

# **Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council**

## **General Meeting Minutes**

January 30, 1993 Room 205, Harrisburg Area Community College

Called to order at 0955 by President Peter McCabe

**Attendance:** see Attachment #1.

Member Teams present: 17. A quorum was established.

### **President's Report**

Several new teams interested in joining.

Patches: had approved money for patches, but person working on them no longer active. Discussion of use of name and patch and logo by members teams referred to Operations Committee (Boyles) to make recommendations.

Would like to expand directors to have more directors.

Ron Wisbith: handling incorporation.

Ken Boyles: will be handling operations, and will be developing operational procedures for the SAR Council.

PEMA is discussing alternatives to currently-effective enabling legislation to permit more of a field role.

### **Secretary's Report**

Minutes of previous meetings (6/27/92 and 9/19/92) distributed. Minutes for 9/19/92 corrected to include attendance sheet (Attachment #2 to today's minutes) and that the minutes were taken by Tom Hirschak. Moved to accept minutes by Thrash, seconded by Hirschak, accepted unanimously.

### **Treasurer's Report**

See report (Attachment #3)

### **Regional Reports**

- • Eastern: has had no formal meeting since last statewide meeting.
- • Central: see attached report (Attachment #4)
- • Western: no significant attendance at last meeting (conflict with WEMT). Next meeting to be scheduled by Regional Coordinator Lee Lyons in the next week or two; he will notify region teams.

### **Special Order for the Day**

Review of September 12 President decisions regarding communications committee: On September 12, President Peter McCabe unilaterally removed Bruce Barton as Communications Committee Chair. At 19 September SAR Council Meeting, this was discussed, and Mr. Barton asked for a formal review of this action at the December meeting. However, the December meeting had to be postponed due to weather (a severe

winter storm that closed many roads in Pennsylvania). A letter was received from a member of NESAR, a PSARC member team of which Mr. Barton is a member, noting that Mr. Barton could not attend today's meeting due to conflict; the letter asked that any agenda items regarding him be postponed until he can be present, and that Mr. Barton and NESAR had not been notified of the agenda for this meeting. The President noted that the agenda is not usually mailed to the membership prior to the meeting, and that he preferred to continue with any appropriate discussion.

Moved by Conover, seconded by Lichtenstein: that we go ahead and discuss the prior removal of Mr. Barton from the Communications Committee Chair. No discussion. The vote was 15 in favor, one in opposition, one abstaining. After the vote, Jim Howley suggested that it would not be appropriate to proceed with disciplinary actions against anyone if they are not present. Keith Conover noted that due process requires the presence of any person subject to disciplinary proceedings, but opined that simple discussion of a topic did not constitute disciplinary proceedings. Irv Lichtenstein noted that Committee Chairs serve at the pleasure of the President and may be dismissed or replaced at any time and for any reason, without it invoking any sort of disciplinary question. There was no dissent to these observations.

Next, the current Communications Committee co-Chairs, Joe Thrash and Steve Houck, along with President Peter McCabe, presented information related to the prior dismissal of Mr. Barton. At the June 1991 meeting, the PSARC membership voted to apply for an FCC license, and allocated up to \$400 for the Communications Committee to obtain such a license (\$350 for frequency coordination with the IMSA coordinating agency, the remainder for FCC fees). The specific frequencies were discussed and we agreed to apply for four mobile frequencies but no base stations. Mr. Barton and Mr. Thrash (co-chairs), Mr. Steve Houck, and Mr. Sawyer were recognized as the Communications Committee to pursue this. Steve Houck noted that the remainder of the Committee not consulted in any significant way by Mr. Barton in pursuing this license. Mr. Houck now works for the FCC in Washington, DC, and when trying to check on the progress of our application, found the original application and found out it was for two Base Stations in East Stroudsburg, PA, (NESAR's base) but for only two mobile frequencies. (According to the IMSA coordinating agency, there is \$50 fee for every base station applied for.) Canceled PSARC checks for \$35 to the FCC and \$350 to the IMSA coordinating agency were shown to the membership. Mr. Houck and others present noted that the individual on the license is supposed to be an executive officer of the organization, but Mr. Barton had listed his own name. This original application approved by coordinating agency (IMSA) in April, and then sent to the FCC. Mr. Houck found out that in June, the application had been modified by Mr. Barton to be in the name of NorthEast SAR, and was then subsequently approved by the FCC. The remainder of the Communications Committee then intervened with the license process at the FCC, explaining that the fees were paid by PSARC and that the license was to be for PSARC, not for NESAR. Those present noted that the SAR Council had not authorized any Base Stations. President Peter McCabe noted that a unique "FAC number" is put on each application by the coordinating agency; we found that the FAC number was the same on the original PSARC application and on the subsequent NESAR application, and pointed this out to the FCC. PSARC's Communications Committee then submitted a revised application with a new \$35 fee to FCC, which was approved without additional coordination fees due to the extenuating circumstances. Peter McCabe noted that at the September special PSARC meeting, Mr. Barton did not note that he had received the NESAR license in the previous month (August) as shown by FCC records, but reported that the PSARC license was still pending. Joe Thrash noted that a lack of interaction between committee members may have contributed to this problem. We are now licensed (but don't have a copy of the license in hand yet) as follows:

