

Emergency Services Advisory Council
August 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Rick Baker, Michael Karolenko, Robert Buckley, Dan Plunkert, Blane Wright, David Coe, Susan Mott, Dr. John Murphy (arrived 19:24), Dr. Stephanie Kemp (arrived 19:30)

Members Absent: Michael Guerin, Michael Robinson, Brett Six, Linas Saurusaitis, Andrew Wooden

Public Present: Marianne Warehime- CCVESA Secretary

Chairman Baker opened the meeting at 19:00 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Michael Karolenko made a motion to approve the June meeting minutes. David Coe seconded. The motion was passed.

Board Member Comments: None at this time.

CCVESA President's Report: Susan Mott reported that the Training Committee is doing really well. They have two subgroups and lots of new people. They are waiting on approval for marketing/social media design that they hope to implement within two weeks. They are advancing the EST program and adding teachers.

Public Comments:

Marianne Warehime commented they are working strategically to update the EST program with the school system so that students can earn college credit.

Director/Chief's Report:

- Not present. Report attached

Medical Director's Report: Not present

Commissioner's Report: Not present

Committee Reports:

FROPS- Chair not present.

EMSOPS- David Coe will discuss the updated EMS policies under new business.

Old Business:

- Review and vote on policies.

1. Apparatus Purchase/Replacement Policy

Dan Plunkert made a motion to approve. David Coe seconded.

Discussion:

-This policy was unanimously approved by the FROPS committee that includes the 14 volunteer fire chiefs.

-ESAC received a letter from the FROPS Committee stating that they made a motion not to support the quint aerial device purchase by Reese & Community Vol. Fire Co.

-David Coe commented that this policy is a good step forward. It is a standardized process with all parties equally represented.

-Chairman Baker will draft a letter to the Commissioners reiterating that the Apparatus Purchase/Replacement Policy is in place after signature by the Chief Robinson. He will provide the letter to ESAC for comment.

ESAC Vote: The Apparatus Purchase/Replacement Policy was unanimously approved.

EMS Policies: David Coe reported that EMSOPS committee went over these policies in depth. He forwarded them to ESAC yesterday which was when they were made available to him. EMSOPS agreed with the content of the policies and agreed to move forward with them but suggested grammatical and other changes. It is unclear if all the discussed changes have been reflected.

Chairman Baker reported that he, Dan Plunkert and Linas Saurusaitis have received almost no feedback from their districts regarding these policies.

Susan Mott stated that Assistant Chief Stoner and Dr. Kemp were receptive during the EMSOPS discussion. Many of the suggested

changes to the policy were about verbiage. There was still question weather or not if all of changes had been included.

2. QA/QI Policy

-Bob Buckley brought up concerns over terms that are too specific as well as the mention of a progressive disciplinary policy.

-Dr. Kemp clarified the DFEMS progressive disciplinary policy which varies based on the nature of the complaint. The focus is on reeducation vs. punitive measures.

Dan Plunkert suggested a revision date be added to the policies so it is clear whether or not changes were made.

Susan Mott commented that more time is needed to review.

ESAC Vote: The QA/QI policy was unanimously approved.

3. EMS Reporting and Documentation Policy

-Tabled to allow time for review.

4. ALS Chase Cars Duties and Responsibilities Policy

- Tabled to allow time for review.

5. Minimum Equipment List Policy

-David Coe noted that only DFEMS equipment is mentioned in the policy and some stations do not have DFEMS equipment.

ESAC Vote: Susan Mott made the motion to approve. Michael Karolenko seconded. The Minimum Equipment List Policy was unanimously approved.

- Action Items from last meeting

1. Fire 101- Michael Karolenko stated there will be a meeting in early September to discuss planning. Fire 101 is being planned for November.

