

Emergency Services Advisory Council
July 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Michael Robinson (Director/Chief, DFEMS), Tim Legore, (Fire/Rescue Operations), Dan Plunket, (Central Representation), Robbie Ruch, (Career Representative), George Wentz, (CCVESA President), JJ Lynott (Eastern Representative), Brett Six (Western Representative), Rick Baker, (Chairman/Southern Representative) Scott Dickson, (Citizen Representative) Mike Karolenko, (Career Representative), Dr. Stephanie Kemp, (Medical Director), David Coe, (EMS Operations), Joe Brown (Citizen Representative)

Members Absent: Michael Guerin, Blane Wright

Guest: Captain Russell Halterman

Chairman Baker opened the meeting at 19:05 with the Pledge of Allegiance. He introduced Joe Brown, new ESAC citizen representative.

Approval of June Minutes, point of order by Dan Plunkett, the numbers presented in meeting as far as funding for 24/7 staffing were not accurate, funding will be discussed in "Old Business".

Dan Plunkert made a motion to approve the June meeting minutes. Scott Dickson seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

Director/Chief's Report: Report attached.

- Announced several key staff members on vacation
- Working on a Semi-Annual DFEMS Statistical Report
- Congratulated acting Assistant Chief of EMS Eric Zaney on his official appointment to the Assistant Chief of EMS effective tomorrow July 18, 2024
- Budget - Informational Session with the Budget session held at training center to show the budget needs for the County
- Total Budget \$33,688,000 for Carroll County staffing 16 Medic Units, 3 chase cars, and 13 Fire Apparatus Driver Operators (FADO)
- Current staffing 141 employees with authorized staffing of 148
- DFEMS heavily involved in recruitment of new employees

- August 1, 2024 staffing of Gamber Community Fire Department with a BLS ambulance. If DFEMS hires enough paramedics unit will be staffed as ALS.
- DFEMS faces long-term staffing concerns as there is no guaranteed step increases for employees
- DFEMS now conducting a two-week academy for new employees
- Promoted two employees to from Firefighter/EMTs to Firefighter/Paramedics effective tomorrow July 18, 2024
- Last month DFEMS staffed Winfield and Hampstead

Ricky Baker questioned if employees works here and volunteer in Carroll County are getting two separate physical?

Tim Legore asked for a database of physicals, to allow chiefs to know who has completed physicals as volunteers.

Chief Robinson advised that NFPA 1582 is the standard and that is what we will follow. Chief Robinson advised that we will have one physical, there is no reason why we are doing two physicals. Assistant Chief Brothers will handle all physical questions.

Background Checks – Callie is currently developing an SOP, hopefully complete next month.

Shift Commanders have been promoted to Captain, and there will be an internal process to hire the two open vacancies.

The county has made a conditional offer to Paul Supko for the Deputy Chief of Operations position. He is currently completing a physical, will start on August 1st, 2024 and be known as Ops 100. Will attend the August ESAC Committee Meeting.

Commissioner's Report: Nothing to report.

Medical Director's Report:

- Met with Carroll Hospital for Quarterly Meeting. Carroll Hospital is now 100% staffed and working on their Surge Plan

- Working to establish an BLS EKG and IVT Program
- Assistant Chief Zaney working to match products with Carroll Hospital Center
- Working with Stryker to upgrade Lifepak 15 to Lifepak 35. Carroll will be getting 7 Lifepak 35s.
- Seeing improvement in documentation and overall positive feedback from hospitals in regard to EMS Care
- MIEMSS has a new app for protocols

CCVESA President's Report:

- New 2nd Vice President: Leon Fleming
- Issues with the CCVESA Phone System at the Public Safety Training Center, looking into how we can combine the phone system with the County in the future

Committee Reports:

FROPS-

- Assistant Chief Zaney came and updated FROPS on policies to make sure we are not kicking the can down the road.

