

Emergency Services Advisory Council  
September 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Michael Robinson, JJ Lynott, Dan Plunkert, Tim Legore, Michael Karolenko, Dr. Stephanie Kemp, Joe Brown, Brett Six, David Coe

Members Absent: Rick Baker, Michael Guerin, Robert Ruch, George Wentz, Blane Wright, Scott Dickson,

Guest: Captain Max Nickey (DFEMS)

Vice Chairman Coe opened the meeting at 19:05 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dan Plunkert made a motion to approve the July meeting minutes. Mike Karolenko seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

Dan Plunkert made a motion to approve the August meeting minutes. Mike Karolenko seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

Board Member Comments: None at this time

Director/Chief's Report: Report attached.

- Chief Robinson congratulated Max Nickey on his reclassification from Shift Commander to Captain. All four Shift Commanders were reclassified to Captains.
- Chief Robinson gave an update on the FY26 budget. Centralized agency requests (Positions, IT, Fleet, Facilities, Public Safety) are due October 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Chief Robinson discussed his plan to pay for the EMS crew and FADO at the remaining stations until DFEMS can staff them.
- Chief Robinson shared that the Board of Commissioners (BOC) is aware of ESAC's request for a joint meeting.
- Chief Robinson gave an update on hiring. The most recent group of new hires will start in the field on September 26<sup>th</sup>. The next group of new hires starts orientation on October 10<sup>th</sup>.
- October 10<sup>th</sup> is also the date DFEMS will begin staffing Pleasant Valley.
- Chief Robinson plans to staff New Windsor next and is looking for hazmat qualified people.
- DFEMS will be assuming some of the administrative tasks related to hazmat now that Ivan Browning has stepped down.

- Chief Robinson met with VFIS and inspections were performed at Reese and Manchester fire stations.
- Chief Robinson, Chief Brothers and Leon Fleming will meet to discuss starting an apprenticeship program.
- Scott Dickson has volunteered to serve on the Commendations Board as the ESAC representative. Chief Robinson hopes to have an award ceremony in April or May.

JJ Lynott mentioned the event at Manchester Valley High School on October 16<sup>th</sup>. Manchester VFC and DFEMS will attend to recruit and promote the EST program.

Commissioner's Report: Not present

Medical Director's Report:

- Dr. Kemp reported the IVT program has held three successful classes with 37 EMTs going through the program.
- Precepting continues and they hope to clear three paramedics this week with two more set to begin precepting.
- Pain dose Ketamine is available on all transport units. Sedation level dose Ketamine is available on the Shift Commander/Captain vehicle.
- The Narcan Leave Behind program has been successfully implemented and well-received by the community.
- Dr. Kemp and Assistant Chief Zaney are working on the whole blood program and have met with Dr. Levy, Medical Director for Howard County. They hope to start with whole blood being carried on the Shift Commander/Captain vehicle and the chase vehicles.
- A workgroup has been formed to look at rapid sequence intubation (RSI).
- Dr. Kemp and Assistant Chief Zaney are looking for topic suggestions for ALS skills classes.
- Dr. Kemp is meeting with the Sheriff on Friday about moving from LEMAC to EMR.
- Dr. Kemp discussed the recent change to the defibrillators settings which is supported by MIEMSS.

CCVESA President's Report: Not present

Committee Reports:

EMSOPS – Meeting tomorrow

FROPS – FROPS continues to review policies. No updates.

Old Business:

- EMS Policies to be voted on by ESAC
  - 3.14 Care After Pronouncement of Death
  - 3.40 BLS 12 Lead Acquisition Program
  - 3.41 EMS Reporting & Documentation
  - 3.42 Handling of Service Animals
  - 3.43 IVT Program
  - 3.44 Law Enforcement Canine
  - 3.45 Ambulance Passenger Guidelines
  - 3.46 Continuing Education
  - 3.47 MOLST/DNR Patients
  
- Vice Chairman Coe noted that all of these policies have been voted on by EMSOPS except for 3.14 Care After Pronouncement of Death.
- The EMSOPS changes have been included in these drafts.
- An applicability statement has been added to these policies.
- JJ Lynott questioned the Continuing Education policy, bringing up the fact that not everyone has had training. Vice Chairman Coe stated that everyone should have training to awareness level but does not need to be operational level.
- 3.14 Care After Pronouncement of Death will go before EMSOPS tomorrow.