2. Dan Plunkert has sent info out to the Strategic Planning Administration group and has not had any response.

New Business:

- The following policies have been distributed to ESAC members for review and will be voted on at next month's meeting.
 1. HIPAA Training
 2. HIPAA Compliance
 3. Minimum Necessary Requirements to Role-Based Access to Protected Health Information
 4. HIPAA Breach Notification & Inv.
 5. OIG Eligibility Screening and Exclusion Disclosure

- Mike Karolenko discussed a letter that the Local will be writing to petition Chief Robinson to convert 12 floater positions to Station Lieutenants. It is his opinion that there is an immediate need for supervision at the three stations without Lieutenants. The Shift Commanders have too much on their plates and cannot be front line supervisors.
 - Susan Mott expressed concern about the timing of this request as well as the funding. There is already a plan in place and seven stations are still waiting to be staffed by DFEMS.
 - Chairman Baker emphasized the need for data to support this request. He also had concerns with the timing and filling the remaining 7 stations with personnel in FY25.

- Blane Wright discussed the need for more awareness in the community about DFEMS and the transition to a combination system.

Action Items:

1. Callie will reach out to the Commissioners' Office about possible dates in September for the next joint ESAC/BOC meeting.
2. Chairman Baker will draft a letter to the Commissioners about the Apparatus Purchase/Replacement Policy.

Dr. John Murphy made a motion to adjourn. David Coe seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 20:55.



Department of Fire & EMS

Report to ESAC: August 16, 2023

My sincere apologies for not being able to attend your monthly meeting. I am in Ocean City attending the MD Association of Counties (MACO) along with the Commissioners, County Administrator and other department heads.

I would like to thank the hundreds of responders who were available to assist with Fire/EMS responses during Monday 8/7/23's significant storms. The strength of our system was tested, and we met all challenges with excellent staffing, skillful response and prioritization of safety. Along with FROPS and Emergency Management we will be reviewing this incident and looking at both positives and negatives. Also, a shout out to both the ECC and the EOC staff who also stood up to the many challenges. I responded on several incidents and eventually staffed the EOC, and it is remarkable what we can accomplish when we work as one in order to mitigate multiple situations. Our efforts were praised by the Commissioners during their weekly meeting.

STRONG WORK BY ALL!

Throughout the last two months, I have made it to as many carnivals as possible and spent time working and getting to know many of your administrative members. Sometimes we forget the value of those who work behind the scenes at a VFC to raise funds and perform admin duties. These individuals are a valuable asset, and I am honored to assist and interact. With all of our hiring and other issues my schedule has been significant, and I apologize to those companies that I was unable to attend. Keep up the great work as it does make a difference within your communities. THANKS for all that you are doing.

National Night Out! On Tuesday, 8/1/23 I attended this event at Sykesville and "Wow" what a great level of community engagement which included Sykesville/Co.-12 with demonstrations and other interaction, multiple law enforcement, Civic groups, Emergency Management, Social Services and a special visit by MSP- "Trooper 3" There were thousands in attendance as well as Commissioner ED Rothstein. A great evening of fun and showcasing what you do to your local communities. Similar events were held in Taneytown, Westminster and at other locations with many companies as well as DFEMS personnel being involved. Great job!

Congratulations! To past president Bob Cumberland who was recognized at Westminster's company membership meeting last week. I was honored to present Bob with a Certificate at the meeting in honor of 60 years of distinguished service to the WFD, the county, the state and nationally on many committees. This was especially significant to myself as I was appointed by Bob to serve on his Executive Committee when he was MSFA President in the late 1980s.

Career Staffing Update:

We were successful with our recent recruiting efforts with 175 applicants for the positions of FF/EMT, FF/PM, PM and FADO. Unfortunately, many people do not follow directions well. We ended up with 69 eligible for testing and 47 tested and 35 were successful. We can add to that another 9 candidates that will join the process from prior attempts for a total of 44 for 38 current

vacancies from our last hiring date of 7/6/23. The Physical Ability Testing (PAT) is now complete with 32 being successful. Interviews are the next step, and they will begin later this week. We are on target to hire this next group in mid-October. This will cover all vacancies and include our 24 floater positions. We are also in the process of promoting several FF/EMTs to FF/PM as well as testing for FADO positions among current employees. Our staffing appears to be going well and station operations are progressing with career/volunteer interactions.

