

Emergency Services Advisory Council

March 18, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Rick Baker, Michael Robinson, Michael Guerin, Jim Mora, JJ Lynott, Tim Legore, Michael Karolenko, David Coe, Brett Six, Scott Dickson, Robert Ruch, Dr. Stephanie Kemp, Joe Brown

Members Absent: Jeff Fleming, Blane Wright

Guest: Randy Stair- Pleasant Valley Community Fire Department

Public: Susan Mott- 2nd VP, CCVESA

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

Scott Dickson made a motion to approve the February meeting minutes. JJ Lynott seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

Board Member Comments:

Chairman Baker – The Commissioners have approved Joe Brown to serve a second term on ESAC.

JJ Lynott – Spring Junior Day is April 11th at Mt. Airy VFC.

Michael Karolenko – The second annual DFEMS Awards Ceremony is scheduled for April 7th at The Flood Zone in Union Bridge. Doors open at 6:00 PM, ceremony at 7:00 PM.

Public Comment: None

Director/Chief's Report: (Report attached)

Commissioner's Report:

-The FY26 Recommended Budget is being presented on Tuesday, March 17th.
-Commissioner Guerin is pleased that the concerns of DFEMS and CCVESA, including the loan process, insurance issues and LOSAP, are being discussed during the budget process.

CCVESA President's Report: Not present

Medical Director's Report:

- DFEMS will receive the Rural Health Transformation Grant. This is a 5-year grant to expand and support the whole blood program. Dr. Kemp hopes to expand the units of blood carried per vehicle from one to two and to add blood to the Battalion Chief's vehicle.
- DFEMS is receiving \$10,000 for the MIEMSS ALS Education grant to cover required education for paramedics.
- IV Pumps will be coming out late summer.
- Training for ventilators is coming up in April.
- DFEMS is trying to find a hospital to work with for the RSI program. An MOU with LifeBridge is in the works.
- There is a nationwide shortage of diltiazem, a medication used for rapid heartbeat. Education will be forthcoming for using metoprolol instead.
- Statistics from Carroll Hospital for 2026 so far show 376 consults. There were 439 consults overall last year.
- There have been many high acuity calls and providers have worked seamlessly with the hospital. This will be reflected in this year's awards ceremony.

Committee Reports:

FROPS - Tim Legore

- Officer Standards – waiting on changes from Deputy Supko.
- FROPS formed a committee to look at the POV Policy.

EMSOPS – David Coe

- Four EMS policies will be coming out soon

Old Business:

- Signal 13 Policy
 - No changes since last meeting.
 - Mike Karolenko made a motion to accept the revision and approve the policy. David Coe Seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Pleasant Valley Ambulance Request

- Randy Stair presented Pleasant Valley's request to place their second ambulance in service as a volunteer-run BLS unit.
- Mr. Stair was able to clarify and address concerns expressed by the ESAC members.
- The ambulance already has radios, an MDT and a stretcher that has been inspected, making the proposal cost neutral for the county. The county is already paying for fuel, maintenance and insurance for the unit.
- There is no existing county policy regarding volunteer ambulance operations.
- The group discussed how the unit will be utilized when the first unit is out, and whether Pleasant Valley will request a county reserve when they have the 2nd unit available.
- The group discussed allowing a trial period and evaluating the results.
- Clarification was requested regarding the previous letter where Pleasant Valley stated they would sell both ambulances.
- The vote was tabled pending written communication from Pleasant Valley clarifying their proposal.

New Business

- Apparatus Procurement Request – Taneytown
 - Taneytown VFC is requesting to purchase a new Duty vehicle and to keep the old one as a Utility. The Utility will not have radios or emergency lights.
 - The vehicle has already been purchased.
 - Chief Robinson noted that Risk Management wants to limit the number of support vehicles on the insurance policy.
 - Mike Karolenko made a motion to approve the request. JJ Lynott seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Apparatus Replacement Request – Reese
 - Reese & Community VFC is requesting to replace their quint, Engine 92, with a pumper.
 - They have already signed the contract for this purchase.
 - Tim Legore made a motion to approve the request since it is already purchased. Robert Ruch seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

- Changes to Apparatus Replacement Policy
 - Chairman Baker suggested the policy be changed so that if the request is for a one-to-one replacement, the company need only write a letter to notify.
 - The revised policy will be discussed after members can review and make comments at next month's meeting.