- • 155.160: 50 watt temporary Base Station, 200 120 W mobile stations
- • 150.775 for 2.5 Watt input to a mobile repeater
- • can be used anywhere in U.S.
- • Question from floor: who can use this, any SAR team in the country? No, only SAR Council member teams.

- • Question from floor: When can teams use this, only on operations or also on training? As soon as the license is in hand, copies will be distributed to member teams. Until a formal radio SOP is developed, teams may use the frequencies for training or missions when joined by other PSARC teams, and will need to follow common sense and FCC regulations.

**Summary of problems associated with radio license:**

**Mr. Barton used \$100 of the fee to apply for two base stations instead of the additional mobile frequencies PSARC specified, and thus we now have only two mobile frequencies, while NESAR has two a license for two base stations.**

Peter McCabe noted that our total costs were \$350 to IMSA (the coordinating agency), \$35 to FCC, and a second \$35 fee to FCC, and thus we spent more than we should while getting less than we should, despite our intervention with the FCC and not having to pay a second coordination fee. (According to Mr. Houck the FCC has never done anything like what they did for us before, so we were very lucky we didn't have to pay another \$350 and start over from scratch.)

**Question from the floor: Did Bruce's applying for the Base Stations prevent us from getting a license for a third frequency? Answer (from multiple people): We don't know, but possibly: applying for a third mobile frequency, with the added cost for the two base stations that Mr. Barton added, would have gone over the Council's allocated \$400. Adding another frequency will cost us more money, and we will have to start over with IMSA (the coordinating agency) to do this.**

**President Peter McCabe: since Mr. Barton managed to get NESAR's license using the money from the SAR Council, we should ask for the money back. Martha-Ann Ackroyd-Geary: at an earlier meeting, Bruce agreed to pay the SAR Council back since he was unable to get the PSARC license for us. Chuck Kollar, noted that asking for money is not disciplinary action. This observation was also the general consensus of the membership present.**

**Joe Thrash proposed, and Greg Sassaman seconded, the following motion: Resolved, that PSARC send Mr. Barton a letter requesting repayment of PSARC money that he spent in pursuing a radio license for NESAR, specifically:**

- • Half the \$250 coordination fee, less the cost of the two base stations (\$125)
- • the cost of the two Base Stations applied for but not authorized (\$100)
- • the extra fee to the FCC (\$35)
- • Total: \$260

**Vote: one abstention (NESAR), all others (16) in favor. Motion passed.**

**Greg Sassaman: Do we wish to take any disciplinary action at this point? Irv Lichtenstein: there are no provisions in the Bylaws for such action, though we have had something like evidentiary hearings by the Board regarding the actions of member teams and whether they should continue as members or not. Keith Conover: if we wish to start disciplinary proceedings against individuals or officers, we may wish to adopt a specific disciplinary process. Agreed by all present; Dr. Conover will provide President Peter McCabe with some information on due process he had prepared for the Eastern Region National Cave Rescue Commission, so Mr. McCabe can propose a disciplinary procedure for PSARC.**

## **Membership Committee**

Martha-Ann Ackroyd-Geary: lots of teams have not yet sent in resource forms (accompanied by general ridicule of such teams including rude noises). PLEASE SEND IN ASAP.