Our next round of testing will be in February, 2024 and that will be for the 84 positions to finalize our three-year staffing plan which will take us up to 248 positions.

The **quartermaster position** has been created with job specifications and a hiring announcement was sent out on 8/14/23 and the position will be posted through 9/4/23. It would be great to hire a current volunteer with a working knowledge of our system and its needs. The job will start around 50K and will work from the PSTC. It will be advertised for 3 weeks and then interviews will be held in early September. The position will work from our new warehouse building once that is complete and will report to the Assistant Chief, Training, Health and Safety.

Our **billing technician** Tracey Estes has submitted her resignation to be effective as of 8/23/23. We thank her for her service and expertise in setting up our initial billing process. This will place that position vacant and so we will be hiring two billing technicians with interviews beginning in about two weeks. The position application period closed on Monday, 8/14/23. We had 25 applications for the positions and will be setting up interviews for next week. In the interim, we have FF/EMS Elyssa Cool who is assigned to Taneytown assisting us with the current billing process and will work part time until we hire what will now be two billing technicians.

We interviewed 11 candidates for the vacant **Assistant Chief of Training, Health & Safety** which will replace Kevin Fox who left us for a state job. We had some great candidates and once we verify our selected candidate, we will make an announcement as to who will be filling this critical position. It is our goal to have this person “on board” by early September and they will be designated as Safety 100. More to follow with information on the new Assistant Chief once it is all confirmed. A special note of thanks to Chief Jeff Leppert who served as a member of the interview panel. When key positions in our staff are selected it will always be our goal to have a representative from the volunteer side of our system. Jeff was representing FROPS and added significantly to our process.

We are finalizing the position description/specifications for our **data analyst position** and hope to post that sometime next week with hiring by early October. All county positions must be posted for a minimum of three weeks and then once a selection is made, backgrounds and references must be verified.

The DFEMS is currently at 116 personnel which includes civilian and staff positions.

As of July 6, Station 1-Mt. Airy, Station 4-Manchester and Station 9-Reese are now staffed 24/7 with DFEMS employees. We also began staffing a second ALS unit at Mt. Airy. In addition, EMS 101 an ALS Car was assigned to Manchester. That brings us up to 6 of 13 stations staffed with DFEMS personnel. It appears the transition is flowing smoothly. I want to thank the

companies involved for their support and for allowing a seamless transition. This is a partnership, and we need ongoing communication to assure that things are working.

FUEL:

On July 1 with FY 24 we transitioned to our paying for all volunteer fuel which includes: Diesel, Gasoline, DEF and 2 cycle non-ethanol fuel. Yes, there are some growing pains. Some considerations:

1. Fuelman cards where issued require that in those stations without a fuel supply that fueling is done at a Fuelman site. So, if you have been using a local vendor at their fueling site and they don't recognize Fuelman then you need to go to one that does. If there is no Fuelman site within a station's first due district, then we will make an exception (New Windsor)
2. Each vehicle operator must have a PIN (personal identification #) that is used only by that person and can not be shared. These are issued via the county fleet manager and Callie is coordinating.
3. In the interim if you have not received cards or further instructions, we will be in touch to assure compliance. Please note that with increasing costs the Fuelman cards are able to purchase fuel at wholesale prices.
4. This does not impact stations with both Diesel and Gasoline distribution facilities (such as Westminster)
5. Contact Callie Williams, DFEMS Administration for further clarification.

