

Harford County EMS Standards Advisory Board Meeting

February 1, 2022

DES 2220 Ady Road, Forest Hill

Meeting Summary

Board members in attendance: John Donohue, Tami Wiggins, Larry Richardson, Ben Kurtz

Staff in attendance: DES Eddie Hopkins, Dr. Sward (Harford County Medical Director), John Richter, Sharon Blevins, Anthony LaDana (Assistant County Attorney, Emergency Services)

Public: Bill Dousa (Association VP), Carolyn Chewing and Kristin Harris (EMS Foundation), Bob Coliani (Co 13), Sam Sauers (Co 9), Mary Ann Baublitz (Co 5-9)

Minutes – John stated minutes from January were emailed. He asked about changes and being none, a motion to approve the minutes by Ben Kurtz, seconded by Tami Wiggins. Motion carried.

Chair Report:

John reported that County Executive said we need to start things moving, we are getting very tight on EMS availability. He met with the Trustees. He mentioned in his State of the County Address will be moving forward to assume more responsibility for EMS within the County. He has issued an Executive Order directing the Board to advise and consult with the County Executive on the most efficient process in transitioning over to HCG the responsibility for provision of emergency medical services throughout the county.

Asked for moment of silence for the many tragedies in recent events (Baltimore City firefighters, yesterday's MVC where four lives were lost), and for the families and the responders.

DES Report:

Director Hopkins introduced Anthony LaDana of the HCG Law Department noting his involvement as we continue moving forward.

Three new ALS Clinicians are started January 24th. Five BLS Clinician on March 7th. We have edited and updated the QA/QI Policy for the EMSOP. It is out for review. We have worked with Mr. Richardson, collected, and provided nursing home CFS data as requested last month for pending legislation in Annapolis. Fifteen nursing homes/1500 CFS in 2 yrs. This was submitted to the Senate Committee. The North Harford Station project is 20% completed. Site challenges due to freezing conditions, electric and storm drains. Next progress meeting is to be February 2,2022, and the project is on schedule for July. We are proceeding with placing a County Medic Unit in the Patterson Mill Station. Will be meeting on the lease. County Law Department is drafting a MOU and operational agreement, and the anticipated start date of 1st week of March 2022.

As a result of the LODD in Baltimore City, we have been supporting Joppa Magnolia VFC with a County Medic Unit as needed.

Joppa VFC as reached out in interest for a partnership with the County for EMS support.

Ben asked about an interface with Aberdeen on EMS. Director Hopkins said they are not currently, but in the future.

Old Business:

COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S ORDER: Looking at numbers and trying to determine the path forward, it will cost at least \$3M more than the County is paying now to assume all the services. Using the Bel Air operation as a model. John asked about if there were plans to take over the responsibility of the Foundation and the two other companies paying their own personnel. The County is concerned about additional liability and potential conflicts if county personnel are placed on the volunteer units. DES Hopkins said that Abingdon is handling things well with the Foundation. He suggested we approach the high-volume companies first. He suggested after Patterson Mill the county should work with Joppa. He wants to cover these two critical areas first and then they would require a staff of about 40 EMS personnel to do this. Requires an infrastructure build-out. After Joppa we can get north Harford settled and have discussions with Aberdeen. They are recognizing the support the volunteer administrators have done and they need to take on additional staff to cover these responsibilities.

We are expecting Joppa to write a letter to the County Executive requesting support. Possibly putting a crew at House 1 by August and Joppa wants to keep a crew at House 3. John expressed his concern that the Foundation is losing personnel to the County, so how will they survive? Will the Foundation need to continue to pay the 3 companies when they have County support? Tami said that Joppa needs to be looked at and Aberdeen is inconstant on crews.

Linda said that the Foundation is losing personnel, even Abingdon is losing crews and are trying to cover 4 territories with 2 crews. John asked about modifying the plan to do something to support the Foundation. Linda said that there are no territories anymore, it is a county-wide service. John asked, how do we resolve this issue. Need to sit with the Foundation and see what can be done like increasing benefits. If the County takes over the 3 independent that would reduce the number of groups in the County to 3 but both Joppa and Bel Air want to try to retain one crew each. Don't know how long they can sustain this. Ben questioned the model where these companies have a split system. Mary Ann recommended increasing the pay of the Foundation to keep people because people are running toward the money. John said this may make up for the benefits that the County employees get (maybe use the 3-company funding for this). Need to sit down with Foundation on salaries and benefits and then meet with the CE to see what we can do to keep the Foundation viable. DES Hopkins' direction is to fill these two gaps first, but it will have a "house of cards" impact on the County and the Foundation. John asked about suggestions for another model to get through the transition. Larry said Joppa sounds like an emergent situation, and we may have to shift our focus for resources to cover. Tami said that other companies may come to the County and ask for support

and would free up Foundation employees for other companies, however this would require hiring another 9 county employees per station. John said that we will never be able to compete with the major urban area companies. The whole Foundation is a band-aid and needs to be replaced by a unified system. John's biggest concern is the Foundation and the County competing for personnel. John feels that there needs to be equal compensation (salary, benefits, etc.) between all components of the EMS system to balance the playing field. This needs the support of the County Executive. There needs to be some strict rules on how the entities are paying their employees.

Points that he is thinking of for the next meeting:

1. Continue with Joppa and Bel Air (question of Foundation funding for them)
2. Investigate salaries and require anyone getting County support to comply with compensation parity
3. As we move forward and companies get support directly from the County, then the Foundation support is decreased (personnel at least and possibly funding, maybe pro-rated?).

John asked for comments and the Board supported this list.

Bill brought up the point that running EMS takes a significant amount of administrative effort and companies like Abingdon may request the County to take over their EMS. Ben asked if the Board could have a conference call with the County Executive so that he clearly understands the concerns of the Board and the need to get everyone on the same page. John will make this request.

John said in comparing the previous figures, that County staffing, in place of the Foundation staffing would only add approximately \$500,000 to the overall cost. Tami said that the whole system is fragile, and we need to determine the best way to keep things from failing. John may have a conference call with the Board to see how to move forward with the County Executive plan. John may try to speak with the County Executive on the direction.

STAFFING: NA

DISPATCH: NA

SUPPORT SERVICES; NA

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: NA

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT: NA

TRAINING PROGRAMS: Nothing additional. Dr. Paul is doing well and anxiously wants to back to work

CONTINUING EDUCATION: NA

MOBILE INTEGRATED HEALTH; NA

LONG TERM CARE: Senate Bill 295, Medicaid, changes would increase up \$25 each year to \$300 including transport to alternate care and MIH. Will be providing testimony. MACO, Jason Gallion is primary on the bill. John will get in touch with Jason to express support. Bi-partisan bill.

ALTERNATE CARE DESTINATIONS; NA

MENTAL HEALTH/ADDICTIONS: NA

ACTIVE ASSAILANT RESPONSE: NA

Open Board position (Physician) – Director Hopkins shared this remains under review by the County Executive

New Business:

Nothing

Good of the Board:

Remember the first responders and check up on them to be sure they have the support they need, their families, etc.

Next meeting:

March 1, 2022, at DES

Adjourn:

Motion by Tami Wiggins to adjourn, seconded by Ben Kurtz. Motion carried. Time: 1948.