## **Training Committee**

(Secretary's notes: the Standards Committee has been dissolved and all standards work is being pursued by the Training Committee under Mr. Howley. Part of this discussion occurred under new business, but as there were no motions presented and no specific actions taken I have placed all of the discussion about standards here.) Jim Howley: at their first meeting the Training Committee started writing up draft standards for individuals within PSARC teams. They used NASAR, Virginia, and Colorado standards, plus input from PSARC member teams that has been solicited over the past two years, to write draft standards. Those helping: Jim Howley (chair), Tom Hirschak, Martha and Dan Geary, Joe Thrash, Ron Wisbith, Roy Keiser, Carol Prosseda, and Dave Hamill. These draft standards were distributed to all teams present and will be mailed to teams not present, for discussion. Please copy as needed, and solicit comments from team membership. Written comments must be received by 1 March to the PSARC address (see letterhead). The Committee will then review the comments and make a formal proposal at the March PSARC meeting. There was some question about whether this was adequate time for comments. However, we decided to go ahead with the present plan, given (1) no standards can be adopted without an affirmative vote at the March meeting, (2) we can always change the standards at a later date, and (3) if we don't adopt standards soon, there is a chance that some state legislator may establish standards regardless of our input. There was much discussion of the method of training and testing to these standards. Some felt that we should require all who wish to obtain SAR certification to attend classes sponsored by the State Fire Academy but built to meet our standards, at least for ground search team members. Others felt that training by member teams should permit people to challenge a PSARC written and practical test. Another thought was that teams that adopt standards including all PSARC standards should be given equivalency, as for example Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference members are granted Virginia state equivalence certification. There was no consensus on this point, but Keith Conover suggested that we adopt standards now and decide on testing later. He noted that the ASRC has had very detailed and rigorous standards for about 20 years, and only recently has begun standardized testing throughout the ASRC's seven Groups (Before this each individual Group was responsible for testing.) However, having uniform standards has helped the Groups work together and to standardize their training. Bob Long noted that the standards that we are proposing for PSARC are minimum standards, and not nearly as detailed as those of the ASRC. He said that at their meetings, PEMA has discussed the problem of SAR teams not working together, and the director of PEMA has said that search teams should get better organized, and should have standards. There is no state or federal law regulating SAR teams, but the Lt. Governor wants PSARC to set standards. If not, at some point, a state legislator will probably pass legislation to impose SAR standards. He pointed out that it is members of rival SAR teams that tend to complain to legislators and are the likely source if this happens. It would be better if the SAR Council

adopted its own standard. No state agency currently has a mandate to manage or control SAR teams, but a legislator could make PEMA do so with little effort.

## **Lessons from Recent Missions**

The only mission discussed was the recent (and continuing) Laurel Hill Search. Joe Thrash was the MC for the CAP, as well as being active with PSARC. The search is for a missing aircraft. Mr. Thrash outlined the technical details of the search (some of this is in the attached Mission Report by Dr. Conover, Attachment #5). It was an unusual mission for the CAP in that there have been no concrete clues at all. The search covered about 2/3 of the state. Originally the CAP had bases in Harrisburg and in Latrobe (near the beginning and end of the reported flight path). They were unable to do any air search for first two days of the search due to the severe weather. Our discussion here centered on the ground operations. The first few days were strictly CAP ground teams, with about 250 people, mostly doing interrogation search and electronic search. This was the first time, as far as Joe Thrash knows, that the CAP has called in lots of outside SAR resources. On Tuesday, the CAP called in PSARC and related teams due to a radar plot (ENTAP) that stopped in the area of Laurel Hill; this was used as the basis to start ground search in that area. The CAP also had some possible interrogation clues in this area, though no solid ones. The First day of PSARC involvement (Wednesday) was "a bit of a SNAFU." The operation was "stood down" for two days due to severe weather and then started up again last weekend. With a PSARC Unitary Unified Command on Saturday ground operations proceeded much more smoothly.

There was some question as to whether having a "SAR Council IC" and SAR Council Unified Command might engender liability for the SAR Council. The consensus was that we should continue with the present policy and even expand on it with more detailed SOPs. Two observations supported this: (1) we are less likely to incur liability by doing what is right than by doing something we know to be less effective just because of liability worries, and (2) the "SAR Council IC" and "SAR Council Unified Command" are actually made up from the teams onsite, and have no position or standing within the PSARC structure itself.