EMSOPS

- Special Meeting on July 10, 2024, to vote on 8 policies.
- Policies passed 8 to 0 with changes incorporated into the policies. Assistant Chief Zaney working on reformatting these policies.
- Susan Mott was elected as Secretary and David Coe was elected as Chairman.

Old Business:

- Discussion of EMS Policies, these policies are currently being reformatted before presenting to the committee
- Question raised about IVT Tech Program, if volunteers were going to be allowed to participated, IVT supplies to be carried on ambulances
- Question how the ERS reports were going to ensure Quality Assurance
- Funding for Corporations that have yet to receive DFEMS staffing:

- Formula is not corrected and will not last till the end of October
- General Discussion of staffing concerns faced by DFEMS
- August Meeting Request for ESAC Meeting from Chairman Baker:
 - CCVESA President to provide a balance of the 320,000 with an estimate of how long it will last
 - Chief Robinson to provide an updated number of potential employees, position they are applying for and how many employees will be hired by September 1st

New Business

- Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Department requested to replace an Engine along with Rescue that was approved previously. Replacement Engine meets current county specifications.
 - Dan Plunkert made a motion to approve the purchase of a 2026 Seagrave that meets county specifications, seconded by Brett Six. ESAC approved the purchase with all members in favor.
- Discussion of Future Budgetary Request and needs of the Carroll County Fire/Rescue Service -2026
 - 2 Training Lieutenants
 - Upgrade all Chase Cars to Lieutenants, that must be Paramedics and meet the Fire Lieutenant standards (12 Positions)
 - Safety Officer at the rank of Lieutenant (4 Positions)
 - Increase the number of floater positions

Action Items:

1. CCVESA President to provide a balance of the \$320,000 with an estimate of how long it will last.
2. Chief Robinson to provide an updated number of potential employees, position they are applying for and how many employees will be hired by September 1st.

Brett Six made a motion to adjourn and motion was seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 21:25.



Report to ESAC

July 17, 2024

Chief Michael W. Robinson, Director

Since our last meeting, I have been focused in multiple areas with prioritization of our budget process and continuation on our personnel recruitment and hiring. Our challenges continue and operationally responses have been consistent with a number of working incidents as well as some severe weather and our ongoing "heat wave." In addition, with Callie being on vacation I am challenged although we did get an agenda and some statistical information to you. My report is below, and I will discuss the highlights and answer any questions.

Congratulations: To Assistant Chief Eric Zaney our Chief of EMS effective tomorrow @ 0700 hours. A General Order has been sent out and Eric will continue now being officially promoted and doing a great job in managing our EMS.

Budget: The process is now complete, and we have a total budget of \$33,688,170. This is all inclusive of funding for Fire & EMS and includes LOSAP and CCVESA. Our focus has been on two fronts the first of which has been the 72 positions from the finalized 2023 staffing plan which will provide for 28 FADOs, 28 FF/EMTs and 24 PM or FF/PMs for FY-25. 72 of these positions are newly budgeted and we will utilize 12 of our funded 24 floaters to offset the difference. These positions will staff the remaining seven stations to assure 24/7 staffing for a medic unit and a FADO at Hampstead, Pleasant Valley, Lineboro, Union Bridge, New Windsor, Gamber and Winfield.

Fundamental to this direction is the essential staffing of our EMS assets which will equate to a staffed medic or EMT unit 24/7 in all of the seven remaining stations. We will also staff one FADO/shift in each station. As discussed last month we can only staff as we have personnel to fill positions with. This began Monday, 7/1/24 with the transition of stations 2 and 14 with DFEMS personnel as of 0700 on that date. We have worked directly with the transitioning companies to effect transfers and to conduct orientation sessions between DFEMS employees and the volunteer leadership. My thanks to Chiefs Legore and Hipsley and Presidents Broussard and Dwyer for their significant partnership to allow this to occur. Things are running smoothly and both stations have been busy. We continue to adjust staffing as newly hired employees complete their orientations.

