

Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference
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ASRC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
 August 15, 2015
 ED Conference Room, Winchester Medical Center – Winchester, VA
 (with teleconference connection)

Documented Board Representatives		BoD Reps Present
Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group 1. Ben McCandless (<i>via teleconference</i>) 2. Don Scelza	AMRG	2
Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group 1. Laura Dodson 2. Aaron Bentley	BRMRG	0
DELMARVA Search and Rescue Group 1. Jim Jackson (<i>proxy to Mike Hansen</i>) 2. Robert Peterson (<i>proxy to Mike Hansen</i>)	DMVSAR	2
Maryland Search and Rescue 1. Gregg Wavle	MSAR	0
Mountaineer Area Rescue Group 1. John Barnett (<i>proxy to Don Scelza</i>) 2. Don Ferguson (<i>proxy to Don Scelza</i>)	MARG	2
Northwest Pennsylvania K-9 Search and Rescue 1. Adam Gatti (<i>via teleconference</i>)	NWPAK9SAR	1 (non-voting)
Potomac Valley Rescue Group 1. Alan Holmes 2. Scott Glazer	PVRG	0
Search and Rescue Ohio 1. Brian Maier	SAR-Ohio	1
Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group 1. Andrew Hower 2. Padraic Hughes (<i>proxy to A. Hower, connected via teleconference 11:25AM</i>)	SMRG	2

I. Call to Order

The Board of Directors (BoD) Meeting of the ASRC was called to order by Don Scelza, Chairman, at 1015 on Saturday, August 15, 2015. The meeting was conducted in the Winchester Medical Center, Emergency Department Conference Room – Winchester, VA.

II. Participant Role Call

Don Scelza opened the meeting with a team/BoD Representative Roll Call. (Six ASRC Teams were represented as documented in the chart above.)

During the meeting there were five voting ASRC BoD Representatives present and four proxies conveyed to the Secretary prior to commencement of the meeting, representing nine of fourteen voting members present (10 of 15 total representatives). 57% of the ASRC Board of Directors was represented, constituting a quorum.

Also in attendance were Adam Gatti, NWPAK9SAR; Steven Weiss, SMRG; and Beth Huhn, ASRC Secretary.

III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

A motion to accept the May 17, 2015, BoD Meeting Minutes (as disseminated with the August 15, 2015, BoD Meeting Agenda) was made by Andrew Hower (SMRG), seconded by Brian Maier (SAR-Ohio). No abstentions, no nays, all BoD in favor. **Motion passed.**

IV. Unfinished Business

A. ASRC Credentialing Project: Progress being made on credentialing process

i. Bylaws (Don Scelza, Chair)

- Three major changes included in new proposed version (2015)
 - Correction of typos
 - Changes to modify focus from conference centric to Group centric
 - Integration of credentialing system
- Chair requests all Groups discuss proposed documents with teams. Bylaws will be voted on at the next AGM.
 - Hower noted that May 2016 AGM is currently scheduled on Mother's Day weekend and National Cave Rescue Conference weekend (5/6-8/16).
 - Chair requested feedback if any Group is interested in hosting the 2016 AGM.
 - SMRG may have interest. Possible location Green Ridge State Forest. To check internally and notify Chair with updates.

ii. Credentialing Policy (Ben McCandless, AMRG - Credentialing Committee)

- Working on how to devise system that will maintain culture.

- Working on how will implement standards and PTB's.
- Interested in feedback from Groups.
- Would like to send a list of questions out to the Board for guidance. The request for guidance focuses on areas where the Credentialing Committee has questions and desires guidance from the Board.
- SMRG concerns (Steve Weiss, SMRG)
 - Big group, scheduling reviews may be cumbersome; possibly focus on certification of GTO's versus all members
 - Content of standards lacking, needs modified
 - How will ASRC credential Evaluators? Needs to be a bigger component of the policy (Groups versus members may be a future prospect)
 - SMRG will develop proposals and are willing to assist with content
 - Steve Weiss will serve as conduit to Ben to relay content/ideas (timeline within next month)
- Other concerns include timely scheduling of external evaluations for testing:
 - Will Evaluators have the ability to move between Groups timely and effectively? Ideal timeline would be within several weeks versus several months.
 - Focus more effort into certification of GTO's versus credentialing individuals.
 - Chair relayed that this was discussed at the 2015 Retreat. The effort to certify Groups will be immense. Advantage to certifying individuals is that ASRC members administratively respond to multi-group missions as members of a Group, but those that respond are quickly spread across separate teams to meet on the ground search needs.
 - McCandless requested additional feedback from the Board on this particular concern:
 - Does the Board wish to focus on GTO certifications?
 - Does the Board wish to focus on individual certifications?
- Additional comments from Chair:
 - Is it important that the ASRC certify individuals (FTM/FTL).
 - Understand concern from Groups regarding timeliness of testing.
 - Wish to make sure members are capable of performing to the criteria in the standards; concern if leave certification level at the GTO only – does not alleviate the historical issue of self-certification.
 - Most GTO's will sign-off on member PTB's. Will make audit of certifications easier on the Groups and the GTO's.