MEDICAL SUPPLIES: /EMS Issues

The current transition to CCDFEMS funded/managed medical supplies is underway. We have ordered three vending type machines that will be placed at Manchester, Taneytown and Winfield which parallels the location of the ALS cars. Once these arrive, in addition to the CHC site we will be able to quickly replace our used medications. With the arrival of the QM position in the fall that individual will assure that the machines are stocked and that other medical supplies are ordered and received in a timely fashion. All CDS medications will be controlled/distributed by the battalion ALS units. Contact AC Stoner with any question or concerns.

NFPA 1582 PHYSICALS:

Starting in July, all physicals (career/volunteer) will be funded under the DFEMS budget. There will be no substantive changes and Susan and Jeff will represent the volunteer interests on our working group which will be led by the new Asst. Chief.

Volunteer Member's Assistance Program (EAP)

I included this in the FY-24 budget and it was approved for every operational volunteer responder to have coverage for this vital behavioral health service. We are working on making this operational. It will be necessary for each station to identify their operational responders as our cost is prorated based on our total numbers. In the interim if someone would need this program the "on duty" shift commander can provide access. Once this is finalized, we will have an SOP

and I will have a presentation to be provided by the contracted EAP to be presented at your company meeting or date of your choice.

Insurance renewal: FY-24:

Our VFIS and Chesapeake Worker's Comp insurance has been renewed and is in effect. Your vehicles should have received new insurance cards. If not received, then contact Callie and we will get them for you. The coverage is at the same levels minus depreciation. Since this includes coverage during events such as carnivals, we still need to investigate and will require paperwork to go to our Risk Management section of the Office of Management and Budget.

Background Checks:

I have received proposals and discussed with three potential bidders. This now goes through procurement and gets placed on the Commissioner's agenda for approval and then we will select the vendor. The process will cost around \$30-50/member. I would anticipate that we will begin, and I will then have a presentation at a later or special meeting, and we will involve the President of each company to take the lead. This will take several months for full implementation and the companies will receive the results.

Improving our communications/information:

Following concerns of this group and many member companies, we have taken immediate steps to improve our ability to disseminate information and thus communicate better with each of you. Some highlights have included:

1. Placing all approved SOPs on our "home page" with the county as well as CCVESA site with authorized access to presidents/chiefs
2. Doing the same with all General Orders
3. Immediate emails to chiefs/presidents for any critical or sensitive issues
4. Access to the county "SharePoint" DFEMS site for all volunteer chiefs
5. Monthly meeting with CCVESA executive board
6. Monthly meeting with CCVESA president and the ESAC chair
7. Daily roster to be sent to all chiefs once we work out some issues.

Behavior/Civil Rights Compliance:

We have recently had two separate incidents involving "human dignity." One of these incidents has resulted in a complaint to the Department of Justice/EEOC and the complaint has been validated and will now move forward. That means that an individual company as well as the county may be liable for punitive and compensatory damages that could be substantial. Our insurance coverage may cover. However, the issue is quite simple: Given our societal standards there is **ZERO TOLERANCE** for anything that violates human dignity and especially where defined under Title VII the US Civil Rights law. My response to these events is necessary and will involve:

1. Training for all career/volunteer members annually that must be taken/validated for anyone employed or holding membership.
2. Development of a process to provide progressive discipline to volunteer members who may be in violation and create accountability for all.
3. Career employees are covered under Chapter 37 already.

I am reaching out to ESAC to develop some standards/direction for handling these situations and to move forward with a process to adjudicate when these situations arise.

We must all recognize that ongoing, timely and effective communications are essential for our success. We ask that company leadership do their diligence and assure that your membership is well informed with our information and that you disseminate it widely. ESAC is certainly a part of the overall process and I always welcome your review and feedback. I will also continue to maintain an “open door” policy and if you have an issue first try to resolve it with my staff and if it is not addressed or timely with a response then contact me directly. mrobinson@carrollcountymd.gov.

Wishing each of you the best for a successful monthly meeting! See you next month!

Yours in service,

Michael W. Robinson

Michael W. Robinson, MA, CFO, NRP
Director, Chief
Department of Fire & EMS