

Emergency Services Advisory Council
April 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Michael Robinson, Rick Baker, JJ Lynott, Tim Legore, Michael Karolenko, Dr. Stephanie Kemp, Robert Ruch, Brett Six, David Coe, Dan Plunkert

Members Absent: Michael Guerin, George Wentz, Joe Brown, Blane Wright, Scott Dickson

Guests: Jim Mora- President, Pleasant Valley VFC, Capt. Josh Pierson- DFEMS Shift Commander

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

Dan Plunkert made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes. Tim Legore seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

Board Member Comments:

Chairman Baker reminded the group that Dan Plunkert, Brett Six and Blane Wright have terms expiring in June. Jim Mora will be taking over Dan Plunkert's position pending county approval.

Chairman Baker's term is up June 2026 and the group should start thinking about if they want a different chairperson for this coming year while he is still on ESAC. The chairperson needs to have served at least a year on ESAC.

Chairman Baker reminded the group to contact him or DFEMS Data Analyst Mel Long if there are discrepancies in the statistics being provided.

Director/Chief's Report: Report attached.

-Chief Robinson reported that there are 11 employees (5 FADO, 5 FF/PM, 1 PM) starting work with DFEMS on April 24th.

-DFEMS employee Julianna Lynott was reclassified to the position of Firefighter/Paramedic effective April 24th. A pinning ceremony will be planned.

-DFEMS will have a booth at the Maryland State Firefighter's Convention in Ocean City in June.

- Chief Robinson thanked Mel Long and Lt. Karolenko for their work on the annual report and emphasized the need for a unified front on data.
- Chief Robinson discussed issues with the Nation Fire Academy.
- Bobby Jones will be honored at the Nation Fallen Firefighters' Memorial Weekend, May 3-4. DFEMS Honor Guard will participate.
- Chief Supko is requesting two ESAC members to serve on a policy committee aimed at streamlining the policy approval process.
- Carroll County is now designated as an Accredited Training Review Agency (ATRA). Will be seeking an ESAC member to serve on the ATRA internal review board.
- The DFEMS Awards Ceremony will be held April 29th. The Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards Breakfast is May 20th.
- Chief Robinson attended the Medical Director Symposium where he received positive feedback about Carroll County from other jurisdictions.
- Chief Robinson discussed the recent increase in demand for company-level loans from the county for apparatus procurement and the process that must be followed.

Dan Plunkert commented that the apparatus are used by DFEMS employees as well. It is unrealistic for the corporations to purchase the apparatus and pay interest.

Commissioner's Report: Not present

CCVESA President's Report: Not present

Medical Director's Report:

- Dr. Kemp stated that ultrasound technology/tool is live in the field and was used for the first time last week to confirm cardiac standstill.
- The whole blood program will be starting soon. The contract for the courier service has been signed. Waiting on some equipment to arrive. There is discussion of using Sinai as a distribution center in the future. This would help us to restock more quickly.
- This month's Continuing Education will be on May 6th. The topic is post-partum hemorrhage.
- The direct-to-triage protocol has been revamped and will go live May 1st.
- Dr. Kemp shared that the State EMS Board has approved the CCDFEMS ALS and BLS continuing educations programs for five-years.

Committee Reports:

EMSOPS – David Coe reported that EMSOPS is cancelled for tomorrow. There are four policies coming out for review in the next week and will then be forwarded to ESAC.

FROPS – Tim Legore reported that FROPS approved the Inside Gas Leak and Emergency Vehicle Operations policies. They also discussed the policies that ESAC will be reviewing next.

-There will be a technical rescue class on April 25, 26 & 27.

-The Colonial Pipeline visit is on May 3.

-Dive medicine training is June 28-29.

Old Business:

- FY26 Budget Discussion
 - Chairman Baker feels the point was missed in ESAC's letter to the Board of Commissioners. The use of EMS billing money for salaries is still a concern. There is not much more to be done except to respond to the proposed budget when it is released.
 - Chief Robinson is still hoping the Lieutenant upgrades for the EMS chase car positions and the third ambulance will be approved.
 - He expects there will be a 5% cost-of-living raise for county employees.
 - The proposed budget will be released April 22nd.

New Business:

- Apparatus Requests
 - Manchester VFD is requesting to add a Chief's vehicle to their fleet. They plan to purchase Lineboro's old utility vehicle. Chief Robinson is waiting to hear back from Public Safety regarding the radios.
 - JJ Lynott made a motion to recommend approving the request. Rob Ruch seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
 - Manchester VFD is requesting to replace their current Duty 4 vehicle (1999 Ford F-350) with a similarly spec'd vehicle.