- Strength of the certification/audit process needs maintained, but need to ensure timely and figure out appropriate method(s) to address.
- Not in favor of certifying Groups; works for MRA because when responding, MRA certified Groups respond as a group. ASRC places resources where needed and ASRC operates much differently than MRA.
- Recommend continue down path of individual certifications, but ensure process does not put a strain on Groups or individuals.
- Look forward to additional input from SMRG and all Groups.
- Ben will issue request for guidance via email. Will pose questions with options proposed. Please respond with any feedback desired. (*Request for guidance sent by Ben McCandless to all BOD Reps via email August 15, 2015*).
- Andrew Hower indicated that ASRC has self-imposed written testing guidelines. Other agency PTB processes don't include similar written testing guidelines. Audit authority for written test to higher authority (controlled chain-of-custody, etc.). Performance-based skills and PTB assessed/documentated at Group level. Could be as simple as submitting completed PTB and resume for approval by a certification cadre.
- Michael Hansen indicated if open testing opportunities across multiple teams, it lends credibility to the process.
- Open question (McCandless): How would one become qualified to certify a PTB?
 - Hower: On a national level, the PTB is open on a local level. Evaluators from different areas are common. Level of diversity of sign-offs for ASRC will most likely be limited – could set threshold for number of sign-offs by one individual.
 - McCandless: Could consider breaking PTB into categories of skills, each category audited/reviewed via limited set of skills and have percentage of each sign-off by different individuals.
 - Hower: Auditing piece will come at end of completion of the PTB. Contact Evaluator to audit components of the closed PTB; then contact candidate to audit skills.
 - McCandless and Hower to talk off-line to discuss additional details.

iii. Position Task Books (PTBs) (Don Scelza, Chair)

- Disseminated drafts with Board package.
- Understand that there are issues with content of standards.
- Would like to proceed on current path in order to test process and in parallel move forward to update standards.
- NWPAK9SAR asked to review current drafts, as Group that does not have ingrained exposure to the standards and certification processes.
- Comment timelines will be posted to ensure all Groups have the opportunity to review and comment on the drafts.

iv. **Training Standards** (Don Scelza, Chair)

- Proposed draft v7.2 disseminated with Board package.
- Hope that approval of these minimal changes is undisputed.
- Would like to save the significant conversation and effort for the v8 standards.

B. **Operational Guidance Manual Update** (Michael Hansen, Operations Officer)

- Updated text has been incorporated with comments.
- Appendices C&D still pending to incorporate, plus Group accreditation policies.
- Operations Officer to make latest version available to Groups on August 16, 2015.
- Group accreditation will be review of first operational period, real world scenarios.
- Comments – SMRG/Operations Officer:
 - Many Groups frequently cover missions with second operational period.
 - ASRC has long tradition of supporting multi-operational period searches; may wish to consider when evaluating Groups.
 - Option could be review of first shift support of multi-operational periods.
 - As implement change to new Operational Guidance Manual, Groups will need to develop own, detailed Operations Manuals.
 - Is it possible to provide a template to Groups?
 - Operations Officer plans to develop deliverable and revisit the existing Operations Manual Annexes. Much of the information is extremely valuable and can be moved to templates or stand-alone best practice documents.
 - Will work to describe operational scenarios that can serve as a basis for training content. Assess operational history in developing training scenarios – trend analysis to incorporate into training content and enhance standards.
 - Context to shape training and credentialing should come from operations.
 - Scelza – AMRG has a fairly comprehensive Operations document; will ask AMRG Board if can be shared broadly within ASRC as a template.
 - Operations Officer would like to see ASRC become leaders in abduction/recovery scenarios; there is research available for missing and exploited individuals.
 - Other scenarios include people that don't wish to be found
 - Incorporate non-traditional approaches
 - Scelza – evaluation of teams: MRA teams get together and are evaluated at the same time. Valuable as a training opportunity and teams learn from each other.
 - Possibly ASRC can appoint an Exercise Leader/Officer to develop and support conference exercises.

