

SAFETY MEETING MINUTES

January 22, 2009

Present: Brad Gates, Risk Management Specialist
Billie Walker, PHN Supervisor
Cherry Kilby, Emergency Services Administrative Assistant
Josh Mitchell, Public Administration/ Solid Waste Director

Absent: Sandra Gregory, HR Director

Guests: Carla Grit, Key Risk Insurance
Leeanne Whisnant, Health Director
Pete Bunn, Maintenance Director

ACCIDENT REVIEW UPDATE: Brad Gates reported that three non-recordable accidents had occurred in since the last meeting. All were vehicle accidents with no injuries. Two of the accidents had adverse weather conditions as a contributing factor, and the third was a multi-vehicle accident, with the County employee not being at fault.

EAP UPDATE: Mr. Gates reported on information he has gathered on Hostile Person/ Intruder Codes. It was generally agreed that the code needs to be clear enough to generate immediate response, but it remains necessary not to induce panic in visitors to County buildings. After much discussion, it was decided to use: CODE DOWN BLUE for this purpose. CODE DOWN is the existing lockdown code, and the addition of BLUE would indicate immediate law enforcement action needed. The Committee also expressed an understanding that the current code in use by DSS was well established, known to DSS employees, and needs not be changed for their department.

Mr. Gates and Ms. Kilby will work together to make the EAP flipchart ready for final approval and distribution.

SAFETY INSPECTIONS UPDATE: Mr. Gates reported the new monthly Safety Coordinator Checklists seemed to be effective in increasing awareness and safety, based on the feedback at this point. The February checklist would include additional revisions, and be sent out near the end of this month.

Mr. Gates further reported he had met with Mr. Pete Bunn on January 15th to discuss the uncompleted corrections from the annual inspection correction checklists. Several items have not been corrected due to budget issues, weather conditions, uncertainty of the future of the locations themselves, and some due to confusion of site maintenance responsibility.

Mr. Gates reported that the budget issue surrounding the parks has been brought to the attention of County Manager Rick French. Mr. French explained that due to initial project funding agreements, several of the items at issue must be repaired and maintained, and could not be demolished. Mr. Bunn submitted that funding for these repairs was not available/ budgeted at this time. Ms. Whisnant reported that she had been part of a recent committee to write a grant for resurfacing at Matheson Park (not County owned) which had failed. After some discussion, the park repair issue was tabled.

Mr. Gates informed the committee as to an uncertainty as to the County's responsibility to make corrections on several leased properties, including Wittenburg School, the EDC, and Dusty Ridge Park.

Mr. Gates has not read the lease agreement for Wittenburg School, but will make an effort to further research the matter.

A recent email from EDC Director David Icenhour has led Mr. Gates to believe that the property occupied by EDC was not leased to the County, but rather to the Economic Development Corporation, and, as such, is not the County's concern. Mr. Gates will seek further information on this.

Mr. Gates reported he has read the lease agreement for Dusty Ridge Access. The agreement seems to point to much more County responsibility than previously understood by the Committee and Maintenance. According to the agreement, the County is responsible for not just the current improvements, but is also responsible to maintain the trails and beach area. There is also reference to the County supplying year-round restroom facilities to shoreline fishermen, and possibly shared responsibility in the maintenance of the Wildlife Access area. Mr. Gates and Ms. Gregory will further discuss this matter with the County Manager.

Mr. Gates reported that in conversations with Mr. Bunn, the future disposition of some County buildings, including the Maintenance Barn, the Landfill Workshop, and the Dayton Building remain in doubt. Mr. Bunn is hesitant to make expenditures for improvements/corrections in those locations.

POLICY UPDATE: Mr. Gates submitted the Electric Work Policy and the Hot Works Policy for Committee approval. Mr. Gates explained some of the newer OSHA and NFPA 70E requirements that forced some changes to the policies since they were first submitted to the Committee for review. The Committee voted to approve the Electrical Work Policy as written, and submit it to the County Manager requesting approval and implementation. The Hot Works Policy was amended by the Committee to include "Grinding" in addition to "Welding, Cutting, and Brazing." Also, Ms. Walker recommended the inclusion of "Fire extinguisher to be operational, appropriate, and in reach of the fire watch personnel" in the Operation Guidelines of the policy. The Committee voted to approve the Hot Works Policy with the above changes, and submit it to the County Manager requesting approval and implementation.

The proposed Contractor Policy was discussed at length. One of the main concerns of the department heads present was the effect the policy might have on their "smaller" contractors, such as Lab Technicians, and Groundskeepers which are vital to current operations, but may not be able to meet all the training, insurance, and documentation requirements the Contractor Policy would likely impose. Many hoped the policy might have some sort of exemption for smaller contractors and owner-operators. Also, a point of general concern was on-site versus off-site contractors, and what amount, if any, of a contracted agency's work could be performed on-site while still being considered an off-site contractor.

Mr. Gates informed the Committee members the Bloodborne Pathogens Policy was due for review. Mr. Gates will send-out copies of the policy for review.

TRAINING UPDATE: Mr. Gates reported that the recent Defensive Driving and Fire Extinguisher training programs were well attended, but expressed a concern over employees not attending required training, even when make-up sessions were provided. Some discussion from the group followed, including potential financial penalties for missing required training. Ms. Walker offered that cancelled training classes could be partly to blame for the apparent apathy on the part of some employees, with some having arrived at classes only to find out they had been rescheduled. Ms. Walker also suggested that some of the training would be better attended if held in individual departments, when those departments make up the bulk of the trainees. Also suggested was getting the departments more involved in the scheduling of the training dates to avoid potential conflicts.

Ms. Whisnant, Ms. Walker, and Ms. Grit discussed the County's responsibility under OSHA regulations to provide an antibody titer following hepatitis-B vaccinations. Also of concern is the vaccinated employee's right-to-know. Ms. Grit will be sending an existing form for vaccination informed consent/declination and Ms. Walker will be examining and possibly modifying the current forms in use by the Health Department. Ms. Walker and Mr. Gates will set-up a meeting with Ms. Gregory to discuss this issue further.

DEPARTMENTAL GOALS: Sandra Gregory was not in attendance, so goals will be discussed at the February meeting. Mr. Gates reported that per Ms. Gregory, the goal cycle would be changed, for the sake of clarity, to coincide with the Workers Compensation reporting year cycle.

Ms. Walker expressed concern that the current goals set for some departments are unattainable, and should be lowered.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION: Mr. Gates informed the Committee he was to be taking over responsibility for worker's compensation claims. Ms. Gregory would maintain existing claims, and advise Mr. Gates as necessary.

Ms. Grit explained the current claims as far as financial loss, including current payouts and anticipated payouts. Ms. Grit explained that while we were not at our goals, we are doing well for a local government our size. Ms. Grit made some suggestions as to additional measures which could be taken to lower our injury rate, including the purchase of powered-lift stretchers for EMS.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2009 at 9:00 am. The location will be the Administration Building Conference room.