- JJ Lynott made a motion to recommend approving the request. Rob Ruch seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Lineboro VFD is requesting to replace their current Utility 7 vehicle (2009 Chevy Tahoe) with similar vehicle (Ford F-350).
- David Coe made a motion to recommend approving the request. JJ Lynott seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Policies
 - Holding off on the Wildland Search policy per Chief Supko.
 - Carbon Monoxide Emergencies policy was distributed for review and will be voted on in June.
- The June ESAC Meeting will be held on June 25th due to the MSFA Convention in Ocean City being held the previous week.
- The group discussed the impact to the department if the EMS Training Lieutenant positions are not approved.
 - Dr. Kemp shared that currently, all EMS training materials are generated by her or others that donate their time. It would improve continuing education and quality of care if there were another person to help create training content. As Medical Director, creating training content is not the best use of her time. There is need for more training, specifically on Basic-Life-Support (BLS).
 - Chief Robinson stated that is it also an issue of being in compliance with Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH). We are only doing the minimum. This is part of running a fire department and can affect citizens' insurance rates if we are not in compliance.
 - JJ Lynott shared that inspections could increase due to the proposed (HB 176) creation of the Public Employee's Safety and Health Unit within the MOSH agency. This would allow MOSH to issue monetary fines to public sector employers (government units).
 - Chief Robinson shared information about SB0374 the James Malone act which mandates annual cancer screenings for career firefighters starting January 2026. This will require additional funding for physicals. Ethically, this requirement should be extended to the volunteers as well.

JJ Lynott made a motion to adjourn. Mike Karolenko seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 20:26.



Report to ESAC

April 16, 2025

Chief Michael W. Robinson, Director

My report is below, and I will discuss the highlights, and you can contact me for further clarification as needed.

Staffing (VFCs): We currently have 204 of our 220 budgeted positions filled which leaves us with only 16 vacancies to fill. We are processing at least that number, and conditional offers have gone out. Our next hire date is Thursday, 4/27/25 and we will be starting 11 personnel depending on getting physical results out. This will include 5 paramedics, 1 FF/PM and 5 FADOs. This will allow us to begin filling our BLS units which will mean assigning ALS positions at Gamber, Union Bridge and then Mt. Airy. That will provide for all DFEMS staffed units being ALS by June 1. We just tested an additional 6 paramedics and FF/PMs which will give us a paramedic over. Those personnel will hopefully begin on Thursday 5/8/25 to finalize our staffing of 220.

This will bring our staffing up to 232 personnel which will complete our original Commissioner approved staffing plan. This will assure 16 transport EMS units daily (24/7) as well as FADO staffing of 13 stations 24/7. Following this we will no longer advertise for positions unless we have vacancies. This may continue depending on the requested positions in the budget. Our recruitment will continue based on our budget initiatives for FY-26 and how successful we are. We will be at the MSFA convention in June and will have a recruitment booth.

Future staffing growth is obviously tied to the budget, and we will determine our needs jointly through VFC requests and based on our ongoing data analysis which will be enhanced with the advent of our new ESO reporting system which is in the implementation phase and will go live by 12/25 or sooner as long as we are comfortable with the implementation progress.

Without the floater positions we will pay additional overtime and that is not optimal as many employees choose not to work additional shifts which can lead to “mandatory holdover shifts” That is not desirable and can compromise safety with increased fatigue of personnel or employee turnover.

Data Analyst: Melissa Long our new data analyst is progressing and moving forward as our new data analyst. She is taking the lead with our transition to the ESO/NERIS reporting system. Next week we will be sending her to the ESO conference in Austin Texas for a week of training and development for our transition to this new reporting system by 12/31/25. Melissa has had ongoing meetings with the ECC and other related entities to get up to par with our systems. She also completed our first DFEMS “Annual Report” which overviews DFEMS response data and The internal ESO development/implementation meetings continue.

Budget: The FY-26 budget process is underway and DFEMS requests were discussed and updated in a budget work session and are now in the decision-making phase with the commissioners. Our proposed third medic unit was cut from the budget, and I have since made a

presentation to the Commissioners to validate its restoration. Based on our own audit of the current EMS fleet, the delay of any ambulance replacement will have significant consequences for our aging fleet. We are hopeful that the unit will be restored.

The final FY-26 operating budget should be approved, and the document posted on 4/22. Following that there will be several community budget meetings provided by the Director of the Department of Management & Budget. We will find out at the Tuesday, 4/22 presentation where we are with our funding.

National Fire Service Issues:

The NFA remains closed and is delivering only online programs. As a 31-year instructor and course developer I can't overemphasize the value of the NFA and its residential and field delivery programs. This also has a huge impact on the Fred Co. and Town of Emmitsburg economy. The NFF Memorial Weekend is still scheduled for May 2-4 at the memorial which is a designated national monument so it must remain accessible to the public. This year FADO Bobby Jones of Reese is slated to be honored at the formal ceremony on Sunday, 5/4/25. I would hope that given the proximity that Carroll County personnel both career and volunteer will make a good showing. Our Honor Guard is slated to participate. Personnel wishing to participate will need to be registered and obtain clearance. You can go to www.firehero.org for further information and to register.

Last week **NIOSH the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health** was shut down by its parent organization the Health Human Services (HHS). This has significant fire service impact in their areas:

1. National Firefighter Fatality Investigation Program (NFFIP) which investigates most LODDs in the US. This works out of Morgantown, WV
2. The NIOSH safety equipment testing program out of Pittsburg which tests and certifies SCBA and evaluates all PPE following a LODD.
3. The National Firefighter Cancer Registry which is an online database to track cancer diagnosis and occupational exposures.

