

Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council Board of Directors Meeting

06/28/97

Notes by Keith Conover, M.D., FACEP, Board of Directors member <kconover+@pitt.edu> [note: there are official minutes to this meeting that were published but this is based on my original electronic notes and thus less likely to have errors than a scanned and OCR'd version. -KC]

Called to order at 0910 by President Martha Ackroyd

Membership Process

There were two recent situations where members of teams approved at the December meeting were under investigation by the police.

- • Ron Schawley (?sp), who represented Laurel Highlands SAR at December meeting, but about four weeks ago killed his search dog Sampson, reported to police that dog was kidnapped and kidnappers were demanding ransom – currently being investigated. Laurel Highlands SAR is here at this BOD meeting and trying to work through this.
- • Chris Tate of U.S. SAR was arrested, and is in jail in lieu of \$50,000 bail, on a felony charge of disposing of toxic waste into the water supply area of Hollidaysburg/Altoona. He also had been collecting money from people to set up SAR teams and provide pagers, in Pennsylvania, NJ, VT, and FL, apparently on a fraudulent basis.
- • Larry Jacobson of NASAR and the Commonwealth Attorney as well as the FBI – U.S. SAR was apparently a scam, where Chris Tate would accept money for membership and pagers and then skip town. As far as we can tell, US SAR doesn't exist aside from Chris Tate. Laurel Highlands SAR, however, is still very much there and trying to get over this regrettable incident.
- • This spurred a move to improve the membership process and categories. See attached proposal by Don, John and Martha. Don outlined the proposal.
- • Jay Cooke (GPSAR): There are concerns because teams can easily join then use the PSARC name – perhaps we should change “membership” to “supporter” for what is called “informational membership.”
- • Peter McCabe (MSAR-ASRC): feeling in the past that we shouldn't be in the business of screening teams' capabilities, this represents a change in that direction.
- • Martha Ackroyd (Somerset SAR): we also need to assure that teams have some sort of financial stability, so should require 501(c)(3) status of member teams. (Side comment from the audience – I guess this means IBM can't join.)
- • Please send comments in writing or by email to Don Scelza (AMRG-ASRC) <das@fore.com>, 220 Old Rt. 8 South, Valencia, PA 16059, 412-898-3603 (H)
- • Moved by Keith Conover (AMRG-ASRC), seconded by John Miller (MARSAR), to make this proposal to the membership at the subsequent membership meeting, unanimous vote in favor.

Membership Survey

John Miller (MARSAR) has volunteered to collate and analyze the results of this survey (see attached). The survey goes to member team individual members. Jay Cooke (GPSAR) had made a proposal at the December meeting that led to this survey.

Comment: what about ballot-box stuffing? Well, if a team or individual wants to go to that much effort, that's OK. What about optional name, team? What about some questions about the individual's length of

association with PSARC, and amount of SAR experience? Peter: can get some of this from the open-ended questions at the end. Some worry about it being seen as a definitive document.

Moved by Roy Keiser (STRIKE), seconded by Ron Sadd (WEST), to have input from those who expressed opinions to John Miller (MARSAR) who will revise the survey, get it Peter who will send it out, and compile the results for the September meeting.

PEMA

Martha Ackroyd (Somerset SAR) got a question from Monty Monoriti of PEMA about the VoAD (VOLunteers Assisting in Disasters). Their eight regions correspond somewhat to our four regions. Would like the name of a contact person and alternative for each "cluster." Would like to give them names of two people in each "cluster." VoADs are used for planning. Includes things like Red Cross, Boy Scouts. Our Mission Coordinators work at the state level, but PEMA wants people at the local level, and Peter McCabe (MSAR-ASRC) explained the PSARC MC and EPLO system to Mr. Montoriti, but what he wanted was a local representative. Martha would like some assistance in getting representatives. Peter: the VoAD program died a while ago, now they're trying to reinvigorate the process. They want someone who will attend meetings.

Moved by Roy Keiser (STRIKE), seconded by John Miller, that Secretary Peter McCabe () the secretary and Keith the PSARC mapmaker, get together and find a volunteer for each cluster. Friendly amendment by Keith Conover, that this person's job is to contact each of the teams in each area and try to get them to send representatives to the VoAD meetings.

Splitting Northern Region

Split via Rt. 15? The Northern Region Coordinator is in Stroudsburg and is a long way from the western part of the state. Hard for him to represent people from the Far West, hard to have regional meetings.

This would mean that we would no longer have a member-at-large

White Deer is in Central; the existing map isn't quite accurate.

Treasurer

- • Andy Appel took over as Treasurer from Steve Houck, who had family problems and had to resign; Andy isn't able to be here due to the recent death of his father. We have had some problems with depositing and crediting checks.
- • Martha notes that since she is in the Somerset area, she can deposit all checks.
- • Moved by Roy Keiser, seconded by John Miller that Martha deposit all the checks. Unanimous vote in favor.
- • Can Martha get a receipt book and send out receipts? Yes.

Liaison with other States

Martha would like liaisons with other SAR council groups, such as VA, WV (which has a meeting today for form a state SAR Council, Heather notes), Maryland, NJ, etc.; to get people who are joint members to other organizations. (Note: Peter reports that Maryland's attempt at a SAR Council has collapsed.)

Adjourned at 1030.

PSARC Membership Meeting

called to order at 1040 by President Martha Ackroyd (Somerset SAR)

Initial Matters

Moved, to accept the minutes of the previous meeting with the modification that Thornhurst's dues had indeed been paid on time.

Treasurer's report: attached. Moved, seconded and accepted unanimously to accept the Treasurer's report. Noted by the President that there are several organizations listed as not paid on this list and will need to be updated: Strike, Thornurst, Elkland, AMRG, Keystone have recently paid, and perhaps some others.

Martha Ackroyd (Somerset SAR) briefly noted the recent problems with Schawley and Tate as described in the Board of Directors minutes, above.

Committee Reports

Don Scelza (AMRG-ASRC), Membership Chair, reported on the proposal for revising the membership structure of the Council (see attached). Keith Conover (AMRG-ASRC) will put up a copy of version 0.2, with changes made on comments at the Board of Directors meeting, on his Web page for member teams' viewing.

<http://www.pitt.edu/~kconover>

We discussed the need for screening members of member teams - we don't want to require teams to get rid of members, but we want to know each team's screening process, including criminal investigation - Heather Houlahan (AMRG-ASRC) suggested that teams may need to do more than just a simple criminal background check; she suggested that teams do a background check just like you'd do for a new employee at a day care center. But she also pointed out that this really does need to be done at the individual team level.

Exercise in September

Ron Sadd of WEST noted that the coming exercise; see attached handout; pointed out by a member that TROT-SAR and other teams with horses may want to put a horse-based component for the exercise this year or next year. Problem is that the park where the exercise was held last year, and will be held again this year, doesn't allow horses; maybe we can work with the park to arrange a special exception.

DCNR SAR Certification

Ken Boyles (DCNR-Parks) and Ken Chiacchia (AMRG-ASRC) are working on state certification - the Grid I and Grid II programs are offered and those who complete it can get a certificate of attendance from the state Fire Academy, but the Fire Academy is unwilling to do testing. So, Ken Boyles is starting a testing project through Department of Conservation and Natural Resources where people can take a DCNR test, and get a card and patch. Ken is in the process of training people to offer the test.

The test is based on PSARC standards, and as it is the only statewide test based on PSARC standards that is available at present.

Peter McCabe (MSAR-ASRC) also incidentally notes that the ASRC and DCNR are renegotiating their MOU (Memorandum of Understanding).

Legislation - Ron Wisbith

Ron (R-40) is working with other PSARC officers including Tom Hirschak of Keystone SAR to contact state legislators to get legislation to set up a state SAR Advisory Board.

Survey - John Miller

John Miller (MARSAR) (609) 646-0524 (home) will be making some minor changes (as described in the Board of Directors minutes, above) and he and the Secretary will be getting the survey as soon as possible.

John also noted that he has state resource forms for teams that respond into NJ. NJ is now forming a SAR council.

Resource Sheets

Peter McCabe (MSAR-ASRC): we usually send out Resource Forms for each team to fill out on a yearly basis – but we have been getting fewer and fewer each year.

Suggestion made and accepted by Peter to send out, with the blank forms and a request for an update,

Bills

Need to pay bills for Post Office box, FCC license renewal, and there is also a bill from Harrisburg Area Community College for \$200 – PSARC used to meet at the Public Safety Institute building on the HACC campus, but stopped using it when the PSI informed PSARC that

VoAD

Martha Ackroyd (Somerset SAR) noted the Board of Directors actions as described above in the Board of Directors minutes.

Nominating Committee

As required by the Bylaws, the President has appointed a nominating committee, consisting of:

Rose Keller (STRIKE)
Jim Hill (WEST)
Heather Houlahan (AMRG-ASRC)

December Council Meeting

Monty Monoriti of PEMA has offered to let us meet for free at the new PEMA building in Harrisburg. Jim Howley (Thornhurst SAR) will coordinate with PEMA to set this up.

PSARC Billing

Martha noted that she will be directly depositing all checks for dues and sending out receipts since.

Mission Reports

Carol Prosseda used to be collecting has moved, and her mailing address has changed. From now on, send mission reports (both the PSARC After-Action Report and the Pennsylvania PIERS report) to:

PSARC Mission Reports
attn: Roy Keiser
STRIKE K-9 SAR
P.O. Box 61
West Milton, PA 17886-0061

Pennsylvania Emergency Incident Reporting System booklets, with a report form, are available by calling:

1-800-424-7362

PSARC Forms Packets, with an original of the After Action report, are available at PSARC meetings, from the PSARC President, or from Keith Conover's Web page at

<http://www.pitt.edu/~kconover>

New Dispatch Numbers

There is a new unified dispatch number for MARSAR, WEST, Palisades, West Jersey

1-800-545-MICU

New number for Rescue 40:

1-888-740-7778

Web Page

Keith Conover (AMRG-ASRC) volunteered to set up a temporary Web page off his personal page for PSARC; this met with a general approval.

<http://www.pitt.edu/~kconover>

Adjourned at 1220.