Mike Karolenko made a motion to approve all the policies excluding 3.14 Care After Pronouncement of Death. Tim Legore seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

- FY26 Budget
  - Chief Robinson outlined what he hopes to accomplish in the FY26 budget including 14 new positions and 12 upgrades.

- Upgrade ALS chase medics to Lieutenant level to allow for supervision
  - Add 12 float positions that were cut last fiscal year
  - Add two Training Lieutenants
- Chief Robinson commented that we must continue to grow the system, especially with the increasing call volume, but some of the Commissioners feel that we don't need what we have now. He is pushing for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party study to examine the needs of the county.
  - \$7-8 million is projected from ESPP. Chief Robinson hopes that money can be used toward an additional ambulance beyond the two already planned and a new reserve engine.
  - Tim Legore suggested that we consider buying more than one reserve engine because the fire companies may not be able to continue buying new apparatus as they have been.
  - Chief Robinson is no longer requesting the four Safety Officers that were discussed previously.
  - JJ Lynott commented that the pay scale should be a priority as it creates a huge retention issue.
  - Mike Karolenko stated that the IAFF is in the middle of updating their pay scale information. Both volunteer and career need to focus on recruitment and retention. DFEMS is falling behind fast as we try to compete with other jurisdictions. He feels that Carroll County Government's practices as a whole are broken.
  - Chief Robinson discussed how the next generation of volunteers is just not there.
  - Mike Karolenko asked if there has been any assessment done on volunteers including age group and level of participation. Chief Robinson responded that that would be included in the 3<sup>rd</sup> party study he is suggesting.

New Business: None

Action Items:

1. Chief Robinson will look at the actual number of employees that are needed, taking into account leave impact.



## Report to ESAC

September 18, 2024

Chief Michael W. Robinson, Director

I hope that Chairman Baker is enjoying his vacation and I have captured the highlights of DFEMS progress in my subsequent report. I am happy to say that I had successful hip replacement surgery three weeks ago and returned to work last week. Ongoing progress with that and I was able to work remotely during my recovery. I will support this report with a brief overview and Vice-Chair Dave Coe will certainly keep me on point.

**Budget:** Our current budget is progressing, and we have initiated bi-weekly meetings with our budget analyst for consistency and awareness of our budget initiatives and progress. We are preparing to provide support to the remaining VFCs in the area of staffing and are currently working on the process and a form that will be submitted weekly by the impacted companies. The payments would then be made through budget to the respective accounts and the frequency has yet to be determined. At the same time the EMS billing proceeds will still be directed to those companies. The staffing will be for 24/7 EMS or 336hrs./week/station and 50hrs./week/station for FADO coverage. I have met with the treasurer of CCVESA, and she has provided me with data that suggests that beginning on October 1 the \$320K that was budgeted for the remaining volunteer stations will be fully expended.

**FY-26 Budget:** We have begun work for next years budget and the CIP (capital) budget was submitted by September 3, 2024. In the CIP we are looking to fund complete replacement of our SCBA and related components. We are working with our budget analyst with regular meetings to look at where we are and where we might go with the next fiscal year. ESAC has made some suggestions, and our priority is to upgrade the ALS chase medics to lieutenant level to allow for supervision. Our next priority is to restore the 12 lost floater positions and to establish staffing in the form of two training lieutenants assigned to the PSTC. We are also exploring additional EMS equipment. There is also consideration to apply for an AFG or SAFER grant and that will require a lot of work, so I am awaiting approval to move forward on that before investing too much time into a significant process. More to follow on the budget once we have better clarity on revenues that will drive our direction. We are meeting tomorrow to begin work on these submissions.

