



Report to CCVESA

March 4, 2024

Chief Michael W. Robinson, Director

I want to thank all of those who reached out to me during my recent illness and hospitalization. I am still recovering and following up with my medical issues but now back to DFEMS and scaling back slightly. I have the following written report and will highlight at tonight's meeting.

Personnel Changes: As of Monday, 2/26/23 AC Michael Stoner, SC Daniel Dushanko and SC Joe Ross were separated from DFEMS and are no longer employed. Whereas this is a personnel matter, I have no further discussion on this issue. However, within several hours each of their positions were replaced as follows: A-Shift Commander: Max Nickie, B-Shift Commander: Russell Halterman. Both have years of experience within Carroll County and meet all requirements. Eric Zaney has been placed in the position of acting Assistant Chief-EMS and comes to us from several PA EMS systems including the Director of Adams County Regional EMS and the Penn State Life Lion System. Eric holds a BS degree and has decades of EMS systems management experience. All three have hit the ground running with no interruption of DFEMS functions and in fact many unresolved issues have been addressed. These are all "Acting/interim" positions, and we will be advertising and have a promotional process for each position.

Hiring Process: We are currently at 150 positions which includes six civilian administrative positions. We hired 5 new FF/PMs who began on 1/4/23 and another 6 PMs or FF/PMs who began on Thursday 2/29/24 who are currently assigned for training and will begin in the field on Thursday until cleared by their preceptors. We did receive about 140 applications to begin the hiring process for FY-25 and are processing after the written and physical ability testing a total of 38 positions. We also have two pending resignations. Our direction is to continue in the current process and replace all vacancies that are current and advertise again for all positions so we can work towards the 84 needed bringing on as many paramedics as possible under the current FY-24 budget. A recent transfer list shows the assignments of our recent hires.

We have also asked for a third assistant chief or deputy director to manage field operations (4 shift commanders and assigned personnel) This will balance the duties better among three chiefs and allow a single point of contact for all operational issues. This is in the FY 25 budget along with two training/safety lieutenants, an office assistant and the upgrade of the shift commanders to the captain rank and for one ALS car to be upgraded to four lieutenants. This would allow for greater supervision and create a back-up officer for the shift commander.

Transition to county employees: There are undoubtedly a multitude of questions and how? Why? What if? Etc. that will be raised by this transition. This will include some emotion as this is a big step by all companies! It is my intent to continue to meet with each of the seven companies who will be transitioning to DFEMS staffing in FY-25. I met recently with New Windsor and am in the process of scheduling with Winfield and Pleasant Valley. All questions and concerns need to be raised to include: Who will be assigned? The transition to county billing? Our goal is to assure continuity of service and a smooth overall

transition. This is many years in the making, we have a signed MOU, and our goal is to make this seamless with our objective to address your concerns. In the interim, the chief of each company may contact the shift commanders if they have a void with current EMS position staffing. We recently provided personnel to staff several corporate positions and will continue to do so.

Response profiles: (ALS incidents) I am very aware of the many response issues that exist with these units. These issues will be mostly resolved after July when all Carroll transport units are staffed as ALS. In the interim please review General Order: 2-6-24 for clarification as to how these units will function until we have full staffing in July 2024. We have listened to the issues, met with ECC and believe that we can best serve the system with these interim changes. This will include responding a chase car to ALS incidents where a Medic is down staffed to BLS and allow ALS to be initiated sooner and to upgrade with the ALS chase units as necessary. This will allow more distant transport ALS units to remain available for other emergencies. The decision to upgrade or have an ALS/BLS unit transport will be incident specific and in the best interest of patient outcome.

FY-25 Budget/CCVESA: Multiple budget meetings were held with all companies over several months to discuss the FY-25 budget. A lot of concerns and issues were brought up. Your treasurer did a great job of managing the process and is ready with the finished product going to the budget analyst for review and follow up meeting with our budget analyst. My sincere thanks to all of those involved as this will be I expect a “challenging” budget year. During the next several weeks DFEMS will be meeting with the Department of Management & Budget to put forth our FY-25 operating budget. We have heard your budget concerns along with our overall needs and we will certainly advocate to assure your concerns are heard. Please understand that there is a process, and we can hopefully be successful in our funding. There will be public budget hearings in the Spring, and we will ask for your support there as well. Given the anticipated requests we are looking at a deficit even before the formal budget process begins. ESAC has communicated their budget concerns at a recent meeting with the Commissioners.

SOPs: We are continuing in our process with FROPs and ESAC to move forward with our operational SOPs. The prior CCVESA approved SOPs where applicable will become part of the DFEMS SOPs and have been posted on our site under SOPs. Both ESAC and FROPs continue to work along with DFEMS and are working collaboratively to move this forward. The previously approved communications policy has some issues and Chief Hipsley(2) and myself will be working with the ECC to resolve.