All of these were previously authorized by congress and have direct safety/health implications. There was no known methodology or process for these closings just an internal administrative directive. This is certainly a loss to the fire service and I'm sure that the MSFA and others are following and working on some action areas to resolve.

Congratulations: To many personnel who will be honored at two upcoming ceremonies to recognize all personnel who have been nominated for various awards.

The Carroll County DFEMS **Commendations Board** will hold its first annual commendation awards ceremony on Tuesday 4/29/25 at the "Flood Zone" in Union Bridge. This is driven by the Commendations Board which is co-chaired by Todd Tracey and Mike Karolenko and with ESAC representation from Scott Dickson. Invitations have been sent to each company and to all ESAC members. There will be no alcohol served at the event but there will be a reception

afterwords to include refreshments and a cash bar. Lt. Karolenko will update you at the meeting tonight. We look forward to seeing you there.

The Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards annual recognition breakfast will be held on Tuesday, 5/20/25 at 0800 at Pleasant Valley. Over 30 awards in various categories for heroism, lifesaving and supervisory and administrative efficiency will be presented. The honorees have been notified and tickets are required at \$30/person.
<https://www.carrollcountychamber.org/carroll-county-public-safety-awards/>

A formal SOP will be forthcoming for the Commendations Board. All members have been doing some significant work behind the scenes and I believe all will be impressed with this new recognition system.

Volunteer Backgrounds: The SOP has been implemented based on the last ESAC meeting and distributed through the CCVESA website as well as the DFEMS site. Any questions can be referred to Callie Williams in my office.

SOPs/Policies: In concert with the FROPS committee and EMS committee there are a lot of operational, response and other policies that are moving forward and progressing in specific work groups. This includes response, staffing, command officers, training requirements and regional supervision using our limited supervisors. Chief Supko has a plan for multiple operational SOPs simultaneously to be presented by June. He is requesting an ESAC representative to serve on a working group to do a review/analysis of multiple SOPs at a separate workgroup/sessions. This will expedite the process to get DFEMS up to speed in many critical operational areas.

MFSPQB-Certification Board: Over the last several months Chief Supko assisted by Chief Brothers have been working to submit Carroll County as an Accredited Training Review Agency (ATRA) under the board. This has involved nearly 100 hours of legwork and validation of our training program, facilities and instructor staff. Last Thursday 4/27 A team consisting of MFRI and various training academies across the state came to the PSTC. After a comprehensive review of our “self-study” documentation, our facilities and personnel the Board has voted to approve Carroll County DFEMS as an ATRA. What does this mean? We will now do certifications through our training academy under Asst. Chief Brothers as an ATRA. A formal SOP will be forthcoming and part of this will be a local Certification Review Board which will consist of three personnel. One of them will be a representative of ESAC and we will request ESAC to provide us with an individual to serve on this group to assure your representation. In the future all Pro Qual applications should be forwarded to AC Brothers, and we will review, approve and then process through the state and then distribute the certifications. We will cover all associated fees. A formal recognition ceremony will take place at the MFSPQB annual meeting on Monday at the MSFA convention. My Sincere thanks to all involved in this process especially Chief Supko. I removed myself from this process as I am the current Chair of the MFSPQB. This has benefits for the entire system and Congratulations!

Annual Report: Was recently completed and contains statistical information and highlights and accomplishments from CY-24. A special note of thanks to Melissa (Mel) Long our data analyst

along with Lt. Karolenko for taking the lead on this. We intend to make this an annual marketing/informational tool. This is available on our website, CCVESA and was sent via a link to all ESAC members. We are always welcome to suggestions for improvement.

Apparatus Procurement: We have seen a recent increase in demand for company level apparatus loans. Currently we have approx. \$14 million in requests for multiple units including, engines, ladders, squads and utilities. Please understand that there is a process for this and there are no guarantees for this funding. This is predicated on the approval of the Board of Commissioners and is tied in with the issuance of bonds where the county assumes the initial cost and the corporations repay the county at an established interest rate (currently 3.69%) and with a term of 10 years. This is not a DFEMS program but a Carroll County Government (commissioners program) The initial step in this process is through the submission of an application which is available on the Comptroller's home page at www.carrollcountymd.gov. Companies should be prepared to provide specific financial disclosures and validations which are explained in the application process.

Meetings with all corporations/VFCs? I am still wanting to schedule a meeting with each company and either your board of directors or primary officers (your decision?) The purpose of these meetings is to review our successes as well as our challenges under our evolving DFEMS and where we should be moving together, as we progress in the future. Please contact me via email: mrobinson@carrollcountymd.gov with some desired dates. We can schedule at a mutually agreeable time at your stations. I will attend along with DC Supko, and we would like to have an open, civil and honest conversation with each of you with the goal of improvements to our combination system? So far, we have received some great feedback and made some changes as a result of this interaction. This may overlap with Carnival season, and I plan to attend each carnival and can accomplish this during that time if it is more convenient.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson