

Harford County EMS Standards Advisory Board Meeting
March 8, 2022
DES 2220 Ady Road, Forest Hill

Meeting Summary

Board members: John Donohue (Chair), Tami Wiggins, Ben Kurtz, Larry Richardson

Staff: DES Eddie Hopkins, John Richter, Carole Boniface (Recording the meeting minutes), Anthony LaDana (Law Dept), Dr. Tim Chizmar

Public: Association- Linda Dousa (EMS Committee Chair), Bill Dousa (VP); Foundation-Carolynn Chewning, Kristen Harris, Katie Burke, Dottie Arnold; Co. 1-Clinton Polk; Co. 2- Steve Hinch; Co. 4- Pres. Steve Sines, Chief Albert Bair, Donna Averio-Laird, Steven Duvall, Lisa Dillon; Co. 5-9- Mary Ann Bobalitz; Co. 7- Pres. Charlie Schutz Chief, Stacey Holden, Andrew Parker; Co. 8-Chief Kevin Thomas, Bernie Wesolowski; Co. 9- Asst. Chief Sam Sauers, Sherri Sauers; Co. 10-EMS Chief Greg Dietrich; Co. 13-EMS Chief William Rosenberg, Asst. Chief Bob Colaianni, Dan McKinney; Andy O'Donnell

Meeting started 6:33 p.m.

Minutes – February Meeting Minutes were emailed to the Board members. Motion by Ben Kurtz to approve, seconded by Tami Wiggins. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved by the Board. Corrected, SB-295.

DES Report:

Director Hopkins

DES hired 5 BLS Clinicians and they started February 28th

Lease agreements and MOU with Bel Air VFC have been signed. County Medics will move into Patterson Mill on or about March 21st

Construction of the North Harford station continues to make progress

Memos have been sent to the administration requesting the following:

Permission to promote from within 2 field supervisors

Permission to create an EMS Public Safety Manager

Chair Report:

Chairman Donohue thanked attendees for coming to the meeting and commented about the great turnout.

Everyone in the meeting room had a chance to introduced themselves.

Executive Order 22-01 is attached.

The Executive Order requests the EMS Standards board to put together a draft plan for “the most efficient process for transitioning over to Harford County Government the responsibility for the provision of emergency medical services throughout the County”.

Chairman Donohue reported that in meetings with the County Executive, the County Executive requested the draft plan provide the coverage we need, utilizing the equipment and resources we have. Volunteers still save the County significant money. The plan is to continue to use the Foundation and concentrate on the population corridor: Bel Air, Aberdeen, Joppa, Havre de Grace. Several recommendations are in the works.

Old Business

Discussed call volume.

Handout from Mr. Bill Dousa. (See Attached)

Since mid-2021, there's been a dramatic shift. Co. 2,3, 8 have been having difficulty getting crews. Now the Foundation is handling about 60% of the calls (16K calls). Need to keep the Foundation viable so Companies can maintain their EMS capabilities. The County needs about 6 or 7 County Units in service to maintain the calls the Foundation is handling.

Chairman Donohue

When the recommendation was made to replace Foundation responsibilities with County employees, the concern was that County employees cannot ride on Volunteer Fire Company equipment due to liability that we've seen in other jurisdictions. We were asked to reconsider the plan.

County Executive wants to see numbers to support any recommendation. Over the last 2 years, response time data, comparing 2019 to 2021, response time went up by 1.19 minutes "Dispatch to on scene". "Enroute to on scene" increased 1.13 minutes. Need to be decreasing response time.

If the plan was to take over Foundation operations with County employees and work with the 3 companies, Co.2, 3 & 8, the cost would be an additional \$3 million. After the meeting with the County Executive, Director Hopkins received a letter from Bel Air asking the County to take over the Patterson Mill EMS station. They are working with the companies then working with the foundation.

Companies present Co. 1, 2, 4, 5-9, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13

Chairman Donohue wanted to find out how the companies are feeling about where EMS is moving

Co. 1- Here to listen. For the most part, are comfortable with how things are going with the Foundation

Co. 2- ok with the way we are hearing things but have very little information.

Regarding Bill Dousa's handout is the data CAD incident numbers or alerts? Need to know how the information is gathered. Here to get information.

Co. 4- No problem with what is going on and know why it's happening. The problem is that it takes a long time to get information back from the County Executive. We don't know what the recommendation is until it comes back from the County Executive. Co. 4 is getting ready to buy \$500,000 of ambos in July and would have liked to have known about the direction of EMS. Need the Foundation to stay in business. County is hiring staff from Foundation then Co. 4 struggles to get Foundation staff. What is the assurance that the Foundation will still be operating?

Currently the Foundation, the County and 3 other entities are handling calls.

Moving forward, you will continue to take staff from Foundation. How can we keep Foundation viable?

County Executive assured he would keep working with the Foundation and address their budget needs.

*Comment-*the North end perspective regarding staffing when Co. 4's 2nd unit can't be staffed, staff usually gets pulled from Co. 10. Because of this they have seen their call volume nearly triple.

County Executive wants to take care of the population areas so that staff wouldn't be pulled from the Northern end.

DES needs to address pay issues as well.

Co. 5-9- Great relationship with Foundation. Some staffing hiccups. Talking about adding another station and would prefer Foundation personnel. Money seems to be the issue. It makes sense to provide the funding to what is already working. Agree with Co. 4, Chief Bair.

Chairman Donohue commented that it is not units that they were replacing.

