

Emergency Services Advisory Council
October 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Rick Baker, Michael Robinson, Michael Karolenko, Brett Six (virtual), Linas Saurusaitis, Andrew Wooden, Robert Buckley, Dan Plunkert, Blane Wright, David Coe, Susan Mott, Dr. John Murphy

Members Absent: Michael Guerin, Dr. Stephanie Kemp

Guests Present: Buddy Buscemi

Public Present: Assistant Chief Dennis Brothers (DFEMS)

Vice Chairman Saurusaitis opened the meeting at 19:07 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rick Baker made a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. Dr. Murphy seconded. The motion was passed.

Board Member Comments:

Michael Karolenko commented that there was a training survey sent out to volunteers, but it was not sent to the career side. Susan Mott said the survey has not gone out yet. It will be discussed at the next training committee meeting.

Public Comments: None at this time

Director/Chief's Report: Presentation attached.

-Chief Robinson reported that 28 new employees began on Oct. 12th with orientation at the Public Safety Training Center and were sworn in by the Clerk of the Court.

-Other new employees include EMS Billing Technicians Amy Rigler and Jen Canary, and Assistant Chief Dennis Brothers who all started work on Sept. 28th.

-The Quartermaster will be Robert Schombert who starts work on Oct. 26th.

-Interviews for the Data Analyst position will be the last week of October.

-Chief Robinson reported there is a need to make several revisions to Chapter 37 of the County Code including language changes, changes to the promotional process and changing the hours of work for overtime/comp time from 168 to 84 to alleviate payroll issues.

-Chief Robinson reviewed the positions and others items he is requesting for the FY25 budget. The 84 firefighter/EMT/paramedic/FADO positions and the Assistant Chief of Operations position are a priority and in order of priority at this time.

-Chief Robinson reviewed FY24 budget issues, gave updates on EMS Billing and the status of DFEMS vehicles on order.

-Chief Robinson and members of ESAC discussed concerns about ambulance maintenance. More to follow.

Commissioner's Report: Not present

Medical Director's Report: Not present

CCVESA President's Report: No comments at this time

Committee Reports:

FROPS:

-Andrew Wooden will discuss the Fireground Communication policy under new Business.

-Andrew Wooden commented that the leadership level retreat the Chief is hoping to do is a good idea and much needed.

EMSOPS:

-David Coe reported that EMSOPS did not meet as planned. Their next meeting is Thursday, October 19th.

Old Business:

- Discussion of Joint ESAC/BOCC Meeting October 26th
 - Eight ESAC members attending, two members unsure
 - Possible topics of discussion for the meeting:
 - FY25 Budget- Filling the 84 positions planned for the last 7 stations
 - Adjusting hiring practices to improve recruitment/retention
 - SAFER Grant
 - Additional DFEMS positions needed
 - ESAC committee formed to examine staffing
 - Updates to strategic plan

- Rick Baker will create an outline of talking points.
- Dan Plunkert asked that the meeting include discussion of the MOU. He is concerned that there are parts of the MOU relating to funding/budget that are not being followed.
- FY25 Budget: Status of pending committee to explore future staffing, DFEMS organizational structure.
 - The committee will be Chief Eddie Ruch (chair), Vice Chair Linas Saurusaitis, Asst. Chief Dennis Brothers, LT Guy Garheart, the Data Analyst and Chief Tim Legore.
 - The committee will brief ESAC in December and wrap up in February.
- Fireground Communication Policy
 - Andrew Wooden stated that concerns about the policy were raised by the Emergency Communications Center. They cannot support the policy due to it being a whole different training modality.
 - FROPS supports tabling the policy for now.
- Fire 101 Status
 - Michael Karolenko stated that there is not a firm date. November may not be feasible, possibly December. He would like to include Assistant Chief Dennis Brothers in the planning.
 - Michael Karolenko mentioned that the International Association of Fire Fighters has pulled back resources in protest to PFAS in our gear, causing a delay in the planning of this event.
- Chief Robinson asked if ESAC would like to continue to receive updates on transfer-of-care from Carroll Hospital Center. The group consensus was yes.

New Business:

Vice Chair Saurusaitis stated that we are now operating under DFEMS SOP 1.14 instead of the interim apparatus replacement policy.

- Taneytown Volunteer Fire Company Apparatus Replacement Request

- Requesting to replace 23-year-old Ladder 5 with a new version of the same type of apparatus. This will be another Quint and meets engine and aerial specifications.
- Andrew Wooden made a motion to recommend approval of this request. Michael Karolenko seconded. The motion was passed.
- Gamber & Community Fire Company Apparatus Replacement Request
 - Requesting to replace Engine Tanker 133 with an Elliptical Tanker.
 - Andrew Wooden reported that FROPS had no issues with the request.
 - Rick Baker made a motion to recommend approval of this request. Dr. Murphy seconded. The motion was approved.
- Volunteer vs. paid personnel issues
 - The group discussed, in general terms, incidents that have occurred.
 - Chief Robinson explained that there will be mandated training for DFEMS employees that will address these issues. He hopes that the volunteer side will implement training as well.

Chief Robinson thanked the fire companies for their great work during Fire Prevention Week as well as Juniors' Day.

Action Items:

1. Rick Baker will create an outline for the joint ESAC/BOCC meeting.

Michael Karolenko made a motion to adjourn. Dan Plunket seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 21:46.