

Emergency Services Advisory Council
September 21, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Rick Baker, Director Michael Robinson, Bruce Fleming, Dan Plunkert, Michael Karolenko, Dr. John Murphy, Robert Buckley, David Coe, Linas Saurusaitis, Lynn Karr-Kratz, Brett Six, Dr. Stephanie Kemp

Members Absent: Commissioner Steve Wantz, Eddie Ruch

Guests: Susan Mott- 1st VP CCVESA, George Wentz- 2nd VP CCVESA, Dr. Roger Stone

Chairman Baker opened the meeting at 19:02 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Baker introduced Brett Six who is the new Western Region ESAC representative.

Dr. John Murphy made a motion to approve the August 17th meeting minutes. Dan Plunkert seconded. The motion was passed.

There were no council member comments at this time.

Public Comments: Susan Mott announced that the new Commissioner candidates will meet with CCVESA on October 7th at the Public Safety Training Center.

Director's Report:

- Director Robinson distributed a handout showing the estimated replacement value of the various aspects of the volunteer fire companies in Carroll County.
- Director Robinson met with the new Director of Human Resources, Kristy Bixler. He briefly described her background and the work she is currently doing with DFEMS.
- Director Robinson reported that the Department of Public Safety has secured a federal grant for mobile and portable radios for use by the volunteer fire departments/DFEMS.
- The Director gave updates on the paying of fire station bills, transition of office space in the County office building, the MOU, FY24 budget and the hiring process.
- The Director reports that hiring for the Billing Technician position is underway and the individual should be on board by October 27th.

-Director Robinson shared that the public hearing for Chapter 37 of the County Code will be October 6th. Language regarding ESAC has recently been added to Chapter 37 in section 37.001 (see language under New Business).

Commissioner's Report: No Commissioners present

Medical Director's Report:

-Dr. Kemp reported that she and DFEMS staff will meeting with Carroll Hospital Center (CHC) this week to discuss the transition of the EMS system to a function of County government.

-Dr. Kemp reported that there have been Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) group meetings with discussions of the future.

-Bruce Fleming initiated a discussion about problems with CHC initiating patient care while the patient is still on the stretcher. Dr. Kemp hopes to address this ongoing issue and encourages EMS providers to accurately document transport and patient transfer information in eMeds.

CCVESA President's Report: Nothing to report

Committee Reports:

FROPS- Eddie Ruch not present.

EMSOPS -David Coe reported that several committees are working on short-term goals that will assist the EMS Officer, Mike Stoner.

Old Business:

1. Strategic Plan Updates

- Administration- Danny Plunkert provided an update.
 - Goal 1 – The current org chart is complete. The group will need to go back and discuss a future org chart.
 - Goal 2 – The MOU is underway.
 - Most goals in the Administration section are either completed or underway.
 - He emphasized the need for accurate statistical data to guide the path forward.
- Operations- Rick Baker read a report prepared by Eddie Ruch who could not be present.

- Goal 1 – SOPs are being worked on. Mike Stoner has come up with a way to post SOPs on the CCVESA website for only Chiefs to see and review.
- Goal 2 – The Chain of Command has been finalized and was approved by the Chiefs at the last FROPS meeting.
- Goal 3 – The group continues to work on Minimum Staffing.
- Goal 4 – There has not been much movement on the Unit Response Times goal other than trying out dispatching the understaffed units on a trial basis with Sykesville when other units from that station are already out. Goal is not to go back to a station that is already on an assignment, knowing that the additional units may not get out unless the station puts them in service. The plan is to implement this with the other 13 departments soon.
- Goal 5 – Running Assignments have been talked about/worked on at nearly every FROPS meeting.
- Goal 6 – More data and conversation is needed in regards to the New Services goal. Discussed the need of a committee to review the purchase of new apparatus and establishing new services.

- Lynn Karr-Kratz inquired about the status of the proposed meeting between IT, Public Safety and members of the fire service. Director Robinson will follow up.

- Dr. Murphy brought up several questions about the budget, especially in regard to unspent funds from FY22. Director Robinson suggested bringing DFEMS's Budget Analyst or another person from Budget to give a presentation to ESAC.

New Business:

1. Chain of Command Policy

-Dan Plunkert made several suggestions/corrections to the policy.

-The group questioned why Sargent was not included and Director Robinson explained his reasoning for not including that role.

-Mike Karolenko supports the policy with the corrections and with the expectation that it will be adjusted as the Department of Fire & EMS grows.

-ESAC will vote on the Chain of Command Policy at next month's meeting.

-Chairman Baker commented that we need to work with Eddie to get these changes to FROPS and as well back out to the ESAC members if we want to vote in October.

2. Chapter 37

- ESAC was not mentioned in Chapter 37, but language has been added in.
- Fire Companies should send their comments about Chapter 37 to Director Robinson.
- Director Robinson showed a revised version of Chapter 37 that includes the follow language related to ESAC in section 37.001.

(C) There shall be an Emergency Services Advisory Council (ESAC) established to serve in an official advisory capacity to the DFEMS.

(1) The method of selection of ESAC representatives shall be made by the Commissioners in accordance with county regulations governing Boards/commissions.

(2) The ESAC shall meet at least annually with the Board of County Commissioners to discuss mutual concerns relative to the DFEMS.

-Chairman Baker commented that he does not want the ESAC bylaws to be an SOP because it would allow current or future Directors to make changes to the bylaws at his/her discretion.

-Michael Karolenko voiced concern about the line of duty death benefits only being one month's pay. For example, if an annual salary is \$60k, the payout would be about \$5k.

-Brett Six feels new recruits will see joining DFEMS as a risk if issues are not addressed and urged ESAC members to share their concerns with the Commissioners.

-Michael Karolenko made a motion to add additional language to §37.001, section C stating *"The established ESAC bylaws shall serve as the operating parameters for ESAC"*. Dr. Murphy seconded. The motion was passed.

-Michael Karolenko initiated a discussion about Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) 207k exemption. His view is that the County is choosing to exploit a loophole in the system to prevent paying overtime to firefighters. He believes this is unethical and will be detrimental to morale and recruitment efforts.

-David Coe made a motion for ESAC to express concern to the Commissioners over the County's decision to follow FLSA's 207k exemption, noting the potential negative impact on recruitment and retention. Brett Six seconded. The motion was passed.

3. MOU

- Some ESAC members expressed concern over the County's plan to keep the revenue generated by EMS billing.
- Lynn Karr-Kratz asked for clarification about some language regarding CIP plans. She also asked why fire companies are still buying ambulances.
- Linas Saurusaitis expressed concern with the fact that the County will not be taking over ambulance loan payments. This was taken out of the MOU.
- Susan Mott reminded the group to send their comments in writing to her and Director Robinson so that they can be properly addressed.
- Bruce Fleming announced that there will be a ballot vote on the MOU next month and a unanimous vote is desired.

Action Items

1. Director Robinson will schedule a meeting between IT, Public Safety and fire company representatives to discuss statistics.
2. Callie will verify dates for the ESAC/BOCC meeting.

Linas Saurusaitis made a motion to adjourn. David Coe seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 22:08.