- Dr. Kemp's Vehicle Request
 - Dr. Kemp is requesting ESAC's support on getting a vehicle for her to respond in. She is the only Medical Director in the region that is not permitted to drive a county vehicle.
 - Commissioner Guerin will speak to Chief Robinson about allowing Dr. Kemp to have a vehicle.

Action Items

1. Commissioner Guerin will speak to Chief Robinson about getting a vehicle for the Medical Director.

Brett Six made a motion to adjourn. JJ Lynott seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 20:53.



MARCH 2026
Chief Michael Robinson
Monthly Report to ESAC

Attached herein is my report for March 2026. Please review and I will answer any questions at tonight's meeting

STAFFING: We were nearing our authorized strength of 224 field personnel and on Thursday, 2/26 we will have 7 personnel who will begin. This includes 2 FF/EMTs, 1 FF/PM and 4/PMs. They will spend two weeks assigned to the academy for orientation and refresher training. They will then be assigned with preceptors to the field and will be cleared for staffing once approved by their preceptors. This leaves us with 5 additional vacancies and possibly 2 more as we work through some professional standards issues. We are advertising for PM and FF/PM positions currently and have received some applications. We will be ongoing with testing. With our floaters in place we have not had any staffing issues and only infrequent mandatory holdovers.

ALS Units: All 16 units remain staffed at the ALS level with some exceptions when staffing does not allow. When that occurs an EMS supervisor or the nearest ALS medic will upgrade the BLS unit based on location. Our remaining positions are either paramedics or FF/Paramedics so we should soon have floaters that will limit that occurrence. We currently have some additional ALS personnel that are completing their field precepting and should be released within the next several weeks.

EMS Fleet:

We continue to deal with maintenance issues with both our ambulances and SUVs. We do have a new Tahoe on order to replace EMS-103. We are awaiting fleet to finalize the specs on the F-150 pick-up which will replace BC101 sometime this summer. If successful with our FY-27 budget, then we will order 5 additional ambulances and 3 SUVs (Tahoe's.) This will provide us with some needed reserve units as our current reserves as on their last leg of service.

The situation overall is still not good, and we will be developing a plan to address this. In the interim we will work closely with you and your vendors and our maintenance shop to address issues as they occur. With the FY-27 budget we will request at least five additional replacement medic units which could all be demos v. custom designed. Those units if available would give us a significantly shorter delivery time. It may take two years and 10 units to put us where we need to be. We currently have multiple SUV/vehicles down for service issues and have not had enough reserve units available.

FY-27 Budget:

We are in the preliminary stages of the Fy 27 budget and yesterday, Ted and Heidi provided a lengthy and informative budget overview. This is available on line:

<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/government/directory/management-budget/division-of-budget/budget-documents/fy-27-budget-process-documents-presentations/>

You will note in the DFEMS portion that our budget is broken down into three areas: Fire/EMS Administration, Fire and EMS. This is based on our revenues from EMS billing and the mandates placed on expenditures of those funds. The presentation explains the specifics of this breakdown.

We placed our requests for additional staffing as elaborated in the ESAC presentation. Our priorities remain as follows:

1. Four (4) shift safety/training lieutenants-new positions
2. Additional 8 (eight) floater positions from original FY-23 staffing plan
3. Laborer either full or part-time to be assigned to the Quartermaster/warehouse-removed from budget recommendations.

The training/safety Lieutenants positions would be assigned to each of the 24/72 shifts and would focus on the training and compliance needs of each shift as well as the volunteers. They would have an immediate safety officer response profile and perform other duties such as accident/injury investigations, station and PPE inspections and provide driver training and OSHA compliance. All other departments in the region currently have such a position. We did a presentation to the commissioners last week on these four positions and our eight (8) floaters. This is now a decision for the commissioners to make in their final budget deliberations. I will be presenting to the commissioners in their budget session on 3/24 at 1015 and will discuss the addition of shower facilities for the BC office at the PSTC/Apparatus building.

Last month, I met with our county budget analyst, Treasurer Mary Carole and Joe Dennis, to go over the FY-27 CCVESA budget as well as the 14 individual company budgets. Joe Dennis and I met with 14 companies and went over each budget item by item prior to Joe's final submission. We have centralized some purchasing in areas such as IT and nozzles/appliances and done some streamlining to other items. An increase in the overall VFC budgets is submitted with a recommended increase of over \$654,000 which I am fundamentally in support of. This is also to meet the spirit of the MOUs between each company and the county government. This has been removed by Budget and Management. CCVESA will be going before the commissioners on 3/24 at 1045 to make their case for additional budget upgrades. I will be there with them, and I just want to note that I am not aware of any LOSAP enhancement being submitted.