Staffing: We are currently in the hiring process and on boarding of some recently hired personnel. We currently have 11 new hires that will begin tomorrow 7/18/24 and will be in orientations for the next two weeks. This includes FADOs and FF/EMTs who will primarily be the positions to bring Gamber, Station 13 on board on August 1. We recently met with Gamber who a BLS will be only ambulance until such time that we hire additional paramedics. The BLS decision is based on our data analysis and the proximity of medics at stations 3, 9, 12. We currently have five FF/PMs who are finalizing their precepting. In addition, we have 31

positions that we are currently processing and a number of applicants as our recruiting continues. Our goal is to staff Pleasant Valley sometime in August and we are moving quickly but must follow our process which now includes a two-week orientation/training process. Paramedics are in short supply so there may be some current medic units that will initially be downgraded to EMT units and in that case an ALS chase car will respond with them on ALS calls. Mt. Airy has gone down to one ALS and one BLS unit as of July 1. At the same time, we are evaluating our current mutual aid and the volume of ALS units that are going out of jurisdiction. We will be training our new FF/EMT hires as IV technicians, and we will be allowing EMTs to do 12 lead ECGs in the field. This will lessen our scene time and absorb some of the impact of not being able to staff all ALS. We are evaluating our EMS data daily to look at some alternatives to our ALS staffing. This could include a fourth ALS chase unit on at least a temporary basis if there is an identified need.

As discussed last month the budget provides \$320,000 via CCVESA to fund FADO staffing, and EMS billing will offset the cost of EMS 24/7 coverage of the remaining 5 stations. We will absolutely need to work together to get through these next 4 months as we continue to hire our staffing. We also need your assistance with our recruitment efforts. I am already working on several contingencies should the CCVESA funds be fully expended prior to our completion of staffing.

We are also in our high vacation time and must allow our employees to take leave as desired. We have a "holdover" policy and are evaluating that as well. If we are unable to staff a vacant shift, we have a plan that will reduce coverage in some situations. We will do what is necessary to avoid reducing units and will welcome volunteers to fill staffing gaps as available. This would only occur when there is no DFEMS staff to holdover or voluntarily fill a vacant position.

On a positive note, we have 7 personnel who have been reclassified to the FADO position and our two shift commanders have been promoted to captain and we also have two interim captains. We are also going to be advertising for two shift commander/captains and that will be an internal process as well as a station lieutenant vacancy.

Our Deputy Chief of Operations position had 24 candidates and we found 8 who were qualified to enter our promotional process. We completed the third component of the evaluation process, and the top three candidates had a final interview with myself, two of the commissioners and the county administrator. We have selected Mr. Paul Supko who is currently a Captain in the training division of the Anne Arundel County FD. Paul has 33 years with that department which has over 1000 career and 500 active volunteers. It is also the combination department where I have been a volunteer for 49 years. Paul has served in a number of roles successfully including special operations and training. He is a Carroll County resident, and his wife is a retired lieutenant from Anne Arundel as well. Paul served for over 10 years as both a volunteer and employee of Westminster. He is well versed in our system, knows many of our key personnel and will begin on August 1, 2024. In the interim we are meeting at least weekly and have begun a transition with him. His radio designation will be OPS-100 and his office will be at the county office building in our DFEMS suite. He will attend the next ESAC meeting and after a significant process he was we believe the best choice. I look forward to working with him and

he will lead the daily operations of DFEMS to include supervision of our four shift commanders, liaison to the ECC, FROPS and will serve as our Professional Standards Officer with oversight for internal investigations, discipline and operational SOPs and policies. He will also have a field presence and will respond on incidents. His first six months will involve and orientation to all elements of DFEMS and he plans to visit all stations/shifts. Please join me in Welcoming Deputy Chief Paul Supko to the DFEMS team.

The creation of four additional lieutenants to upgrade four of the FF/PMs on one of our ALS chase cars was not approved for the FY-25 budget. We are looking 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. DC Supko will develop this process.

