

Emergency Services Advisory Council
March 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Rick Baker, Michael Robinson, Michael Guerin, Michael Karolenko, Robert Buckley, Eddie Ruch, Linas Saurusaitis, David Coe (virtual), Brett Six, Dr. John Murphy, Lynn Karr-Kratz, Dan Plunkert

Members Absent: Dr. Stephanie Kemp, Bruce Fleming

Guests: Alan Barnes

Public Present: Marianne Warehime-CCVESA Secretary, Mary Carol Stiffler-CCVESA Treasurer, Susan Mott-CCVESA 1st VP, Mike Stewart- President of Pleasant Valley Community Fire Co.

Chairman Baker opened the meeting at 19:00 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Murphy made a motion to approve the February meeting minutes. Linas Saurusaitis seconded. The motion was passed.

Board Member Comments:

Chairman Baker will ask for public comments after each topic.

Chairman Baker announced that Blane Wright has been selected to join ESAC as a citizen representative and plans to be at the next meeting.

Chairman Baker addressed a comment made at the last CCVESA meeting. He noted that ESAC does not make budget decisions for CCVESA as was stated in the March minutes. ESAC has input into the County Fire & EMS budget. The CCVESA budget is between CCVESA, Chief Robinson and the Commissioners.

Chairman Baker brought up that the June ESAC meeting may need to be rescheduled because it is the same week as the Maryland State Firemen's Association Convention in Ocean City.

Chairman Baker reminded the group that some ESAC members' terms are expiring in June. The Region 4, Employee (Union) and one Citizen Representative positions all expire in June. If those people want to continue on

ESAC they will need to submit a letter stating so. There will also be a vote for Chair and Vice Chair in June.

Chief Robinson announced that 16 Lieutenants started work with DFEMS on March 2nd. He invited those that were present to introduce themselves. The following employees were introduced: Scott Svoboda, Daniel Dushanko, Bryce Ballard, Mikel Hess, Jeffrey Carroll, Eric Bostian, Brendan Bonita, Michael Karolenko (8 Lieutenants were not present).

Chief Robinson said the Lieutenants are working well together. They are currently assisting with the hiring process and developing SOPs.

Public Comment: Susan Mott stated that at the last CCVESA meeting, member companies expressed concern over the future of CCVSEA now that DFEMS is operational, as well as concern about the role of ESAC. She requests support for the volunteers from ESAC and the Commissioners.

Chairman Baker noted that ESAC is advisory only and that it is not intended to be the voice of the volunteers.

Linas Saurusaitis noted that ESAC regional representatives answer to those they represent. ESAC representatives need to be made aware of concerns.

Chief Robinson stated that he is committed to creating a combination career/volunteer system as was mandated by the Commissioners.

Bob Buckley shared that some employees of the fire companies feel they have been treated unfairly. They were told at one point that they would have jobs after the transition to County staffing.

Chief Robinson stated that there are liability issues for Carroll County Government as the employer. There must be standards and we need to maintain the standards of the region.

- Update from Strategic Plan Training Sub-Committee
-Alan Barnes gave a report on the progress of the Strategic Plan Training Sub-Committee's goals and objectives. He met with Training, Health & Safety Officer, Kevin Fox, and Training Center Coordinator, Josh Shaffer, to discuss what progress has been made and what areas need work. He

expressed that many of the training goals and objectives will come together as the department continues to develop.

Director/Chief's Report:

-Chief Robinson reported that DFEMS has reposted for Firefighter/Paramedic, Paramedic and FADO positions due to not having enough successful applicants to fill the positions planned for FY23.

-Chief Robinson discussed the re-test restriction that is now in place. Those that have failed the written test are not permitted to test again for six months.

-Chief Robinson provided an update on EMS Billing. Digitech has been selected as the third-party billing company. There will be meeting on March 16th at 1900 at the PSTC. Tracey Estes, EMS Billing Technician for DFEMS will present information and answer questions from fire companies.

-Chief Robinson will work with CCVESA on which one-time funding items to present to the Commissioners on March 28th at 10:00 during agency hearings.

-Chief Robinson will request a second EMS billing position and an upgrade of the current staff member's position during agency hearings on March 28th at 10:30. He is also requesting a Data Analyst position.

-Chief Robinson asked ESAC to make a recommendation on the budget.

-Chief Robinson is working with VFIS to standardize background checks for fire companies/volunteers. The new process is expected to start August 1, 2023.

-Chief Robinson shared information about the upcoming Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards on May 15th from 8:00-10:00 AM at Pleasant Valley's Social Hall. Awards will be presented for the 2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years. The deadline to submit a nomination is March 20th. Submit a nomination or register for the event online at

<https://carrollcountychamber.org/carroll-county-public-safety-awards>.

Public Comment: Mary Carol Stiffler shared that CCVESA is asking for about \$335,000 in one-time money and \$80,000 ongoing into the base of the CCVESA budget. The rationale is that the budget has been cut by about \$250,000 each year for a number of years. This is not to fund any specific company but to level out the budget. CCVESA has been held to a 2-3% increase which is no longer reasonable due to inflation and other factors. In regard to one-time funding, if the ask is to replace something that is no longer operational then she feels it should be considered.

Chairman Baker commented that ESAC does intend to make a recommendation on the DFEMS budget after receiving input from CCVESA.

Medical Director's Report: Not present

Commissioner's Report:

- Commissioner Guerin reports that the budget process is underway and he supports the two positions that Chief Robinson is requesting.
- Commission Guerin is happy to have Blane Wright joining ESAC as a citizen rep.

CCVESA President's Report: Not present

Committee Reports:

FROPS- Eddie Ruch reported that three policies that have been reviewed by FROPS were sent out to ESAC members today. He emphasized the need to ensure terminology is consistent across the county.

EMSOPS- David Coe reported that this week's EMSOPS meeting was cancelled so that people can attend the EMS billing meeting. He also addressed the Albuterol shortage.

Old Business:

- Lieutenant Impact/Station Assignment
 - Chief Robinson shared a report showing which fire company each Lieutenant came from and where they will be stationed starting in June. The group discussed the impact DFEMS hiring will have on the fire companies. Bob Buckley shared that several medics who were working for Carroll County fire companies have left and taken other jobs.
- Updated Org Chart
 - FROPS and EMSOPS have been added to the DFEMS org chart.

Public Comment: Susan Mott shared that at the last CCVESA meeting it was discussed that the volunteers are no longer getting input from FROPS or EMSOPS. The FROPS minutes are no longer posted on CCVESA website.

- Budget Committee Update
 - Chairman Baker has reached out to Gene Curfman, the Budget lead for the Strategic Plan. Gene has reached out to his group and is planning a meeting in April. This discussion will be on looking at ways of presenting

the entire fire department budget per the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan. Chairman Baker made it very clear, that ESAC is not approving anyone's budget.

- Policy Committee Discussion
 - Chief Robinson will assign one Shift Commander Lieutenant and one Station Lieutenant to serve on the Policy Committee.
 - Brad Kreimer, Wayne van Dommelen and David Coe will serve on the Policy Committee.
 - ESAC will continue to review policies as they do now.

New Business:

- June ESAC Meeting
 - Dan Plunkert made a motion to move the June ESAC meeting from June 21st to June 28th. Eddie Ruch seconded. The motion was passed.
- New Policies for Review
 - Three policies, Incident Management, Structural Firefighting and Fireground Communications, have been sent out to ESAC members to begin the review process. ESAC reps will distribute to those they represent.
 - The policies can be voted on next month if members get approval from their constituents. Since these policies have been in review for a long time, Chairman Baker asked for these to be voted on next month.
- Retest Restrictions
 - Linas Saurusaitis stated that the retest restriction that has been imposed as part of the DFEMS hiring process is inconsistent with prior practice and to his knowledge, is not part of any County policy.
 - Dr. John Murphy made a motion to question the retest restriction and recommend its removal. Linas Saurusaitis seconded. The motion was passed. A letter will be sent to Chief Robinson and Commissioner Guerin stating ESAC's concern.
- Insurance Issue
 - Dan Plunket stated that Westminster Fire Dept. is covering insurance costs for one month for the four Westminster employees who were just

hired by DFEMS because their benefits do not take effect upon hire as he was previously told. This will become a bigger issue in June when there is a larger number of people hired. The cost is estimated to be about \$1000 per month. He asked if there is anything that can be done.

Action Items:

1. Chief Robinson will get information from the County about how we can compensate fire companies for the insurance cost and if there is anything that can be done to prevent the issue.

Chairman Baker made a motion to adjourn. Linas Saurusaitis seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 21:47.