In addition, given the challenges with apparatus replacement and timing we are asking for increases to the maintenance budget line item. Just understand that this will now be subjected to the standard review and processes that all county agencies go through. This will be part of the CCVESA budget enhancement as well.

My other goal with the FY 27 budget is to request a countywide study by a consultant. That study would evaluate our current system and its capabilities to include both fire and EMS coverage, station locations, apparatus needs/type and staffing. We would use three criteria in the study and that would include ISO standards of coverage, NFPA -1201,1710 for coverage and CFAI (fire accreditation) standards of cover. I believe we all have our opinions but a third-party unbiased organization using national standards could provide a comprehensive overview of our strengths, weakness and recommendations for future Fire/EMS coverage and potential costs. This would also provide an analysis of apparatus and fleet needs both for procurement and maintenance as well as station locations and maintenance requirements to provide sustainability. We will see if we are able to have this included and will move forward from there. I sent to each of you separately a “sample” of two such studies from our region. These were done by two different consulting organizations for Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County. This will give you an opportunity to see the comprehensive nature of these studies. If the commissioners approve such a direction, then an RFP would be developed to define the “scope” of such a study.

Insurance is another ongoing concern in terms of cost and coverage. The 10K deductibles based on accident history are not sustainable and I am working with risk management and our insurer VFIS to see what options are there. We will also look at that issue in our budget discussions. Our challenge with the budget will be the growing state budget deficit and the unpredictability of state funding and revenues into the county. I want to thank Joe Dennis for his significant efforts in the budget process, and I believe that we are moving towards a more streamlined and equitable process to meet the needs of the 14 VFCs while serving the citizens with efficiency and cost effectiveness.

PSTC improvements/ Phase II: We are also submitting in our budget at the request of the training committee a replacement container/module for our burn facilities which have become worn giving the age. This current configuration of a burn facility was intended to be temporary pending phase II of the PSTC.

Currently we have a priority project in the budget for approximately \$8 million. These funds would be used to remediate the current PSTC practical area which meets the federal threshold for PFAS remediation based on geotechnical drilling and testing conducted during 2024. DPW’s construction division has made some recommendations and are now developing a timeline and total project cost. The total for remediation and construction of Phase II will be around \$22 million. The commissioners are funding FY-27, the first phase of this which will be remediation. Once that is complete construction can begin which will provide a new two-story burn building, an outdoor classroom building, new flammable liquid/gas props and associated civil engineering projects such as drainage, new parking facilities and other environmental compliance.

I am awaiting a timeline/cost analysis from DPW/construction. The reality of this plan will be a need to shift all practical training from the PSTC to an alternative site for as long as (18-24

months.) Obviously, this will have a significant impact on our training programs and especially fire and rescue courses as well as applicant testing and recruit training. We are working on some alternative plans that will obviously involve MFRI, neighboring jurisdictions and our CCVESA training committee. For many reasons we must have a plan to ensure training continuity given our focus and mandates in the training area. All elements of county government as well as the commissioners are fully supportive of our needs and our future direction. We will all need to be prepared to improvise and adapt to some temporary solutions.

Logistics Warehouse: Is in its final stages and nearing completion. The shelving units are being installed, and I have met with the DPW/Construction Division and provided a “punch list” and some additional feedback on the quality of the project. We are working in concert with them to resolve some identified issues. We anticipate occupancy in the next several weeks and will consolidate into the new warehouse from three current locations on the campus. This should streamline all of our logistics capabilities and stock.