C. **Tracking Standards Update** (Padraic Hughes, SMRG – Tracking Committee Chair)

- Five members from across the Conference have asked to join the Tracking Committee. 4- from SMRG and 1- from BRMRG. We will have our first meeting

- in September to review proposed standards. Greg Stronko and Tom Loftus have tracking experience.
- Draft standards in development.
 - At next Board Meeting will present PowerPoint presentation with details. Hope to adopt existing SARTI material with minor additions for ASRC.
 - May wish to utilize Rob Speiden (Mid-Atlantic expert – At-Large ASRC member) as third-party trainer or evaluator. Proposal will be presented at next Board Meeting.
 - Will issue tracking material for Board/Conference-wide review prior to the next Board Meeting.
 - Possibly quarterly, go to Group Meetings or provide training, in some form, at rotating locations for conference-wide coverage.
 - Need to further define relationship between third-party vendor and ASRC, in order to properly and effectively leverage. Possibilities may include MOU. Padraic to draft proposal to solidify recognition, training to standard and use of materials.
 - Developing roadmap for project for presentation to Board.

V. New Business

- A. **Financial Report** (submitted electronically by Victoria Airey, Treasurer – read by Chair)
- I have received payments from all the teams and all of the at-large members *except* for PVRG. We have not received their roster so their invoice was based on a previous roster. They owe \$661.
 - Two checks were written for the AGM, one for the facilities we used for the meeting (\$150) and the second for the caterers on Saturday night (\$200). For a total of \$350.
 - Our current balance is \$13053.17, the insurance will be paid once I get that bill this month which I estimate to be about \$2550 which will put our account at about \$10503.17

Comment – Weiss: Recommend development of a 2016 Financial Plan that incorporates budget planning to support travel expenses for implementation of the credentialing process. Recommend review of business models from other organizations.

B. **Operations Report** (Michael Hansen, Conference Operations Officer)

- Search overview (with input from each Group present):
 - DMVSAR one call in past quarter
 - SMRG has had several searches (4 in past quarter)
 - SAR-Ohio call-out in July; found before on-scene, otherwise quiet
 - AMRG
 - Change dispatch system to Active 911
 - Dispatched using new system a day after received training on new system.

- System can track avails, where resources are, etc. County dispatch entities also using.
- Need to develop a set of guidelines for use
 - Comments from those present:
 - Safety aspect with person to person contact versus 100% electronic exchange in order to incorporate personal safety checks; check-in by phone encouraged.
 - Safety segment is incorporated into new Operational Guidance Manual.
 - AMRG dispatched to three searches using Active 911, working well. Cost approximately \$1.00 per device per month.

C. Group Updates

SMRG (Steve Weiss, SMRG Chair)

- SAR Operations: Responses in Virginia seem above normal compared to the last ten years, but below the high volume seen in Fall 2015.
 - ASRC teams have been called out to southwestern Virginia (Pulaski and Henry Counties). This is a change from recent years when SW Virginia counties have remained parochial about the SAR resources called out.
 - *Interesting Lessons Learned from Henry County*: The subject who went missing was a dementia patient, living at home, who walked at least 5 miles per day in her usual rounds. We are trying to gain enough of the paperwork on this search to use it for future training, possibly even as a tabletop exercise. The characteristics of the search make it a good candidate to explore some of the more advanced analytic techniques some ASRC members seek to introduce to search planning.
- VDEM Training/Certification: Virginia is ramping up its requirements and administration of VDEM SAR certifications. VDEM SAR Training lead has imposed a requirement that all members of every VDEM team are VDEM certified, with appropriate administration of these certifications (through VDEM).
 - This is highly infeasible for the ASRC teams that have MOUs with VDEM.
 - There really is no authority (via MOU or VASARCO agreement) for Billy Chrimes to offer this.
 - I think we can continue to head in the right direction, noting this mandate as a goal, but not fighting it directly.
- “Reciprocity” between VDEM and ASRC Certifications: ASRC certifications are being accepted as prerequisites for VDEM certifications on a case-by-case basis.
- GIS in Virginia: Through a VASARCO committee on “Communications and Information Management” (following the chapter in NIMS), some SMRG

members are getting traction and enthusiasm for using GIS and other remote support tools in Virginia.

