

Roanoke Valley Media Public Safety Co-op

Minutes 7/18/02

Members Present

Shelly Alley	Roanoke Police
Mike Stater	Virginia State Police
Jennifer Conley Sexton	Roanoke County Fire and Rescue
Mark Vaught	Vinton Police
Melissa Preas	News Channel 10
Rick Ashwell	Roanoke City 911
Wayne Deel	Roanoke Times
Dutchie Hughes	WVTF
Bruce Bytnay	NPS Blue Ridge Parkway
Tammy Keller	NPS Blue Ridge Parkway
Pat Pavich	US Secret Service
Ray Clark	Salem Police
Steve Poff	Roanoke County Fire and Rescue
Jennifer Faulkner	Roanoke Fire-EMS
Emily Morgan	News Channel 10
Erin Barnhart	News Channel 10
Ray Lavinder	Roanoke County Police
Terrel Holbrook	Roanoke County Police
Amy Whittaker	American Red Cross
Jim Brubaker	Roanoke Sheriff's Office
George McMillan	Roanoke Sheriff's Office
Jennifer Donovan	Roanoke Sheriff's Office
Meg Hibbert	Salem Times Register

I. Shelly Alley welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

II. This meeting was designed to be a business meeting to discuss issues and concerns among members.

PIOs on Vacation

- Media inquired about what happens when PIO is on vacation, sometimes it is hard to know who to call
- PIOs who were present confirmed that the information is left on their voicemail, but in the future will also send out a fax or email ahead of time

Paging System

- Over the last several years, our service provider for the paging system has changed ownership multiple times. Now, the new company, Voicecom is charging \$20 month for the broadcast mailbox.
- Sheriff McMillan agreed to pay for the mailbox in order to keep the system up and running. There does not seem to be another company that can provide us with a similar service.
- Roanoke County Police has been using the pager frequently for a shooting and several traffic accidents. The media was very pleased.

Attendance at meetings

- Attendance at our meetings has declined to about the same 30 people each meeting. Members discussed how to get some of the agencies who are not attending to join us.
- Possible conflicts with the meeting date and time were discussed.
- The media pointed out the good stories that have come from the relationships that have been developed through the coop meetings.
- Everyone also agreed that all the area media needs to be in attendance.
- Some agencies who members would like to see attend and also use the pager are – Bedford County Sheriff's Office, Bedford City Police, Botetourt County Sheriff's Office, Bedford/Botetourt fire agencies, Franklin County Sheriff's Office, Rocky Mount Police Department, Franklin County Public Safety, Roanoke County 911, Salem 911
- Several members agreed to contact these agencies to request their attendance and participation.
- Members also discussed the meeting formats and agreed to limit guest speakers to about 15 – 20 minutes, to allow for a business meeting, then adjournment after about an hour total.
- Members requested a representative from John Lambert Public Relations Firm be invited to speak about the clients that they represent and how they get involved in crisis situations and media management. Shelly will follow-up.

Critical Incident – Advance Auto Shooting

- Chief Lavinder answered questions from the media about this incident
- He commented that it was a very unique situation with personnel issues and difficulty notifying family members.
- He indicated that Advance did not tell police what they could and could not release.
- The media was concerned that they had varying levels of access to the scene and could not get an officer to even confirm the basic facts – there has been a shooting – a woman is deceased, etc.
- He indicated that once he learned of these issues, he called the scene and instructed officers to work with the media.

- He indicated that they may have made some errors, but they do not have a designated, full time PIO to handle the media and therefore the media will have to deal with a variety of different people for information.
- He indicated they would like to provide an officer or detective who is closest to an investigation to handle the media inquiries.

Web site

- Thanks again to the Roanoke Sheriff's Office for maintaining our web site. Mailings will no longer be sent. All minutes, meeting announcements and agendas will be posted on the web site. Email reminders will be sent directing members to the web site.
- Links to member agencies is very helpful.

Other

- Photo deadline for the Roanoke Times is 11:00 – 11:30 p.m., digital technology has created earlier deadlines
- There are likely to be a lot of activities occurring on and around September 11th. Public Safety will be notifying the media about events.
- All attending members were encouraged to share the importance of our group with others who do not regularly attend. Meetings are open to anyone who has an interest.

Next Meeting

- September 26th – 10:00 a.m. (change from 3rd Thursday to 4th Thursday to assist with attendance issues)
- Shelly will contact John Lambert Public Relations
- Possible locations – Channel 7 or the Clearbrook Fire Station, to be determined