

Emergency Services Advisory Council

April 15, 2026 Meeting Minutes

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

Members Absent: None

Guests: Commissioner Susan Krebs, Mike Stewart (Pleasant Valley Community Fire Company)

Public: Marianne Warehime (CCVESA), Battalion Chief Josh Pierson (DFEMS)

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

Tim Legore made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes. Jim Mora seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

Board Member Comments:

JJ Lynott- Junior Day was held on Saturday, April 11th. There were about 100 juniors in attendance and Mt. Airy VFC did a great job of hosting.

Mike Karolenko- On behalf of the Commendation Board, thank you to everyone who attended and supported the DFEMS Awards Ceremony on April 7th.

-We have outgrown the current venue and are looking at options for next year.

-Please submit nominations when the events are fresh in your mind. It is important to recognize when good things happen.

Public Comment: None

Director/Chief's Report: (Report attached)

Chief Robinson and Chief Supko served dinner to the ECC this evening in celebration of Public Safety Telecommunicators week.

Commissioner's Report:

- The FY27 budget will be announced on Tuesday, April 21st. The Board of Commissioners worked hard on what was brought to them for the budget and Commissioner Guerin is looking forward to Tuesday's presentation.
- The DFEMS Awards Ceremony was a fantastic and successful event.
- Thank you to Winfield VFC for the rural water supply tour with Tim Legore. DFEMS will now coordinate with the Department of Public Works about installing dry hydrants in replacement bridges where possible.
- Junior Day was inspiring and very well done.

CCVESA President's Report:

- The date for the annual convention is May 9th in New Windsor.
- CCVESA is hiring for an EST Coordinator.

Medical Director's Report:

- Dr. Kemp met with the EMS Lieutenants today about operational expectations, equipment and QA.
- Dr. Kemp is looking at revising all EMS-based policies, improving formatting and continuity.
- Continuing education is coming up on April 23rd via zoom on the topic of eliminating bias in patient care.
- Ventilator courses are scheduled. Lieutenants will be trained first. Eventually every ALS clinician will be trained on ventilator use, starting with Mt. Airy due to the proximity to the ventilator facility at Lorient.
- IV pumps will be in the field soon.
- Changes are being made to EMS bags to make them more hygienic and also to fit the IV pumps.
- Dr. Kemp attended the Maryland Medical Director's Symposium along with Chief Robinson and 95 other Medical Directors and jurisdictional leaders.
- Looked at statistics for whole blood administration statewide. Our data is spot on with other jurisdictions.
- 50% of whole blood administrations are for trauma, 50% for medical patients. Survival for medical patients is 100%. 80% survival for traumas. This includes patients in arrest on arrival.
- Administered 20 units of blood since starting the program.
- Will be expanding our whole blood capabilities with the Rural Healthcare grant.
- Paramedic Myers and the crew from Trooper 3 will be honored at the Trauma Symposium with the Paramedic of the Year award.
- Dr. Kemp is working on a research project with Hopkins using i-STAT devices to test for proteins released in the brain during significant head injury. The long-term goal of the project is to appropriately triage patients with significant

neurological injuries to trauma centers that are capable of dealing with the injury and others can go locally.

-Joe Brown, who runs the ER at Carroll Hospital, commented that Carroll County EMS far exceeds other jurisdictions in the area.

Committee Reports:

FROPS - Tim Legore reported that FROPS is working through the POV policy and Officer Standards.

-A subcommittee was formed regarding record management systems to try to get continuity across the county.

-A subcommittee was formed for updates on radio channels.

EMSOPS – David Coe shared that EMSOPS is meeting on April 22nd. They should have policies to ESAC in two months.

Old Business:

- FY27 Budget – discussed under Chief's report
- Pleasant Valley Second Ambulance Request
 - DFEMS Command Staff is okay with proceeding with the pilot program.
 - JJ Lynott made a motion to recommend approval of the pilot program. Mike Karolenko seconded. The motion was passed. 10-1 vote.
 - The parameters of the program are up to Chief Robinson.
 - Randy Stair at Pleasant Valley will be the point of contact.
- Apparatus Replacement Policy
 - Proposed change: Only increases or reduction in the volunteer or career fleet size, a new service or a reduction of service will need to be reviewed by ESAC.
 - Mike Karolenko commented that when it comes to county-procured medic units, he does not want the policy to be prohibitive if opportunities/deals come up that require quick action.

- After discussion ESAC agrees that there could rare instances where a piece of equipment may come available and will need to be addressed quickly in order to procure. Particularly in the apparatus purchasing environment we are in now. These instances can be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- JJ Lynott requested that a line about electronics (radios, MDTs, etc.) be added to the policy.
- Chairman Baker will make the addition and send the policy to ESAC members to share with those they represent.

New Business

- Future Needs of the Department
 - The group discussed next steps for the department.
 - Third-party study
 - Chief Robinson was advised to start with a risk analysis of Carroll County
 - DFEMS is at a crossroads. We are close to meeting our initial staffing goals and have improved EMS. There are still gaps in service, such as fire protection and special operations teams.
 - The group does not want the study to just sit on a shelf. It needs to look at strengths, weaknesses and analysis of proprieties. More discussion to follow.
- Chief Robinson would like to examine the structure of ESAC.
 - Chief Robinso suggested the President of the Local be an ex-officio member of ESAC, making the position equal to the CCVESA President as far as representation. More discussion to follow.
- Joe Brown noted that May 20th from 11:00 am – 2:30pm is the EMS Picnic at Carroll Hospital.
- Brett Six brought up concerns about the impact of Senate Bill 445.
 - DFEMS may lose employees to other jurisdictions for more pay and opportunity, especially if they offer lateral positions.

Action Items

- Chairman Baker will amend the Apparatus Replacement Policy and send it to ESAC members.
- When the Adequate Facilities document is released, Chief Robinson will pass it on to ESAC.

JJ Lynott made a motion to adjourn. Robert Ruch seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 20:58.



April 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 currently have 10 vacancies and had a paramedic resignation this morning. We had 7 new personnel: 2 FF/EMTs and 5 PMs and FF/PMs who began on March 26. They are currently on internship/precepting in the field. We will be participating in the Winters Mill Job Fair on 4/28. We are looking at some recruitment strategies in light of our current vacancies as well as any staffing enhancements with the FY-27 budget. Included are our previous information sessions and attending volunteer association meetings in neighboring jurisdictions.

With the passage of SB 445 which will mandate FF overtime after 168 hours in a pay period or simply require a 24/72 shift for all municipal fire departments. This will have a significant impact on our agency in terms of a potential exodus of current staffing for neighboring departments who have identified merit pay scales and potentially higher wages for entry and continuing levels. This breaks down as follows among our bordering agencies:

Frederick: 150 personnel

Howard: 120 personnel

Montgomery: 300 personnel

Baltimore :300 personnel

With nearly 1000 potential positions this will not only affect DFEMS but also the regional volunteer fire service as many volunteers will be in the hiring pool. We should have a proactive strategy for recruitment and retention to counter the potential impact of this. Areas such as our public safety pension and DROP are certainly a start as are our other positive elements. More in the coming months as jurisdictions address this "unfunded" mandate.

LEGISLATIVE: There are a number of successful bills with the Sine Die of the legislature.

These include in no priority order:

SB455- Hours of work for career firefighters (see previous)

SB 439- Will allow medical cannabis to use by our personnel for medical purposes and this will impact our tort liability as THC remains in the system and will be positive for drug testing even days after use. We will be working on an applicable policy to address.

SB 159: EMS unit inspections to be mandated by MIEMSS along with a specific equipment check list- to be determined by MIEMSS director.

SB 553: Re-establishes Lithium-Ion battery/energy storage commission for study of the issue.

SB 624: Requires fire safety inspections of short-term rentals (VRBO etc.) to be done by local jurisdiction and we have no mechanism to perform this.

Volunteer cancer testing bill was successful and we are including career/volunteer testing under a grant for FY-26 and through our annual physicals line item in FY-27 and beyond.

There were also several VFC debt/loan bills to include Hampstead and Manchester. Manchester advised they will be receiving \$265K for station renovations.

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 waiting 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 vs. custom designed. Those units available would give us 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. If it is successful we hope to be ready on 7/2/26 for procurement. This will all impact on the availability of a vehicle for the medical director, by which we will submit a plan shortly to the commissioners.

FY-27 Budget:

The budget recommendations/deliberations are now complete and the formalized budget recommendations will be presented on Tuesday 4/21 by Management and budget. We thank the commissioners for their support with our initiatives and will know soon where we stand. We obviously have our priorities which were well orchestrated by ESAC.

<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 on 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

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.

Joe Dennis presented the CCVESA budget with enhancement of a \$654K increase to the commissioners and I attended to support them with the presentations. 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, weaknesses 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 there are. 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 burning facilities which have become worn giving the age. This current configuration of a burn facility was intended to be temporarily 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 burning 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. This is subject to scrutiny and alternatives as PFAS is a planet-wide issue and spending millions on remediation may or may not address the issues.

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 awaiting the painting of the floor. We are working on 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, and we will 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 held the 2nd Annual Commendations and Awards. Kudos to the Commendations Board and especially to Co-Chairs Lt. Karolenko and President Todd Tracey. An excellent event and I will note that it had great unifying qualities that showed both our career and volunteer partners as an organization working together to save lives. Plans are already underway for the third annual event.

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.

On the federal level the DHS remains shut down. The impact of 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 likely be moved to Mt. St. Mary's University 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/>

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson

Michael W. Robinson MA, CFO, NRP
Director

MWR/Mr
C: CCVESA officers
Command Staff