Cancer screening grant: I submitted on 1/15 through the state health department, a grant for \$85,500 for cancer screening for 228 uniformed career personnel. There is \$480,000 available for a one-time cancer screening. We were notified last week that we have received the award but only in the amount of \$61,029 v. the original \$85,000. This equates to only 163 v. the required 228 to cover all career personnel I was told by 2nd VP Mott that CCVESA also received a reduced grant which will not cover the anticipated needs. The issue was caused by limitations in funding from the state. I am working with our budget analyst to see if we can redirect current FY-26 funds from our physical exams to cover these gaps which would be around \$48K to cover all current personnel who receive physicals. In FY-27 we will budget for our annual physicals and will include cancer screening in the costs. There is currently a bill in the legislature to mandate volunteer testing but I don’t believe there is associated funding. More to follow

Commendations Board Has done a great job to recognize personnel at all levels in various awards categories. On April 7, 2026, and again at the Flood Zone we will be hosting the 2nd Annual Commendations and Awards beginning at 1900 hrs. Following the ceremony there will be refreshments and then alcohol will be served but not during the official proceedings for the awards. All are invited and Class A uniforms or business casual is the official dress code. We have over 70 awards and personnel, both career and volunteer as well as civilians who have earned recognition from incidents, lifesaving and administrative excellence.

On Tuesday, May 19 beginning at 0800 at Pleasant Valley, the annual **Carroll Chamber Awards for Public Safety** will take place and many career and volunteer members will be recognized for their actions from 2025. This event is a breakfast and there is a cost with tickets at \$30/each or tables available at \$240. For further information go to:

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

The Commendations Board now coordinates the submissions for both events and I want to commend the Co-Chairs, President Todd Tracey from Gamber and Lt. Michael Karolenko from

DFEMS and their board members for the many hours they have worked to make these events a success and more importantly to recognize both career and volunteer members who are going above and beyond in service to their communities and to Carroll County.

Maryland General Assembly/Legislative Session-2026 began on 1/14/26 in Annapolis. This is a challenging year for the state given the billion+ deficit and their politicization of many national issues. I am also in attendance during the session for the Friday fire service legislative meetings along with your MSFA President and other fire service reps. Hopefully the fire service will make some progress and preserve state funding in areas such as 508, loan funding and other relevant initiatives. Each company should sign up for the weekly MSFA legislative bulletin to keep abreast of progress in these areas. I'm sure that President Simpson will have more to say in this area. There are a number of Fire service-related bills that are being opposed by the various organizations. Highlights include:

1. A bill to mandate quarterly ambulance inventory compliance by MIEMSS
2. A bill to allow medical marijuana use by career Fire/EMS personnel
3. A bill to mandate all jurisdictions to work a 168 hr./28-day cycle (our current schedule)
4. A bill mandating inspections of short-term rental properties
5. Many other bills with impact on the fire service

On the federal level the DHS remains shut down. The impact to the fire service includes:

- Shutdown of the sites for mandatory training-ICS 100,200, 700,800 etc.
- Ongoing shut down of the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg
- Shutdown of AFG/SAFER grants management and application process
- NERIS support provided by the USFA
- Other related Fire/EMS federal programs

However, The National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend at the National Memorial in Emmitsburg is still scheduled and will occur on May 3-5 with the NFF ceremony beginning at 1000 on Sunday, 5/5. I will be in attendance as will our Honor Guard and Winfield VFC will be honoring their LODD- Captain Keith Phillips who died as the result of occupational cancer. Go to <https://www.firehero.org/>

Operations: Tim Legore will report and the February FROPS meeting. weather. There is a proposal adopted by the Metro Fire Chiefs Safety Committee that would require SCBA/PPE during all phases of overhaul to mitigate exposure to carcinogens. This would also apply to fire investigators (FMs) This is to address particulate matter in the aftermath of combustion that is linked to cancer. This will be a significant cultural shift, and we are discussing DFEMS implementation. Given the impact of such a change this will be widely circulated and debated before any adoption. Fundamentally, DFEMS would be in favor of such a change, but we need to assess the impact on our air management and staffing requirements. More to follow.

I have provided a “DRAFT” last month at FROPS on a POV policy for incident response. The primary issue is when our personnel with issued portable radios respond in their private vehicles and are entered into our ECC/CAD system. This makes that person and their vehicle a component of DFEMS and the county. Our insurance does not cover this and there is an extreme liability on the county should an accident occur enroute or at an incident. Our SOP would allow POV response based on current company policy or a model policy that we would provide. However, members would not be on the air or be acknowledged until arriving on scene. If given a traffic violation during a POV response that would be reviewed by our accident review committee. Each company has one or more command vehicles for their officers to respond, and the liability of official non departmental vehicles cannot be assumed. This was the first draft and FROPS has a group working on the policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson

Michael W. Robinson MA, CFO, NRP
Director

MWR/mr

C: CCVESA officers
Command Staff