Incident Reporting: We have a committee which has been diligently working to replace our current ERS reporting with ESO who has bought out the ERS provider. The group has met with significant volunteer input including Chiefs 2, 12, Rick Baker, Richard Koons and several administrative members as well as DFEMS, IT and budget personnel and lead by Katie Spurrier our data analyst. A final proposal has been approved and we are moving towards procurement. At issue is the removal of an asset management module and perhaps one of the members present would like to comment. In any case the issue is still open and hopefully given the cost we can move forward. We will be providing training, and the package is fairly inclusive. We look to transition from NFIRS to NERIS by the end of CY-25 with the federal mandate being 1/1/2026. We are also procuring an asset management system for our Quartermaster and his operation. This system is known as Operative IQ and is in use by a number of agencies in the region. Given our volume of medical supplies we are able to receive this at no cost. Today I signed the procurement documents for this to move forward.

Transition to county employees: Meetings with stations to receive county employees are ongoing and they will be included in discussions regarding how their stations are staffed and the priorities and order in which the new staffing will take place. We piloted an orientation model with both Winfield and Hampstead which will have our personnel receive a station tour and orientation information from the local stations and by their leadership. We recently met with Gamber and our scheduling an orientation with them prior to August 1. I have also met with Pleasant Valley, New Windsor and Union Bridge and will continue with this process as they transition.

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. He recently met with VFIS, and they are planning a site visit/inspection with Hampstead next month.

Vehicles/procurement: We have a new vehicle (Tahoe) on order 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 August. 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 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.

We have now received all five of our Tahoe chase vehicles and are now rotating them back to the upfitters for some warranty and modification issues. These vehicles have been a challenge regarding the upfitters and that will be taken into consideration. We also have our logistics van placed in service and the graphics are complete. 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.

Weather Instruments: Through a FEMA/EM grant we recently received some portable weather monitoring incidents (used by wildland firefighters) These have been placed on the shift commander, ALS chase cars and DFEMS chief officers as well as the PSTC. We will also place on the ATR and HM primary vehicles. These will provide us with on scene/real time weather data to include heat index, wind chill, temperature, barometer and are capable of blue tooth and data logging remotely. This will be another tool in our toolbox and will assure accuracy of on scene operating parameters. A training program is developed. These devices have been widely deployed over the last several weeks.

EMS Billing: We are doing well with our EMS billing revenues. We are asked all remaining companies to join our billing as of July 1, 2024. 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. You will still continue to receive revenues from your previous billing companies and joining with us now you will continue to receive your revenues until our staffing of your station begins. In our first year of billing with only six stations we brought in \$4.3 million in revenues and will recoup about \$1 million additional in uncollected billing and reimbursement for Medicaid (state medical assistance) We are expecting as high as \$8 million for the current year. I am currently working with the administration to develop guidelines for investment of these funds for EMS enhancement to include medic units, electronics, stretchers, ventilators and other EMS related equipment. We will also use these funds for advance training and continuing education for our providers both career and volunteer.

Carnivals: We are at the height of carnival season, and I am attempting to get out and work as many carnivals as feasible but will not be able to make them all. However, it is impressive to see the efforts that each company makes in staffing these events while maintaining your coverage. There is a tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes work going on. I will also acknowledge our

employees and those who are voluntarily assisting at these events which really epitomizes how our system can work! The commissioners have also been marketing the VFC carnivals and how essential they remain in funding the overall operations within Carroll County. Strong work by all!

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.

Annual Physicals: We are also meeting 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 is working with Susan Mott of CCVESA on the related issues and we will get this resolved. Due to the current hiring in the region the physicals and open appointments are challenging, and questions can be directed to Chief Brothers.

Personal: I will be undergoing surgery for a total hip replacement (my second) to complete the set on August 29. I will be out for about two weeks recovering and DC Supko will be in an acting capacity. I will be working from home after a few days to allow for my recovery. It's tough getting old!

New business: We will discuss our strategic direction moving forward and will get into more detail during our meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson