

WASHINGTON COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE ASSOCIATION

A special meeting of the Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association was held on November 10, 2011, at the Smithsburg Volunteer fire Company.

The elected officials in attendance were: Senator Shank, Delegates Serafini, Myers, Donahue, and Parrett, and Commissioners McKinley, Baker, Cline and Callaham.

Delegate Serafini called the meeting to order at 1903, and said we were here to discuss the distribution and accounting of the Gaming Funds. For the record there is no indication that any funds were misappropriated. There will be technical changes made to the bill and the details will be made at the local level. Delegate Serafini distributed a form summarizing his idea of the Gaming Fund Distribution Issues. This form also showed the Current and Proposed method of distribution. He feels that the Training Center and funds for emergencies should be the County's responsibility. There should be oversight by the County of the funds by DFES, Accounting and Finance or Gaming Commission. Office space for the Association should be worked out locally. The Association and the member companies should show how the Gaming money was spent.

Delegate Donahue said that the 1995 language gave the BOCC the right to create regulations for the nonprofits, but not for the Association. The change proposed will give the BOCC the right to create regulations for the Association. He also feels that the Association should only keep 5% of the distribution for a rainy day fund in addition to the budget of the Association. He later said that this was a starting point and that the amount could be adjusted.

Senator Shank said that he supported what Delegate Serafini said and that the key words are Accountability, Oversight and Transparency. When Annapolis is finished there should be an equal partnership between the County and the Association.

Delegate Myers said that Washington County is the model. We need to make some changes. \$500000 in 14 accounts is too many accounts. We need to make it better so that the people downstate do not get involved.

Delegate Parrett thanked the volunteers and said that they save the County millions of dollars. It is very unfortunate that this was played out in the papers. He also had a problem with Delegate Semifinal's proposal to have the BOCC approve the Association budget. He did not feel that the BOCC should have approval of a nonprofits budget.

Commissioner Cline said that he supports the volunteer system.

Commissioner McKinley said that the system has worked well for a long time.

President Fishack said that the money for the training center has been allocated in the budget for a long time. (A motion was passed by the Association in January, 1997, to use 5% of the tip jar money to fund a training center). There is currently one full time employee and one part time employee. The part time position ends on January 1. The part time position was created to get the mandatory physical program started. The County loaned the Association the money to purchase the building on Pennsylvania Avenue in July 1999. (This was after the first office in the basement of the Court House in 1996. Subsequently the office was moved to a County

owned property on Londontown Dr). He also discussed the other items funded by the Association. Mr. Poole discussed the proposed MOU that would be between the Association and the County. The original intent was to have an MOU between the County and each of the member companies of the Association as well as the Association, but some of the Companies opposed this and they wanted to be able to talk directly with the BOCC. (Article VIII, Section 1. States that Except for County

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Revolving Loan Fund requests, No member company shall approach the Washington County Government to solicit monies, equipment or services financed on behalf of them without prior approval of The Association or said company shall be subject to remedies in Article I Section 5.)

Delegate Serafini stated that the MOU would not correct the problem, because it could be changed at a later date. He feels that the BOCC should approve the Association budget.

County Administrator Murray was asked about the County lending money to Company needing emergency funds for equipment repair or replacement. He stated that if the County retained funds from the Gaming Funds they could make it available in a few days.

President Fishack cited an example of company needing money and the County said it would take 45 days to approve the money. The Association wrote a check the same day.

Delegate Serafini said that some companies feel that the Association would not treat each company fairly.

During the wrap up of the meeting Delegate Donahue said that the money retained by the Association can be worked out locally. Senator Shank said that what the Association and the County do cannot be codified. Delegate Serafini asked if the Association had approached the County to ask what the County might do to help the Association. Commissioner Callaham said that there had not been a formal proposal to the BOCC. Delegate Parrett questioned how the BOCC could approve the budget of a nonprofit. All of the Delegates said the current 50% of the Gaming Funds to Fire and Rescue would not change. Delegate Serafini said the County is obligated to fund Fire and Rescue.

Chief Ball of Company 2 stated that the Buracker Report should be dusted off and followed for Fire and Rescue in the County. He stated that the County quit funding the Association in 2002. (According to minutes of the Association in February 2001 Treasurer Shindle explained how the gaming funds were being distributed. The Association get 50% and keeps 10% of the total gaming distribution or 20% of the amount given to the F & R for its budget. (This is the amount that the County quit funding the Association.) The companies get 40% of the total or 80% of the amount given to F & R which is divided 27 ways. This was a part of the Treasurer's Report which was approved by the Association).

The President thanked everyone for coming and commended the BOCC and Administrator Murray for the EMS Plan and challenged them to develop a Fire Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Sam Murray, Secretary