinkler Assistance Committee will know which buildings are #1, #2, etc. If a building owner doesn't want to put a sprinkler in the numbers will change. Walt stated several issues were developed in the Bellefonte Borough Water Association, which are low hanging fruit that would help the situation. One is backflow preventer at the top of Allegheny Street. The Borough is waiting for funding.

Mrs. Dunne said Don Holderman is confident that the funds could be accumulated to provide assistance. Randy feels Don is getting strung out with all his other tasks. Mrs. Dunne would like a new member to come in to work on the funding. Randy suggested getting a representative from one of the banks. Walt said part of the problem right now with grants is there's not a lot of water flow in the grants and the amount of time it takes to write them is immense. Mrs. Dunne said a grant has been applied for through the Keystone Program. Walt suggested they check with the Visitor's Bureau.

Walt said any federal money going forward through the DHS system is going to be absolutely painful with respect to building modifications. They are moving ahead with the sprinkler project. They got the environmental clearances done, but it was very painful. Anything in a Historic District, if you can see it from a house that is historic they actually sent someone from Philadelphia to have to look at the front of the station and the only thing exterior they are doing is putting a fire department connection on. Someone had to come here and look at it and it delayed the project two months.

From a different front, from a Historic Front, the Garman and the Cadillac Building properties permit application hit Walt's office earlier this week. Those projects are moving forwards towards construction. He has a meeting next week with the American Philatelic Society. Walt is not their favorite person. Mrs. Dunne stated the APS doesn't have sprinklers to her knowledge. Walt stated the problem is originally when the APS came in years ago they went to the Department of Labor and Industry and argued they are a historic building and shouldn't have sprinklers in it even though the sprinklers in it dated back to 1918. His argument is that they are truly historic and need to be put back in. They had gone through some code modifications prior to them taking over as code officials and there is a portion of the building that is not yet complete with a certificate of occupancy and if they want to move their library into it the contention is that it isn't code compliant at this point. In its current configuration if they wish to put a library in it they are going to have to sprinkler it. Walt is happy to work with them

to educate them on different systems and options or they can architecturally redesign the space and make modifications to the space, but in its current configuration it is not compliant. They will be meeting next week or the week after with the owner and the design professional on site to discuss the options. The Borough has charged Walt as the Building Code Official trying to maintain the level of fire safety in the Borough in accordance with the adopted codes.

**D. Funding** - Mr. Stewart provided a report for the Task Force to review. His report was mostly about, other than meeting with the DCED Representative that is now gone and hopefully he'll meet again with the new representative from DCED who has understanding of the Keystone Community Network Funding possibilities.

**E. Communications -**

**1. Resolutions submitted to PSAB's Resolutions & Policy Committee** - Mr. Stewart sent in three resolutions for the PSAB Policy and resolutions committee. One of those had to do with a 50% tax credit incentive for installing sprinklers in the building and making the associated fire sprinkler system installation exempt from real estate tax exemption. The other thing that is relevant to the Fire Protection Task Force is that they support legislation that is similar to Senate Bill 292, which proposes a tax credit for volunteer firefighters equal to his or her earned income tax. Later this month there will be a PSAB meeting and the Policy and Resolutions Committee will decide which proposals to support legislatively. Walt suggested that Council also send these to Kerry Benninghoff and Jake Corman.

**F. Fire Protection Master Plan Update** - Randy Brachbill sent his report to Mrs. Dainty. It was a review of the '98 plan. They will be meeting on Sunday and they will look at Water Flow, Testing of Hydrants, determining who is responsible for collecting the results, talk about hydrant locations, determine fire protection needs of townships and the Borough, Station II is charged with the townships and Station I is evaluating the Borough needs. In moving forward there may be a need to bring in an outside consultant to assist in certain issues but for the most part they felt there was enough experience to be able to provide the updates for the issues presented in the '98 plan. Randy feels as the Committee goes through and completes items it should then be submitted to the Fire Exec Committee for approval and then go to Council for further discussion and approval.

(Tape turned here.)

Mrs. Dunne had Tim discuss what was displayed on the easels. The last couple years there was discussion about increasing the capability downtown. It's referred to as the 5610 Box where it encompassed only a certain area downtown. It was spread out a little bit. Basically they did groups here, groups here and groups over here. It was all based on occupancy, the type of occupancy, how many lived in it and the type of building. They sat down as officers from the department and came up with his display where they increase the 5610 Box where the coverage area is increased where it is classified as high risk and they also added additional apparatus to it where it gives the flexibility of having enough pumping power and manpower as well as increasing the response time. The next step of this would be to take segments of the surrounding area as the 5611Box where it would reduce the amount of apparatus coming in but it would be

based on the box alarm system in Centre County. It would identify what equipment will respond to those areas. It doesn't matter if it is Marion Township, Benner Township, Spring Township, or Bellefonte Borough. It's the same type of response index. Right now the 5610 Box is final. Confirmation was received (?) and Tim has been working pretty close on it with him as well as they do have the apparatus all in the (?) system. The next step is when they upgrade the (?) system to the next generation that is when the new box alarms will be upgraded. They will then look at the other areas - the Marion, Spring and Benner Townships and be able to upgrade that as well by actually increasing their capability. The whole thing has come together. The officers - Chief Pressler and Chief Schneider feel they came up with a good package. Chief Schneider feels it will be a learning curve because of some changes but functionally it will be a good add, especially with adding the 5611 Box, which is the high hazard district.

Tim said if there is a building in downtown Bellefonte and in the previous 5610 it was two engines, an aerial piece, Pleasant Gap's rescue - that was the typical response. It has been upgraded to three engines. They actually had to consider backfilling other stations so they staggered the response. They also set it up on various alarms. The first alarm responds in that district. The second one is a backup. With a third alarm they bring those in to backfill the station. They will always have apparatus on the backside of it and they will always have a surplus. The drive behind this is that volunteerism has declined so much. The typical is six firefighters respond during an initial call.

**G. ISO Reclassification - See 2/23/15 Report** - The classification was upgraded. Mrs. Dunne feels the following criteria could be improved: company personnel and training. To clarify something Tim stated the report must be digested and determine what is being said before you can look at it and determine what is going to be done. Based on previous ISO inspections this will be handled differently where the officers will review a copy of it and digest what is there; look at where the weaknesses are and how to build on it; and then develop a strategy on that. The two challenges he sees on this are manpower and equipment.

**H. Next Meeting** - The next meeting will be Thursday, May 21, 2015.

**Adjournment:**

The Fire Protection Task Force meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.