

Tim Schadt
Chairman

Bernie Deutsch
Vice Chairman

Mary Ann Drobysh
Secretary

Sullivan County Fire Advisory Board

Date: August 30, 2010 Special Meeting on Blue Wing Report

Meeting called to order at: 7:30pm

Pledge to the flag was held

Attendance: 12 out of 15 members present

Bethel: Ed Lubniewski	P
Callicoon: Paul Hemmer	P
Cochecton: Gary Cochrane	P
Delaware: Tim Hornicek	P
Fallsburg: Bernard Deutsch	P
Forestburgh: Arthur Salomon	A
Fremont: Anthony Wayne	A
Highland: Tim Schadt	P
Liberty: Don Sherwood	P
Lumberland: Charlie Fallon	P
Mamakating: Joe Roe	P
Neversink: Tom Matthews	P
Rockland: Michael Juron	P
Thompson: Gary Smith	A
Tusten: Craig Burkle	P

New Business:

Dick and Tim want to thank everyone for being here for this discussion on the Blue Wing Report and the State's intention to look into broadband communications.

Alex gave an outline of the Blue Wing report and the steps that need to be taken from here on. The bottom line is the money. The study was paid from with money from the Federal Government, we now have to get the money to fund whatever recommendation that is chosen. The estimated cost to the County is between 9 and 10 million dollars.

The Capital Planning Committee has asked questions regarding various aspects of the project. A large part of the cost would be the rebuilding of our communications infrastructure. The majority of the Legislature seems supportive of the plan.

There was a recent State Conference that the feasibility of using broadband was discussed and the Legislators questioned if this is something Sullivan County should consider.

Tom wanted to clarify that the 9 to 10 million dollars would just be the County's money; individual departments would also have to pay for their equipment.

The purpose for tonight's meeting is to discuss what would be best for us know and make that recommendation to the County.

Both Alex and Dick feel that at this time broadband is not really a good solution for our area; however, at some point down the road it may be an option to consider. Alex explained that there is funding through the Federal Government available for a study on broadband and that the old State SWIN Program is now the Broadband for Public Safety Initiative and they have applied for some of that money. Sullivan County can join in the study; it will not commit us to anything.

Tim read an EMS Resolution recommending the need for improved radio communications.

A motion was made and seconded for this Board to send the same resolution to the County, substituting the Fire Advisory Board for EMS. There was a great deal of discussion on the motion.

The Blue Wing report recommends 3 options with varying costs. The recommendations are high band with simulcast. They are looking into a commercial provider with available frequencies.

Tom asked for some explanation on the difference between the 3 Blue Wing options. He is concerned that by going with option 2 that the area of coverage will decrease. Alex explained that all 3 options have around a 95% coverage area. It was suggested that he meet with Alex and discuss the matter in more depth. Alex said that he is available if anyone has questions or would like more detail on this. He feels that Blue Wing's second option is the best for Sullivan County at this time.

Blue Wing is also looking into the best way to improve communications in the river corridor. They are looking first at County or Town owned properties in order to keep costs down. They have already identified 3 potential sites.

Ed asked how high band is better than low band since they are both radio waves, as well as satellite communications. High band penetrates better than low band and satellite was not recommended by Blue Wing for area.

Bernie questioned what would happen if the broadband money became available. We are not obligated to take it. We can make that decision when that happens. Broadband may be the future but improved radio communication is needed now.

The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

Tom has some concerns as to why he was not advised about a Communications committee meeting. Tim explained that he had to drop a member to include Bernie on the committee. Tom concern is that Neversink is the only "fringe" area that does not have representation on the committee. Bernie stressed that Neversink's problems were brought up and discussed in committee. Alex and Dick also stated that the committee is committed to solving the entire County's problems, not just the areas with members on the committee.

Adjournment: Motion to Adjourn Time: 8:15pm

**Next meeting September 27, 2010 at 7:30pm at the
Sullivan County Government Center**