**Staffing:** We are currently in the hiring process and on boarding of some recently hired personnel. We currently have 9 new personnel completing their training and reporting to the field as of 9/26. We have 8 conditional offers processing for a 10/10 hiring date. We have an additional 10 persons being processed with position specific testing and if successful conditional offers. This past weekend we had 16 persons take the written exam and awaiting the results. If all are successful, that would be 37 new employees in place by mid November.

We are planning to staff Pleasant Valley as of 10/10 which is the beginning of the next 28 day FLSA cycle. We are currently getting with the Valley to schedule and orientation and meet/greet for the employees to be assigned. This will be one FADO and a FF/EMT and PM or PM/FF per each of the four shifts for a total of 12. With the above information that would potentially leave us with 25 more employees so New Windsor would be the next to be staffed. There are moving parts involved and our goal is to be successful with our hiring process. We are also intent on filling current vacancies so we can be at full staffing on each shift which would leave us with 3 floaters/shift.

**Shift Commanders:** I want to extend my sincere congratulations and recognize Captain Max Nickey- A shift and Captain Russell Halterman-B shift. These personnel were successful in our recent Captain's promotional process and were effective as of 9/12/24.

**Field Supervision:** Chief Supko is working on the plan to have the station lieutenants to provide administrative oversight for their adjacent stations. This will include leave administration, discipline, and other administrative areas specific to our employees. The shift commanders will make up the difference although they will now have 55 on each shift for a total of 220 field personnel and 12 staff personnel or 232 total budgeted positions.

**Incident Reporting:** The ESO contract was approved by the commissioners, and we are now into the process. The committee met today and have meetings and trainings being scheduled with the ESO vendor. Our data analyst Katie Spurrier is the lead of the process, and we are also sending her to the ESO conference in Texas to become a "master" at everything related to ESO. We could have an implementation sometime in the Spring and there are still many issues that are being addressed and that includes preservation of historic ERS data. Chairman Baker is part of the committee, and we have wide representation from all areas of the department.

**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. Both ESAC and FROPS continue to work along with DFEMS and are working collaboratively to move this forward. The previously approved communications policy had some issues and is being reworked via FROPS. There are several additional SOPs for review/approval tonight. Chief Brothers will work with each station to assure compliance with all areas of MOSH requirements. As part of our safety initiatives VFIS risk managers and AC Brothers did a safety tour/audit of the Hampstead and Reese fire stations today.

**Vehicles/procurement:** We have received the new vehicle (Tahoe) for the Deputy Chief and Chief Zaney will also be moving to a Tahoe and will provide additional EMS coverage while on duty. We are moving quickly on the FY-25 units x2 and will allow these to go to competitive bid. Our four Horton ambulances/Ford F-550s are on the assembly line and we expect delivery by late October. We will be doing an inspection trip to Horton on October 8. Since Gamber cancelled their ambulance order we have an opportunity to take over the contract and use our specifications which would allow us to have a new unit by Spring. Horton has offered a similar opportunity. We are finalizing our specs and in discussions with several dealers/manufacturers. Our current reserve

fleet and several volunteer units are continuing to have mechanical issues and we must address the limited life span that remains on several units.

Our greatest challenge is having enough reserve cars available as we will now have 6 Tahoes, 3 Explorers and three reserves in our fleet as well as 9 medic units by early 2025.

Our next challenge is to consider replacement of the reserve engine which is nearing the end of its life cycle. A new replacement reserve will cost around \$800,000 or greater.

**EMS Billing:** We are doing well with our EMS billing revenues. We will transition the billing of the remaining VFCs as they come on board with DFEMS staffing. Until that occurs, they will continue to receive their revenue and we will need to manage all billing. Please contact Amy or Jennifer our billing technicians to coordinate. We will be working with the administration and commissioners to determine how to reinvest this funding back into our system. We are already in the beginning process to replace all of our medical electronics which includes our LP-15 cardiac monitors with the latest LP-35 devices. Dr. Kemp will update some of our planned initiatives in this area.