To date, the search still has found nothing. Keith Ce up of the membms onover, M.D.: reviewed the mission from his viewpoint (see attached Mission Report). He noted with pleasure that the many SAR Council teams worked together in a manner not seen before here in Pennsylvania, without personality or team conflicts interfering with the prosecution of the mission. He credited the SAR Council and its Unified Command policy with this success. He regarded it as the fulfillment of a treasured goal he'd held ever since he helped start the Pennsylvania SAR Council years ago.

## **PA Wing CAP Ground SAR**

nd even start woe question as toJoe Thrash introduced observer Major Bob Ayers, Director of Operations, MD Wing Civil Air Patrol, then presented recent changes in PA Wing CAP's Ground SAR program.

on more detailedOPsPennsylvania Wing had the first organized ground SAR program in the CAP, which started about 30 years ago. It ran unchanged for many years. The last revision of the program was about ten years ago. Originally it was for cadets only and included military discipline and firearms training; now, it is updated and includes seniors (adults). About three years ago, Joe became director of Emergency Services for PA Wing CAP. They are now revising the entire SAR program, ground and air both. PSARC standards will be incorporated in the PA Wing Ground SAR program so the terminology and management structures and techniques will be compatible. A pilot of this new GSAR program was given at Hawk Mountain Ranger Camp about three months ago. PA Wing will still have Ranger teams, but will have a structure compatible with PSARC ground teams. Maj. Ayers: Ranger Teams are unique to PA Wing, and

other Wings simply have "ground teams." He noted that CAP does things such as fly SAR teams from one place to another, but the request must go through the Inland Rescue Coordination Center at Scott AFB, and a local authority, not a volunteer team or private person, must call Scott with the request. He related that about two years ago, the national emergency services manual of CAP was revised. Joe Thrash: the CAP is directed by "manuals" and "regulations." "Manuals" are suggested guidelines, whereas "regulations" must be followed to the letter. Previously, ground SAR was mostly regulated by manuals only, and individual state Wings had many variations. As of January 1, 1993, CAP now has regulations for ground SAR, rather than just manuals. These for the most part are compatible with the ICS. Maj. Ayers: when a Mission Coordinator (MC) is appointed, he or she has full authority. Each mission is run with a "different flavor" because each MC has wide latitude in running the mission. Most searches start out with little useful to do on the ground except for interrogation search: interviewing pilots, family members, airports, and asking local people for clues. Seldom does the CAP have any use for ground teams during the initial phase of downed aircraft search. Bob Long (PEMA): if local teams are already on a search and CAP is requested to help, will CAP now join an existing ICS command structure? Answer (Joe, speaking as Wing Emergency Services officer): yes. Bob Long (PEMA) pointed out that by doing this, rather than setting up a separate CAP command structure, would be a great step forward. Several present noted that they had experienced good joint command structures with local CAP squadrons, but others including Mr. Long pointed out that this is the exception rather than the rule. To get CAP assistance: call PEMA Emergency Operations Center at 1-800-424-7362 (in PA), 1-717-783-8150 (outside PA).

## **New Business**

- • Incorporation: Andy Appel was helping out in the past, but incorporation never happened and Mr. Appel is no longer active with PSARC. MED-SAR now has an attorney who has volunteered to help incorporate us as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, with the only cost the IRS and State fees and publishing fees. Approval for the needed expenditures was made in June 1991 so no additional approval needed.
- • Elections: Secretary Keith Conover reported that Tom Hirschak was elected by mail ballot to the Board Director position. Also, the ICS Unified Command policy was passed unanimously (see September 1992 minutes or attached Mission Report). We will need to elect all officers at the December 1993 meeting, and nominations need to be done this summer. Ballots have to be mailed 30 days prior to the meeting. There is a three-term limit on all officers except for Treasurer. Peter McCabe: the lawyer for incorporation mentioned that we don't have a dissolution clause in our Bylaws, which we will need to add.