Data Analyst: Katie Spurrier, has hit the ground running and is becoming acclimated to both Keystone and ERS. She has recently verified data for our first “annual report” which should go out in several weeks, and will show data at various levels to include responses, staffing and GIS mapping of her findings. She will be looking at all data points and we will be standardizing our reporting which will include an upgrade to new reporting software for DFEMS which will mean that the current ERS will be replaced with a new product and that will be ESO. This is a complex process that will take at least a year to transition. Included will be single silo reporting where all data will be sent to the data analyst v. the OSFM. This will enable us to provide grants and on-going data to the Commissioners, MIEMSS and OSFM/NFIRS. Part of this process will be the end of NFIRS reporting and a migration to a new federal system known as NERIS or National Emergency Response Information System. ESAC Chair Ricky Baker is very active with this along with Chief Ruch, Richard Koons and other representatives from IT as well as the ECC, and IT. This will be a participative process with our goal of centralized data repository

and recognition as a jurisdiction which will then enable us to compete for AFG, SAFER and other grants in the future. Katie is meeting with other regional agencies to determine best practices and to clarify our data sources and especially our accuracy.

LMS (Learning Management System) Our thanks to the CCVESA Liaison-Richard Koons for his valuable assistance with getting some compliance programs up and running. We are looking to expand this system for training delivery and tracking. Those requiring EMS continuing education can use the system to satisfy 12 hrs. for BLS and up to 30 hours for ALS.

EMS Recertification: Those paramedics who expire this month 3/31/24 are reminded to submit their credentials with continuing education and ALS skills to AC Zaney prior to the deadline. We will have a final ALS skills review on Wednesday 3/6 and you can contact Eric: ezaney@carrollcountymd.gov to register for this.

Training Center Expansion: As most are aware the Phase II of the PSTC which is an expansion of the practical training area to include a new burn facility, flammable liquids/gas props and other enhancements has been held up by the presence of PFAS compounds in the soil. We had a meeting with our architect last week and CCVESA was well represented. Construction will begin shortly on a new waterline into the facility. We also verified the specifics of the site enhancement and if all goes well we will be bidding the construction and then schedule a “groundbreaking” maybe sometime in the summer of 2024.

Along with this project we are moving forward with a logistics/warehouse facility on the PSTC campus. Working with facilities we have established a temporary warehouse in an unused area of the barn on the first floor. That is currently operational, and we are storing medical supplies, PPE and other items since last year. Dennis Brothers is leading the project and is also coordinating the rehab of the block building that was in use by the Sheriff. We will do a rebuild of that building which will become the DFEMS warehouse and office of the quartermaster. This project has been approved and is moving forward with an anticipated Summer 24 completion. This will house our quartermaster who is working out of a temporary office at the PSTC. We recently received a new sprinter van for the quartermaster which will greatly enhance his capability and allow for station deliveries.

We did meet recently with the CCVESA leadership regarding ongoing and future needs of the PSTC for space as DFEMS expands while meeting the needs of the association. We are looking at repurposing some space by the late Spring in anticipation of our training staff. The long-range plan will be for a DFEMS HQ facility on the main county campus and in the design, we will incorporate permanent space for CCVESA and assure that the DFEMS needs are met with adequate office, meeting and support facilities. This is a long-term project.

EMS Billing: Along with our EMS Billing Technicians Amy and Jennifer we are making progress in this area. We are working directly with the VFCs that have come on board with our vendor Digitech and although slow to come in the revenues appear to be steady and thanks to feedback from the users, we are making improvements towards greater efficiency and quicker turn-around. Those companies using our vendor should be seeing a steady revenue stream. We are anticipating moving the remaining seven companies to our billing vendor in early July or once we get our staffing in the stations. Please contact either Amy or Jennifer with any questions via 410-386 6800 or via email. We are also working with the

administration, budget and the comptroller to focus our billing funds on systems equipment and positions. In addition, we have been approved to begin with our ESSR (Medicaid reimbursement) funds.

Background checks: We have begun our company level background checks. We listened to your concerns regarding your access to valid background information. You should now be able to receive a full report of the specifics of each submitted request which should enhance your level of information. Again the backgrounds should be initiated for the following:

1. All riding/operational members
2. All new applicants for a VFC
3. Anyone who participates in LOSAP and is a functional administrative member.

I realize that there may be some additional questions and you can email these to me, or we can discuss at the meeting. Callie Williams is our administrator for this program: cwilliams@carrollcountymd.gov

Chamber Public Safety Awards: The annual Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Awards Ceremony will be held on May 13, 2024, with a breakfast at the Pleasant Valley Social Hall. With the advent of DFEMS the awards committee has changed their policy such that all awards will be submitted through the agency. Accordingly, the awards and criteria for Fire/EMS personnel were sent out via a General Order.

I would encourage all personnel both volunteer and career to submit awards for consideration. These awards will cover the period from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. I am aware of many significant incidents that occurred with many individual actions that will meet the criteria. All submissions should be sent to cwilliams@carrollcountymd.gov no later than 1000 hours on Monday, March 25, 2024. The submissions will be reviewed for correct formatting and will then be forwarded to the chamber's committee for review and selection. Those selected will then be contacted and will be provided a ticket for the breakfast and ceremony. Companies with members receiving awards are encouraged to purchase tables and individual tickets will be available for \$35 each.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson

Director- DFEMS