

**FIRE PROTECTION TASK FORCE  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2013**

**Call to Order:**

Gay Dunne called the Thursday, September 25, 2014, meeting of the Fire Protection Task Force together at 6:00 PM.

**Members Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Ralph Stewart, Borough Manager;  
Don Holderman, Assistant Borough Manager;

**Guests:**

**I. Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Schreffler made a motion to approve the minutes of July 31, 2014. Mr. Schneider seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous to approve the minutes as presented.

**II. Reports of Subcommittees:**

**Education** - Mr. Schneider reported they have been working on budget matters. He feels they will be successful in getting a new fire safety trailer. It will not replace the current one, but will be in addition to it. It will cost approximately \$100,000.00. This will be for the entire region, which are the six municipalities in the Centre Region proper plus Bellefonte. It is felt that this is an important piece to the ongoing educational opportunities because of the fact that the existing resource is good, but today's youth do not want to sit and listen to a lecture. They want wowed and interaction. It is very computer based and has the ability to change and grow at a reasonable cost in the future. Two companies were interviewed - Scotties, a Pennsylvania company, and Bolex, a company from New York State. The technology of the Bolex is more solid and cutting edge.

The committee will be expanded by the end of the year. There is prevention with the safety trailer as well as pro-action.

Mr. Brachbill asked why Bellefonte couldn't do a fire prevention season instead of a fire prevention week.

**Manpower/Marketing/Statistics** - No report.

**Historic Preservation** - Mrs. Dunne met with Sue Hannegan and they discussed potential people to have on the committee and the scope. They are trying to get as much information together in advance before the Historic Preservation Committee begins its work. The sub-committee is charged with assessing all unsprinklered buildings within a given area, although that area has not been fully established. When the area is determined the fire risk and historic and community value of the buildings would be assessed in some way and then prioritize them. Sue Hannegan and Ryan Van Sweden agreed to serve on the committee. Ryan is with the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission and the regional representative for Bellefonte. Mrs. Dunne has invitations out and is waiting to hear from a historic architect and a property owner in the downtown. Mrs. Dunne would also serve on the committee, making it five members. Sue Hannegan is looking at what building inventories are available, existing and what information is in those inventories. They hope to collect a lot of information and work a lot by email so they don't have to have so many face-to-face meetings. They are currently in the information gathering phase.

Mr. Holderman stated Ms. Dainty, in working with the Keystone Community Project, one of the subjects she is working with is one of the same charges as a building inventory. He suggested incorporating her because it could save a lot of duplication and it would help her generate that information with the help of Sue Hannegan.

Mr. Schneider reported that HARB has had two meetings in a row where siding was discussed. One project was the Bellefonte Mews and they were encouraged to use a hardiboard versus some type of vinyl. Also, the owner of the building where Mish-Mosh is located was encouraged to use a hardiboard siding to replace an existing vinyl. From a fire standpoint that would be a big plus. He suggested an educational piece could be done on siding and siding options. Hardiboard is a little more expensive, but it holds up better and is fire resistant. They are rated for fire resistance.

The committee has to discuss the criteria they establish for the historic buildings. Mrs. Dunne is seeking other communities that may have done something similar.

Mr. Holderman shared the complete report and under attachment "C" it shows the buildings in the downtown that have sprinkler systems.

**Funding** - Mr. Stewart stated the big objection was to submit the application for the Keystone Designation. They believe there is some funding from this and hope to hear by the end of the year whether this was successful or not or whether any revisions need to be made.

Locally, he would like to have Mr. Holderman and Mr. Schneider help out because they are both successful grant writers.

He has been following different pieces of legislation. There has been some incentives to make it more attractive to be a volunteer firefighter. When these things come up letters are sent to show Bellefonte supports that legislation.

Several months ago Senator Toomey had a piece of legislation about a tax legislation for sprinkler systems. There haven't been any recent updates.

Mr. Stewart hasn't seen anything about Act 13 for funding for municipality fire-fighting efforts. He stated the allotment for Bellefonte Borough is very small, \$4,000.00.

**III. Fire Protection Master Plan Update** - Mr. Brachbill stated the original meeting got postponed and he was not able to make the rescheduled one. Tim Schreffler stated there was a follow-up and they went down through line item by line item. They are trying to clean up the verbiage and eliminate some things in the report that is not factual. They plan to go with today's information and rewrite it from front to back. The goal from both fire stations as well as the committee that is working on it is that everybody has a piece and everybody has to complete that piece. Instead of taking a document and say everyone come back with an opinion they give paragraphs and sections of the report that they come back with. If everyone agrees then the move on to the next part. That way in the future this will be an opportunity for the department chief and the future operation of the department to have a clean document that was developed by the fire department and not a third party. It will become more of an operational tool than a report.

#### **IV. Other Topics**

Mr. Brachbill suggested having a mission statement. Mrs. Dunne is happy to rely on the broad statement in the final report as a mission statement - the last sentence of the first paragraph. "The purpose of the 2012 Task Force was to examine Bellefonte's vulnerabilities to destructive fires with the objective of strengthening our fire prevention programs and suppression strategies." Task Force members are asked to review this before the next meeting.

Mr. Brachbill stated if the fire departments go through this exercise and they don't see it followed don't ever expect them to do it again. Mr. Schneider feels this is the start of the strategic plan that they have not had and with the leadership if Chief Schreffler they have to put it together because it has been seen in some hodge podge stuff that is going on. This won't be cast in stone.

It was reminded that there are two reports. It was discussed to bring it all together and come up with all the documentation that had been created. They are going to work independently on what they are working on and this should be embedded into the document, meaning the Task Force should be embedded into the Master Plan.

Mr. Stewart stated originally this was about fire prevention from the two fire companies. It wasn't about saving Bellefonte from additional fires and preserving what there is. It is much broader now that it was in 1998. It was about replacing equipment. The scope of it was a great idea and it was the right thing to do. Mr. Brachbill feels if this becomes a working document that it continues to be worked. Mr. Holderman stated when it was presented it was laid out for 10-15 years. He stated this should be an ongoing living thing that continues to be worked on. Another part is it is the belief and vision of the Bellefonte Fire Department that the Safety Committee and Bellefonte Borough be working hand-in-hand and once there is a final document that there is a cooperative agreement and cooperative initiative with the Borough and the Borough Safety Committee and implement the Safety Committee to be part of the operation side then if there is a disciplinary issue or an issue that needs to be addressed then there is a third party involved that is representing the Bellefonte Borough and not the fire department to make the decisions necessary to fix any problems. Mr. Stewart stated your speed is based on your resources. Mr. Holderman feels the key is going to be to keep communicating. Frustration comes into play when people don't see any progress.

Mr. Brachbill, speaking as a citizen, stated you need to consider how to take resources and incorporate more than recreational. How can you come up with other funding. If people are

willing to sit down and talk about how to save a swimming pool they need to be willing to talk about how to save a fire company.

**V. Next Meeting**

Mr. Holderman will send an email when the next meeting date is determined.

**Adjournment:**

The Fire Protection Task Force meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.