- We met with VDEM GIS staff to discuss possible use of VDEM's ArcGIS Enterprise system. There has been some use of the "Collector" app from ESRI as a way to collect data directly into VDEM's ArcGIS system.
- The VASARCO CIM committee has had productive discussions with the VASARCO Exercise lead about planning a tabletop exercise focused on GIS and/or remote support.
- A significant gap remains that Virginia has a bit of a shortfall of GIS-trained SAR personnel. I would expect that there would be enthusiasm for a Virginia-based GIS training (hosted by SMRG?) in 2016.
- SWVaMRG Pre-plan and Exercise: In late July, SWVaMRG hosted a major exercise. The primary objective of the exercise was to practice use of a pre-plan developed for an assisted living community in Blacksburg. This event was the best exercise this correspondent has ever attended.
 - ASRC was well represented among the planners of the exercise (Rob Spieden and Carl Solomon).
 - ASRC (via MSAR and SMRG) represented about half of the non-SWVaMRG attendees.
 - Exercise of the PIO function was particularly outstanding. The PIO for the incident has developed some generic forms to support development of public-information materials and for logging their approval and release. Also, the PIO for SWVaMRG managed media coverage of the exercise itself, which resulted in high-profile features on two television news stations in SW Virginia.
 - Again, ASRC and resources from SW Virginia worked very well together.

VA passed aggressive law regarding local law enforcement. LE must now write own plans on addressing SAR incidents. Impact not yet evident. VDEM reorganized. Training component now via Search and Rescue Academy.

VI. Good of the Order

- Chair's offer to visit Groups still open. Completed two Group visits thus far, another scheduled. Offer remains open to all Groups. Please contact Chair if interested.
- Don Ferguson will conduct a GIS for SAR course Oct 2-4, 2015, in Morgantown, WV, at the West Virginia GIS Tech Center. Ferguson has requested a small amount of funding (\$120.00) to cover miscellaneous expenses. Since there was a donation to the ASRC specifically to support Don Ferguson's remote support

- efforts, the Chair will direct the Treasurer to write a check and relay for the amount requested.
- Operations Officer indicated Don Ferguson requested a way to encourage use/recognition of advanced training in the use of GIS. Possibly a Search Planner award to recognize members. Possibly develop a small list of achievements in order to attain award/recognition.
 - List of Remote Support human resources available in Appendix B of the Operational Guidance Manual.
 - Groups asked for ideas on how to recognize those that put forth the effort to become more proficient in using GIS tools:
 - Pay for annual ESRI license
 - Incorporate items of cost into the annual ASRC Budget Plan in order to relieve financial burden on individuals.
 - Please remit comments on all draft documents to credentialing@asrc.net. Secretary will also post documents to asrc.net with comment instructions.

VII. Adjourn

The Chair thanked all who participated in the meeting.

With no additional formal business noted, a motion to adjourn was made by Michael Hansen (DMVSAR), seconded by Brian Maier (SAR-Ohio). No objections.

The meeting was adjourned at 1220.

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The foregoing minutes are reported to the best of my knowledge.
Beth A. Huhn, ASRC Secretary

Supplemental information:

Medical Advisory Committee Report (submitted electronically August 16, 2015)
Keith Conover, Medical Advisory Committee Chair

The Medical Advisory Committee has met twice by phone conference, first with Carl Solomon, the chair of the Medical Committee, and once with the full Medical Committee. We continue to work via email.

Our tentative work plan is to first to complete White Papers on controversial issues with recommendations. After this we plan to work on a set of wilderness first aid and BLS protocols for the conference. These will be available to Groups to adopt as is, or adapt or for that matter ignore if they wish. However, we hope that they will all be seen as authoritative.

A first draft of a White Paper is circulating within the Medical Advisory Committee and Medical Committee, on the topic of stress management, and particularly on the topic of mandatory CISD sessions.

A second White Paper on spinal immobilization will be next.

If there are other White Papers the MAC should consider, please email me directly.