


**Parsippany - Troy Hills, NJ - Fire District #2**

**Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting Minutes**

<b>Call to Order</b>		Time: 8:00pm	Date: 7/10/17
<b>Commissioners</b>	<i>Present:</i> George Appel, Eugene Caulfield, Peter Deegan, Donald Denise, James Murphy		<i>Absent:</i> None
<b>Guests</b>	Chief Douglas Reighard, Deputy Chief Joseph Reeber		
<b>Last Meeting's Minutes</b>	Read & Approved		
<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	Read & Approved		
<b>Bills for Payment</b>	Approved		
<b>Correspondence</b>	Read & Reviewed		
<b>Committee Reports</b>			
<b>Insurance</b>	Insurance is current. Awaiting two members' paperwork; upon receipt will complete transition to VFIS Life Insurance policy.		
<b>House</b>	Still looking into roofers and getting estimates. Roof continues to leak.		
<b>Apparatus</b>	E-23 mirror has been replaced. T-21 is making a knocking noise under the front of the truck. Will bring to J&J. E-22 also being brought to J&J to repair the driver's door latch. Will begin pricing additional tool mounting on apparatus.		
<b>Chief's Report</b>	Read & Reviewed.		
<b>Old Business</b>	Chief's budget will be restructured. Will call DJs regarding next year's dinner dance.		
<b>New Business</b>	Radio system problems continue. This is an ongoing issue that has been repeatedly brought to the attention of PD by the Chiefs and Fire Commissioners over the last few years. We will now reach out directly to the Mayor, Town Council, as well as other concerned parties, regarding finding a solution. Correspondence attached.		
<b>Adjourned</b>		Time: 9:30pm	Date: 7/10/17
<b>Respectfully Submitted</b>	 James Murphy Secretary		

**From:** Douglas Reighard <[reighardd@gmail.com](mailto:reighardd@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** July 6, 2017 at 4:44:40 PM EDT  
**To:** partroy mayorsoffice <[partroymayorsoffice@parsippany.net](mailto:partroymayorsoffice@parsippany.net)>  
**Cc:** Donaldandmarlo <[donaldandmarlo@yahoo.com](mailto:donaldandmarlo@yahoo.com)>  
**Subject:** Communication meeting concern

Mayor Barberio

I just wanted to reach out to you in regard to our communication system with some feelings and concerns. I was unable to attend the first radio meeting you attend due to a previous work commitment however my fire commissioner passed on the information that you were not aware of the 3 year issue with the system and were to say the least not pleased with our current situation of having an unsafe system to operate on. I appreciate your concern and the push you made to move us in the right direction. I did attend the meeting last week with the county, I'm not sure you're aware that not only am I the District # 2 Chef my regular occupation is fire chief at Morristown Airport and I'm a former volunteer Asst Chief in the Morristown Fire Bureau. I have been operating with the county system for years and I have to say I am very pleased with all of the county services and find the cost paid to the county is well worth the money spent to operate within that system. Although nothing is perfect the county always looks to improve their service. In the event they have an issue regardless of it being equipment or personnel, it is handled quickly and the chiefs are given feedback on the corrective measures taken. We have been dealing with not only the radio issues, but the CAD system for over 3 years. In addition we constantly get poor quality dispatching service from the people operating the dispatch center. Radio calls go unanswered, attitude is given, information is not properly communicated and directives are not followed. This is not a reflection off all the dispatchers but there are some who we have problems with regularly. The fire chief's have complained over and over and rarely get any feedback as to what happened and how it will be corrected.

When we sat the the meeting last week at the county oem center and I was actually hopeful for the first time in my 3 years here as fire chief that our problems will be fixed. I hoped that once we got to county dispatch that everyone would see what a dispatch center is supposed to do and to be honest I had hopes we would never come back to what we have dealt with for years. I knew that time would tell. However last night I attended a meeting at District 4's fire house and I was disappointed you and the business administrator were not in attendance. This meeting moved in a completely different direction. It sounded like everything I was told you stated at the 1st meeting was being disregarded and that we are going to continue to try and repair the current system. There will be no move to the county and we will continue to operate as we are today with hopefully a minor repair to once again try to fix our broken system. I am obviously not happy. In addition I was advised by the police captain that his internal issues with dispatchers was not being taken seriously by the administration and that going direct to town hall in addition to notifying him would be helpful. I couldn't believe that this is the direction I must take to handle a personnel issue within the dispatch center. I have been a firefighter for over 30 years and operated in many capacities in 9 different fire departments as a volunteer, combination and career firefighter and fire officer. As a fire chief in Bergen County along with my local police chief we worked together and moved from a local dispatch center to the largest dispatch center in Bergen County. Again no transition is easy and had a bumpy start but the communications improved and the service was night and day.

