

MARION TOWNSHIP MEETING WITH HOWARD AND WALKER VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES
October 27, 2009 at the Township Building

Present: Jack Aberegg, Archie Gettig, Jr., Ray Gutshall and Ellie Trulick

Guests: Rick Dillon, Ken Roan, Greg Kline, Howard Fire Company: Bob Mann, Collin Alterio, Tom Bowes, Bobby DeArment, Walker Fire Company: Doug Corman, Allen Strouse, Chris Roan

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by Pledge of Allegiance.

Aberegg welcomed all and thanked them for their attendance. He feels that we have signed an agreement with Howard and Walker Fire Departments and he would like to have them show us exactly where on the fire map they will be responding if a fire call is made and especially to I-80. Bob Mann, Fire Chief of Howard Fire Company asked what has been decided with Bellefonte Fire Company. Aberegg stated nothing has been done with them and we have until December 31, 2009 to sign an agreement with Bellefonte, which we will not do if Howard and Walker can provide the services needed. Mann showed the map and explained that neither Howard nor Walker Fire Companies would be able to handle I-80 because their response time is greater than Bellefonte Fire Companies and that would be unacceptable for any accidents. Walker also agreed that they would not be able to respond as quickly as Bellefonte. Bob Mann said there could be a lawsuit if Bellefonte did not respond as first responder. Gettig stated since the lawsuit was brought up he wanted to clarify with Bowes what was said at a previous meeting. Gettig asked Bowes who should go to I-80 and who would be liable if there was a lawsuit. Bowes stated that Bellefonte would be the closest and they would be the first responders to access I-80.

Gutshall asked why is it that Marion Township should be responsible to pay Bellefonte Fire Company to cover I-80 and we pay nothing to Clinton County to cover I-80. He does not feel that the equipment needs of Bellefonte should be paid for by Marion Township. Bowes stated that he does not have the answer and doesn't know if anyone here has that answer.

Aberegg stated that PSATS has informed us that there are no requirements for a fire company to respond to I-80. Bowes says that if the time is too long he doesn't know where litigation would go.

Aberegg said if we must pay Bellefonte to cover the 6 miles of I-80 from the FAT tax and then we will split the difference between Howard and Walker. Is that agreeable to both fire companies? We have paid the money to Bellefonte for 2009 at this time. Bellefonte has increased the payment requested from Marion Township for 2010 to \$2,000.00. For years we have been paying them over \$4000.00 for fire protection and this is twice as much as our past agreement. Aberegg said he would just as soon give Bellefonte Fire Company \$1,000.00 a year and then reduce the FAT to Walker and Howard by that amount. Bowes stated that if a call goes out for mutual aid Bellefonte must respond to that call. There is only 6 miles of I-80 that is to be covered by Bellefonte.

Aberegg stated that what we are being told by Howard and Walker is that they will not go onto I-80 for as a first responder. Howard and Walker will be covering all of Marion Township except I-80. Bellefonte will no longer have any part of the index except 6 miles of I-80. There are a lot of accidents on the 6 miles.

Bobby DeArment discussed how Bellefonte bills for accident rescues. Does Bellefonte receive money when they go to an accident on I-80? Yes they receive a portion of the money billed for each accident responded to. He also mentioned that a negotiating point with Bellefonte would be that their index of response area has been reduced to just the 6 miles of I-80. No money is given to Howard and Walker for any rescue procedures. Question that must be asked of Bellefonte Borough is: if the fire company receives any money back for their use of fire equipment on I-80.

Aberegg wants to speak to Bellefonte Borough about the fire companies. Secretary will invite Bellefonte Borough (Ralph Stewart) to the next Supervisor's meeting. We want to know the number of calls and types.

Bob Mann will extend index to I-80 will work out the Sand Ridge Road with Walker because it does span both Walker and Marion Township. Hublersburg Ridge is not a problem. Walker's Doug Corman stated that his main concern is that every person's home receives the fastest responder regardless of which company it is. He and Bob Mann will work out the boxes for each to respond to appropriately. This may

take a week or two for Norm Spackman to get this set up but it is doable and Howard and Walker will work together. Nittany Ridge has been serviced by Clinton County and that will not change for the closest medical help.

Bob Mann suggested that we might want to contact Milesburg Borough for coverage on I-80. He also stated that in a conversation with Benner Township they might be starting their own fire company. They would not be signing the agreement proposed by Bellefonte Borough between Marion Township, Spring Township and Benner Township.

Aberegg stated we need to separate the EMS from the fire discussion completely. Bellefonte ambulance is a separate entity and has an agreement with the fire company to pay them a stipend for their runs. Howard and Walker do not have that advantage and receive no money back at all.

Aberegg stated it appears that Marion Township can enter into an agreement with Bellefonte Borough and we will need to make an addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding signed with Howard and Walker when/if an agreement is reached for a sum. That sum would be deducted from the payments to Howard and Walker before the FAT is split at 75%/25% as stated in the current signed agreement. Secretary explained that the total of the FAT might vary depending on the payment of taxes. Secretary will send a letter to Howard and Walker to inform them of the outcome of the discussion with Bellefonte Borough.

Aberegg made a motion to adjourn.

October 27, 2009 meeting with Howard and Walker fire companies adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Aberegg, Chairman

Ellie Trulick, Secretary/Treasurer

Archie Gettig, Jr., Vice Chairman

Ray Gutshall