Mr. Kurtz reiterated the message that County Executive said he will do whatever he can to support the Foundation

Co. 7 – Here to listen and report. Dependent on the Foundation to staff unit. Sometimes the Foundation doesn't have the staffing when needed. Something has to happen

Co. 8- Are open to all options. We are hurting for staffing and now down to one crew. Communicated their vacancies with the County

Chairman Donohue reminded that due to County Law, County employees cannot operate Company units as the Foundation staff does now.

Co. 9- here to take back information

Co. 10- If they continue the partnership with the Foundation, they are all for it. Unified system allowing for volunteers would be the best scenario. Want more info on how this will progress but support where this is headed now.

? is there a study that would show the effect if the 3 entities (Co. 2, 3, 8) go back to the Foundation? Would like to see if there is enough staff working between them and the Foundation to provide the help that is needed.

Answer-- Looking at the County taking those responsibilities.

Foundation-Pres. Arnold—Joppa used to be part of the Foundation, Bel Air had abbreviated scheduling and they help supplement Aberdeen for a short time.

Problem is that some employees from the Foundation also work for the other 3 entities. As a county employee, the clinicians would not also be able to work for the Foundation.

Chairman Donohue said he will investigate this.

Comment-There used to be an agreement in place that stated entities could not offer hirer salaries to pull staff from one agency to another, but Attorneys said that we could not dictate what people were going to pay their employees.

Co. 13-Sent a letter to County Executive and EMS Standards Board regarding their concerns about staffing and the long-term abilities of the Foundation.

Chairman Donohue Action Items

1. What are we going to do with the 3 companies? Is putting Foundation staff in those companies an option? Harford County Medics cannot also work for the Foundation per ethics board (maybe 5/7 people)
2. All companies are supportive of conversations regarding supporting EMS in their companies. Chairman Donohue asked Companies 2 and 3 if they prefer County or Foundation staff?
Co. 2 We're open to discussions on how to make the system work.
Co. 8- open for discussion, whatever get progress going.
Question posed to Company 2 & 8 -Would you want County Medic and staff or Foundation staff to ride on Company apparatus

Foundation- If you put crews into Co. 2, 3, 8, you will start hiring from the same staff pool.

Patterson Mill, North Station, then possibly Joppa, that's 18 more hires that possibly come from Foundation and this will hurt the Foundation. We need to get creative with staffing.

Pres. Arnold- had a budget meeting with County Executive and discussed wage disparity, shortage in staff pool, and other concerns. If something doesn't change the Foundation will fold and that would be a disaster.

The County Executive said that we are partners. President Arnold said right now the Foundation doesn't feel like partners. County Executive's vision is that the Foundation will be around for a long time. How are we going to keep our people?

Discussion

-Co. 2 said that over the years Companies 2, 6 & 8 have made requests to the County for units. Chairman Donohue said the County will accept new requests. Any company can send a letter requesting assistance with EMS.

-Co. 13 asked if the County units will respond to Baltimore Co. calls. Director Hopkins said they will respond to out of county mutual aid calls.

-Who wants to keep EMS in their station? You need to look at the financial impacts of losing EMS receipts.

Co. 2-The County EMS billing needs to go back to EMS not General Fund. Enterprise fund-means that EMS need to operate on the money he brings in.

-Chairman Donohue asked for Companies to get their ideas together and bring it back to the board.

-Mr. Dousa said that the administrative load is not being looked at right now.

Donohue-

Put together a proposal and bring it to this meeting

1. County employees and Foundation employees equal pay and benefits
2. Negotiate the 3 companies who have employees, put Foundation or County employees into those companies. Parity for employees and flexibility to work to replace apparatus

Comment- Companies 2, 3 & 8 pay more than the Foundation

-Continue to support the Foundation.

How many Foundation staff? FT- 45/50 PT-65/70

-Are there MOUs with the towns? Would it interfere?

-Would Foundation staff keep their seniority if they were brought on to the County?

-Carolyn Chewing said that Foundation staff pays more for their health benefit than County employees.

-Foundation reimburses based on the staffing that was provided. It is no longer a flat fee reimbursement.

Submit payroll and scheduling to determine the reimbursement.

How many ambos does the County need if they would take over the Foundation? Hard to estimate in an area that is growing. About 25 ambos to start.

Donohue

Please email your ideas to john.donohue@ccdes.org

John will be in touch with the 3 companies. Will give a solid plan to Mr. Glassman. One that he will work with all of us.

The objectives discussion will be suspended for this meeting

STAFFING:

DISPATCH:

SUPPORT SERVICES:

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT:

TRAINING PROGRAMS:

CONTINUING EDUCATION:

MOBILE INTEGRATED HEALTH:

LONG TERM CARE:

ALTERNATE CARE DESTINATIONS:

MENTAL HEALTH/ADDICTIONS:

ACTIVE ASSAILANT RESPONSE:

Board Member Larry Richardson reported Updates on EMS Legislation:

2 bills-~~SB205~~-**SB295**-Sponsored by Senator Gallion &HB 44 MD Medical

Currently Medicaid reimbursement is \$100 for a transport. Seek to increase the amount an additional \$25 a year until it is \$300 per transport.

Reimbursement for non-transported care-establish Medicaid reimbursement.

Transport to non-hospital establishments-allow to transport to urgent care or Patient First

Cost of Care reimbursement.

Holding this up is the State and whether there is money in the budget to support the Bill. General feeling is that as long as the funding is there, it will pass.

New Business:

None

Good of the Board:

Chairman Donohue requested a moment of silence for the Association's loss of Janet Holbrook.

Adjourn: With no further business, the motion was presented by Mr. Kurtz to adjourn, motion was seconded by Mr. Richardson and unanimously approved at 2006 hours.

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 5, 2022