I want you to know as the chief of the Rainbow Lakes Fire Company, Parsippany Fire District # 2 I am against my district operating under this system. I feel the firefighters in my district and the citizens we serve are being placed in harms way by continuing to operate with the current failing system. In addition as a citizen living in Parsippany I feel my neighbors lives and property are in danger. As I said at the beginning of this email, I was happy to hear you were moving in a direction to fix this problem even if it is only temporary, but after last nights meeting I fear this is being taken off track and moved in a completely direction. If you would like to discuss any of this further I can be reached by cell at [\(973\) 417-2776](tel:9734172776) at any time.

Respectfully

Chief Douglas Reighard



May 29, 2017

To: Board of Fire Commissioners of Fire Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6  
Board of Directors, Parsippany Vol. Ambulance Squad  
Board of Directors, Rockaway Neck Vol. Ambulance Squad  
Mayor James Barberio, Parsippany – Troy Hills, NJ  
Chief Paul Phillips, Parsippany Police Department  
Township Council of Parsippany – Troy Hills, NJ

Re: Fire and EMS Radio System Issues

Greetings,

The Chiefs of the township fire and ems emergency services write this letter with frustration and regret in its need. The Fire and EMS channels owned by the town and managed by the police department have had consistent and regular issues rendering the system inoperable for periods of time. We write this letter to express our anger and dissatisfaction at the current state of our emergency radio communications system. The radio system is in such a state that it now endangers the lives of Parsippany's Emergency Responders.

The Parsippany emergency radio communications system is regularly failing and the frequency is getting worse. The system is plagued by repeater failures, voter failures, and other hardware failures. These failures broadcast static, high frequency noise, random tones, and other undesirable noise on the repeated radio channels of Fire Dispatch, EMS Dispatch, and Fire Ground 1. These noises cause emergency communications to be interrupted, not heard, or causes units to not to be able to broadcast.

The history of these issues dates to Father's Day weekend of 2014 when lightning struck the radio tower. Emergency repairs were quickly made, however, the system quickly deteriorated afterwards. The issues were so bad that in early 2015, after great pressure from the Emergency Services Chiefs after several months of trouble, all township units had to utilize Morris County's Ops 21 for communications with Parsippany Dispatch. After this period, repairs were made and there was an improvement in the system. However, for the last 2 years the system has consistently declined in usability and reliability. These issues have forced EMS operations to be moved to Fire Ground 1 at times, Fire Dispatch operations to move to Fire Ground 1, and units to stop utilizing fire ground 1 during calls. At times, it is a vicious circle of moving operations between channels to avoid the interference. At times, all 3 channels have gone down simultaneously giving Parsippany's Fire, EMS, and Rescue responders no way to communicate except by cell phone. The periods of interference and failure can vary from 30 seconds to several hours in length.

An example of this issue was demonstrated during the drafting of this letter. On May 29<sup>th</sup> between 9am and 10am, EMS dispatch suffered radio transmission and repeater issues 4 times. One of these times occurred while a paramedic unit was attempting to communicate with Parsippany Dispatch regarding the location and condition of a patient. EMS dispatch had to repeat the message 2 times before the paramedic unit could receive it. Fire Dispatch also suffered an issue 1 time while District 1 was broadcasting an announcement. This caused the message to not be received properly by several of their members.

Parsippany Police Department in September of 2016 sought the services of a radio consulting firm. This firm conducted a study of the hardware controlling the fire and ems repeated channels. In December of 2016 it was reported to the township chiefs at our regularly scheduled meeting that the radio consultants recommended replacement of the system due to its advanced age. Copies of the

consultant's report were not provided to any Emergency Services Chief of Parsippany so we have no idea of the true root causes of these failures or content of the report. In December, it was stated that the Parsippany Police Department would start considering repairing, replacing, or designing another system. Since December 2016 no further information has been shared. When asked about the problems no response is given or the response is work through it we are trying. These are not acceptable responses and we fear our concerns are falling on deaf ears. The radio issues present a clear and present danger to safety and welfare of Parsippany's nearly 400 emergency personnel and the citizens we are sworn to protect. The fire, ems, and rescue units of Parsippany depend on a reliable radio system to receive calls, updates, and relay information to dispatch and other units on scene and still responding. We all fear the day that the radio issues cause a delay in responding to a citizen's life threatening emergency or mayday call by one of our own responders. The delays caused by failures of our radio system could, in an extreme, cause a loss of life.