## **Statewide Paging**

As we move to a Mission Coordinator system with PEMA, we need to have a statewide paging system for up to ten individuals designated as Mission Coordinators (MCs). To begin with, we would mostly use DER employees as MCs, because they are state employees and have extensive SAR experience. There was a long discussion of the criteria for selecting MCs, during which it was emphasized that these MCs, who have not formally been chosen yet, would dispatch PSARC resources to the area. This seemed to center on the worry of some present that they would not be considered for the MC role. Peter McCabe: we are a year or so away from implementing this system. Summary: Through Professional Communications in Pittsburgh, we can obtain paging service for \$13/month for each pager. This includes statewide coverage, a second code on each pager for private use or for paging individual MCs, and pager rental for Motorola Bravo pagers. If we wanted to use Motorola Alpha alphanumeric pagers instead, the cost would be \$18/month, and this requires use of a (free) computer program on a computer with a modem, or a special encoding device that is expensive, to enter the alphanumeric codes. Peter McCabe noted that the ASRC has been happy with using Bravo pagers and numeric codes for several years. Keith Conover noted that AMRG had quit using Professional

Communications because of their incompetence and poor service, including two episodes when the company took more than a day to get the system back to functioning during a callout. However, Lee Lyons had related related that the company has improved recently.

## **Communications SOP Proposal**

This proposal (Attachment #6) is for discussion only at this point; please get comments to Joe Thrash or Steve Houck (Joe Thrash, RD 1 Box 75, Friedens, PA 15541). Each member team should have a Communications Officer. Current policy is that we can't use the license until it officially comes in the mail; after it comes, we can use on missions. At present, cannot be used by member teams for their own training, but if two or more teams have joint training, they can use. See current Communications SOP (Attachment #7) and make comments on this, too. Irv noted that Greater Philadelphia allows PSARC to use its frequency by letter of understanding.

## **New Teams (visitors, prospective members)**

Ron Martin and friends from Lackawanna Co. and the Scranton area are starting a new team, but have no name yet. Also, there were people present from Clinton Co. and Huntingdon Co. (Lock Haven area). They have a 4x4 unit and a ground team with dogs, and a mounted unit also considering merging into it. Palisades SAR dogs, based in north N.J.: has been inactive and wants to rejoin.

## **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**

President Peter McCabe has a proposal for SOPs similar to those used by the ASRC and Virginia. He will have a draft available by the March meeting; if interested in helping, call him (1-301-596-5554 (H)).

## **Bylaws Changes**

Hirchak moved, Conover seconded, and amended by Lichtenstein that we accept the following two proposals for changes to the Bylaws:

- • Resolved, that we add to the PSARC Bylaws a dissolution clause as follows:

The Corporation shall dissolve if and when the membership falls to five members or fewer. Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Corporation, dispose of all assets of the Corporation exclusively for the purposes of the Corporation in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as at the same time shall qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law), as the Board of Directors shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the Corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

- • Resolved, that the Bylaws of the Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council be amended as follows:

Effective with any election of officers of PSARC conducted on or after November 1, 1993, and there being twenty (20) or more member organizations at that time, no two officers or voting members the Board of Directors shall be members of the same member organization. This restriction shall not apply to individuals elected prior to November 1, 1993 and whose terms of office continue beyond December 31, 1993. This restriction shall be suspended if during the membership year including the election the membership of PSARC shall be fourteen (14) or fewer member organizations until such time as there are twenty (20) or more member organizations.

Vote: 14 yea, three nay.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

The next statewide PSARC meeting will be March 27, 1000 hours, Harrisburg, probably at Area Community College (notice will be mailed to all members). Training standards will be the main topic voted on at this special meeting, and we will develop a plan for implementing these standards: Call-Out Qualified, Field Team Member, Field Team Leader. Other standards (dog handler, rescue specialist, medical specialist, water rescue, cave rescue, incident staff, and Incident Commander) will probably be accepted by reference to established standards. The next regular statewide PSARC business meeting will be June 26.

Adjourned at 3:40 PM

Respectfully submitted, Keith Conover, M.D., Secretary.

Attachments: (1) Attendance; (2) Attendance from 9/19/92; (3) Treasurer's Report; (4) Central Region Report; (5) Mission Report (6) New proposal for Communications Policy; (7) existing Communications Policy.