**Volunteer Backgrounds:** These are not progressing at the rate we anticipated, and Callie is working to answering some questions as we develop a related SOP that will address some issues. These are still considered essential to assure safety and quality among volunteer membership. We have determined that once an initial background is completed, we will contract with a monitoring service that will provide information and alerts ongoing from multiple judicial and criminal databases. More to follow.

**Annual Physicals:** We recently met with Carroll Occupational health to create equity between the career v. the volunteer annual 1582 physicals. These should be the same with the exception of career nicotine testing. Chief Brothers and Susan Mott of CCVESA have met with Dr. Mann and his staff at Carroll Occupational Health (COH) and we are working to address several identified issues. We will be including revised language in our renewal contract to address these issues. In the future there will be only one physical for career and volunteer personnel.

**Operations:** Chief Supko has made an effort to meet with each company and its officers and has also met with related committees and groups. He is also actively attending major incidents to get a sense of our operations and perspectives. Today he met with Chief Coe of the HM team and we will be transitioning some of the ongoing HM administrative functions to operations. In addition, we plan to assign HM techs to New Windsor when we staff it and will be adding some career members. This will remain a partnership along with other special operations functions as he meets with ATR and Dive/swift water. Our goal is to assure prompt response and adequate staffing. A great job by the ATR personnel who responded to Littlestown, PA last week for a tractor-trailer into a laundromat. We are also working with Reese to conduct an after-action review for the Church Fire that occurred in August.

**Apprenticeship program/EST:** A meeting was held yesterday with the MD Dept. of Labor Apprenticeship program to discuss some possible initiatives and funding for apprenticeship. We are looking to partner with CCVESA and EST which would allow students to enter an

apprenticeship track and become employees and receive stipends during their training. The second phase of this could continue at the College with PM training and a career with DFEMS or also just remaining a volunteer after completion of the program. This may also become a direct entry for non-students and allow nonaffiliated personnel to be hired/trained with all funding provided. We are planning to make application for this funding and will keep ESAC apprised. Also notable was a CC Times article where the school board stated there is no “approved high school training program for Fire/EMS” occupations. I have spoken with Leon Fleming on this since he has a lot of the history, and we will be planning a meeting with the Board of Ed to discuss and explore further opportunities.

**911 Ceremony of Remembrance:** was held on 911 and we had good attendance both from DFEMS, the Commissioners and county officials as well as members of the public. The ESAC chair and several members were in attendance. My sincere thanks to all who made this possible.

**New Initiatives:** As mentioned last month we have begun two new initiatives. The first is the formation of an Honor Guard Unit. This will be open to both career and volunteer members. It will be used to represent the department at official DFEMS, and outside ceremonies and we have funding for start-up in our current budget. Once the members are selected there will be a training period, selection of a commander and procurement of related equipment. This is anticipated to take approximately six months. The deadline to express interest is October 1, 2024.

Our other initiative is to form a Commendations Board. This group will be a 5-person board with representation from: ESAC, CCVESA, IAFF, FROPS, and a DFEMS employee. A chair will be elected internally, and this group will develop award types, criteria and design of both heroic as well as merit awards. An SOP will then be drafted, and the goal will be to begin an annual awards cycle based on the calendar year. This group will not supplant company level, chamber of commerce or other awards but will standardize DFEMS awards with an independent group to investigate and validate these awards. ESAC has submitted a member to serve on the board. We are going to be setting up an organizational meeting in October and the board will progress from there. We are looking for a Spring date for the first Commendations/Awards event and this will recognize awards from CY-2024. A lot of preliminary work to be done.

I will answer any questions that anyone has, or you may contact me outside of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

*Chief Michael W. Robinson*



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