The Chiefs would hereby request a full disclosure of the radio system issues in a confidential manner if necessary. We also request information from the Police Administration on the progress they have made in rectifying the issues, if any. We need to have an immediate solution to the issues, whatever they may be. We cannot wait years for funding, design, and construction of a new Parsippany owned radio system, all the time dealing with the current failing system. Solutions that should be explored are as follows: requesting an emergency appropriation from the township council for repairs to the current system, seeking a combined services agreement with Morris County for use or movement to their radio system, seeking a combined services agreement with the New Jersey State Police for use or movement to their statewide NJICS, or other solutions out there.

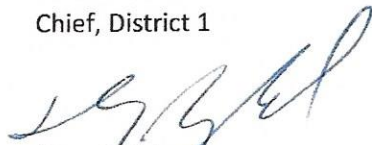
The chiefs would also like to have an update in regard to the computer aided dispatch (cad) system. The cad has been in process for 3 years and is still not in place. We have heard several times that there has been a server issue, but we have no resolution. The fire department and police department cad systems were ordered at approximately the same time. The PD CAD has been in service for over one year. The fire department CAD system still has no timeline for implementation.

Mayor Barberio has stated on numerous occasions that Parsippany's Emergency Services have greatly contributed to making Parsippany the 5<sup>th</sup> best place in the United States to live. We need to see actions now that back up these words. The Chiefs request to be a part of the discussions and a part of the solution.

Respectfully Submitted,



David Hollner  
Chief, District 1



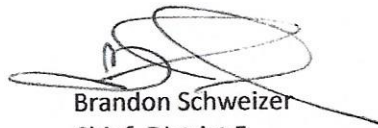
Doug Reighard  
Chief, District 2



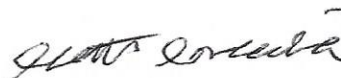
Matthew Topolewski  
Chief, District 3



Christopher Cleary  
Chief, District 4



Brandon Schweizer  
Chief, District 5



Scott Serrecchia  
Chief, District 6



**From:** Douglas Reighard <[reighardd@gmail.com](mailto:reighardd@gmail.com)>

**Date:** July 6, 2017 at 4:05:08 PM EDT

**To:** jay wieners <[jwieners@parpolice.com](mailto:jwieners@parpolice.com)>

**Cc:** partroy mayorsoffice <[partroymayorsoffice@parsippany.net](mailto:partroymayorsoffice@parsippany.net)>, Brandon Schweizer Deputy 5 <[brandons25@optonline.net](mailto:brandons25@optonline.net)>, Donaldandmarlo <[donaldandmarlo@yahoo.com](mailto:donaldandmarlo@yahoo.com)>

**Subject: July 4th Dispatch issue**

Captain Wieners

I just wanted to follow up with an official complaint to your office in regard to a dispatching issue on July 4th. When District 2 went into service to cover the fireworks detail at the high school, dispatch was advised that for all calls for District # 2, District # 5 was also to be dispatched. At Aprox 2141 Denville requested our district to respond mutual aid to 74 Lakewood Drive in their town. This request came in during the fireworks display and fortunately I was able to hear it come in. As you are aware my apparatus was all tied up at the fireworks event and was unable to respond. I immediately requested District # 5 be dispatched. Once the dispatch traffic cleared I again advised dispatch that District # 5 was supposed to be dispatched to ALL District # 2 calls. The dispatcher advised me that she was now aware and didn't know because she "Just came on shift". When we contact dispatch with a directive in regard to needs of the fire district I would believe that this would be considered an important directive and the needs are for the protection of the citizens we serve. Failure to pass important information on or it to disregarded is unacceptable and delays the response of units responding to an emergency. This only compounds our current issues with radios and CAD systems. Hope that this complaint will be investigated and handled appropriately.

Respectfully

Chief Douglas Reighard  
Parsippany Fire District # 2