

Task Force Meeting May 16, 2018

Doug and Bill Green unable to attend. Ralph, Barb and Bill Flynn attended.

Here is what we have so far:

- Lessons Learned
- Education and Training
- Communications
- Facilities

(It is important to understand that “response time” is based on the time the 911 call came in to dispatch. No one knows how long it took for Mr. Morris to actually make the call. Russ did look at his watch and based on his time shown, the guys were in the water a good 40 plus minutes.)

The first thing we tried to do as a task force was determine if the rescue time, given the current players and the situation, was as good as can be expected. The answer appears to be “yes”. Our expectations of emergency services for FFH are unrealistic. So here are some issues that we discovered.

First, Ralph called Emergency Services of Craven County and asked if they monitor channel 16 marine radio. They do not have marine radios, therefore as in the case of the “Mutiny event”, when the call came in on 911 it could not be transferred to channel 16. Rescuer responders came from the 911 call. As Bill Green has mentioned, he and Jan were at the fuel dock at NW Creek Marina but because there was no call out on channel 16, they were not aware of anything happening.

Once again access to BSC for launching a rescue boat came up. The main issue there is that FFH does not have the fire and Rescue volunteer numbers they used to have. Volunteers to man such a boat would have to come from New Bern – a 20 minute trip including launch. Because of the volunteer nature of personnel it is recommended that every 6 months we do a practice run through Blackbeard to train/show new Fire and Rescue personnel how to access Blackbeard. A 3 digit touch pad code would be easy because you don't have to worry about where the key card is or if you have the latest one. The code can be changed easily.

Our focus is really FFH. If we concern ourselves with our neighborhood and improve response times through volunteers here in the Harbour we may have a more realistic expectation to emergency responses and be able to make corrections as needed.

What boaters do or don't do when they go out on the water is critical. Life jackets and basic water safety equipment, no matter a kayak or a 50 foot boat, should be on board and accessible to captain and crew. In the case of life jackets, they should be worn. Water safety equipment does not have to be an expensive investment. Something as simple as a whistle, a water proof flashlight or strobe light, portable marine radio and a waterproof case for your cell phone could go a long way to averting an incident from a tragedy. If you are part of a crew and you all have whistles, take a moment to come up with a communication signal so you can keep track of each other in spite of waves blocking your view....one long blast for crew 1, two long blasts for crew 2, etc.

Ralph has been speaking with the state to see if we can create our own Harbour Master, including what his/her duties and responsibilities might be. This person might monitor channel 16 and also have access to 911 monitoring. This person would then become the communication hub for our boating

community.

Education and training of BSC and FHYC members – including but limited to responsibilities of skippers and crew. Under this would fall training in water rescue of volunteers in FFH. This could be an area where FHYC, BSC and the POA join forces and raise money to purchase personal marine radios to be issued to the volunteers trained in water rescue from FFH.