



Department of Emergency Services  
Advisory Council  
Minutes  
February 8, 2018

Present:

Non-Voting Members:

Executive Director, Scott Haas  
Medical Director, Dr. Joseph Ciotola  
Assistant Chief, Jim Alfree  
Assistant Chief, Scott Wheatley  
Assistant Chief, Jeffrey Morgan  
Assistant Chief, David Rivett

Staff Support:

Office Coordinator, Rebecca Rombro

Voting Members:

JC Lewis (Volunteer Ambulance Committee), Nick Venuto (Consumer), Chuck Melson (Consumer), John Cvach (Consumer)

Excused Absence:

Billy Faust (FEC), Buddy Thomas (Volunteer Firefighter), Kathleen Deoudes (Consumer)

Represented:

None

- Executive Director Scott Haas called meeting to order 6:00pm.
- Note that we have a quorum

Minutes from November 9, 2017 were reviewed and approved by the Council.

**Emergency Services Director Update**

Executive Director Haas advised; the EMS Division recently recorded a video with Commissioner Moran to review the video laryngoscope, a new piece of equipment which has recently been purchased for use by our first responders. In this latest press release filmed by QACTV, Assistant Chief Scott Wheatley demonstrates how the laryngoscope can be used for intubation to save lives in the field.

Video is played for Council.

**FY19 Budget Submission/Presentation**

Executive Director Haas advised; an essential topic for review tonight is our budget request. I would like to familiarize the Council with our submission and hope to get approval. The timeframe was moved up this year leaving us with less time than in previous years to complete our packets. An additional step was also added this year; a meeting was held with members of the finance department to review our requests before the budget was submitted to the County Administrator for review.

The budget is showing a 3.25% increase for FY19 but that is not exactly correct because each department provides two budgets. One is the baseline budget and the other is the enhanced budget. The baseline budget outlines departmental necessities; the expenditures required to keep the department running. The enhancements are required to allow the department to grow and to adapt to many factors.

#### EMS Division Budget Requests:

A new state-mandated change is going into effect; an option for retirement, insurance for contractual employees. In the past we have been able to submit the salary requirements based on a lump sum figure and could split that amount between our 1300-hour and 499-hour contractual staff.

Doctor Ciotola advised; 40-hours of sick leave, classified as personal leave have been added.

Executive Director Haas advised; at this stage we are not certain of all of the details. We were told bulk loading could not be used; we had to use contracted amounts. The department lost \$150,000.00 this way, plus the additional sick leave. But then we looked at the way the information was laid out and realized all hours were not included for our contracts so we added them back into the budget. That is the increase we see here in the submission. The remaining portions of the EMS budget are mostly staying the same except normal upcharges for services and increases.

For the enhanced portion, we are requesting four additional EMT positions to equip the Church Hill location to increase to 24-hour shifts. We are also requesting funds to allow for promotional options.

Executive Director Haas informed; we met with the County Administrator and the Church Hill station. Our crew has been staffed at the station for years, renovations were supposed to have taken place by now. The building is older and in need of upgrades; a place for our staff to stay, otherwise the 24-hour shifts will not be possible. At this point, the details are still uncertain. Options being considered; the county could purchase a lot on which to build a new fire house, or the station could be relocated to a place on the edge of town which is equipped to handle the needs. The building could also be torn down and rebuilt. We have some good leads as to where we can relocate our staff while renovations take place.

#### Communications Division Budget Requests:

Executive Director Haas advised; the overall amount shows as less than in previous years because of the turnover in staffing; for example we had a thirty-year employee retire this year and new hires brought in.

Chuck Melson; is the turn-over rate because of salary?

Executive Director Haas informed; recently we have seen many employees starting out younger than previously, and as their first step in public safety, they do not intend to be in the Communications Center forever.

Assistant Chief Alfree informed; many aspire to transfer to firefighting

Executive Director Haas advised; many transfer to the EMS division or out of the department. Retirement options elsewhere are often appealing. Improving our retirement options is a top priority; the best option right now is to piggy-back LEOPS, which we are qualified for. We have included promotion options in the Communications budget too, within the price structure. There is an increase in service contracts and with capital project requests.

#### Fire Marshal Budget Requests:

Executive Director Haas advised; there is one full-time employee and two part-time employees within the division. The contracts were broken down the same way as in EMS; hours were shorted so we calculated them back in. The overall budget reflects similarly to the previous year.

#### Support Services Budget Requests:

Executive Director Haas advised; radios and IT costs account for the bulk of \$300,000.00 request. We have the Motorola service contract for the 700 megahertz system switch. This charge is unavoidable; we knew the support service would begin in FY19. As for the additional increases, various service contracts have increased in cost or we

have replaced services by other vendors. Requests for employees' training on Microsoft SQL is also included in the budget.

#### Special Operations Budget Requests:

Executive Director Haas advised; an increase shows for an Emergency Management Associate, but he is in a grant-funded position so on the revenue budget we are receiving those funds back into the budget. We were instructed to keep Animal Control's budget separate so it was subtracted out. There are two full-time positions and one contractual position; an employee who primarily covers weekends. The Animal Control budget is basically the same as previous years, no increases.

The Administrative budget requests for FY19 also remain similar as in previous years.

#### Capital Budget Projects:

Executive Director Haas informed; the Public Safety Network project requires the same budget every year for next five years. These funds support the system server and equipment.

We requested an EMS Supervisors' unit again this year. Last year this request was cut from the budget.

We have requested funds to continue with the replacement ambulance project.

Personal Protective Equipment project; the EMS staff's turnout gear is on a ten-year replacement cycle.

We have requested upgrades to ambulance stretchers and lifts.

The AED project will continue for 2 – 3 years. The Sheriff's Office vehicles will continue to be built-out through the AED project. Any Officer with an AED in their vehicle can be dispatched to respond if they are in the area. Officers coming on duty each morning inform dispatch if their vehicle is equipped so they may be dispatched if necessary. We have had success with this project. I would like to see every county vehicle eventually equipped with an AED.

A medication dispenser was requested again this year. This request was cut last year from the budget but we are trying again for FY19.

The Communications Center planning design is added to the capital budget. The room needs to be gutted and redone. Years ago the room was flooded, so the floors were raised but the wiring has not been replaced. Electrical outlets need to be installed under the flooring. The skylights in the room need to be capped off. During rain storms it is too loud in the room; calls can be difficult to hear. The UPS is 20-years old, although the batteries were recently replaced. After fixing and updating, in FY2020, the Emergency Number Systems Board may assist with funding to update the phone systems. Some parts of the upgrades will be grant-funded. I would like to see the COM Supervisors' desk incorporated better into the room as well.

Assistant Chief Alfree advised; additional improvements: we would like to take a public safety recording approach; where we can tie in many different agencies with data and push information back out as it is updated. The Court Commissioner, detention center, law, fire, etc. could all add information to one database so work is not duplicated. The Fire Marshal's office could add blueprints or statistics; information could be shared, so when there is a tornado or an active assailant at a school plans could be reviewed for response.

Executive Director Haas advised; currently this type of information is located within separate reporting systems. The volunteer companies each have different recording systems and the law enforcement agencies both use different systems. It is hard for all agencies to agree on one vendor. For this request we have based costs off of what other jurisdictions have done.

Executive Director Haas advised; we will be meeting with the County Administrator on February 14. The Sheriff's Office has requested and will likely be approved seven new employees to staff the new courthouse. I believe funds have already been allocated for this. We are not certain when we will be scheduled to present to the Commissioners. Three county hearings will be held.

Executive Director Haas advised; council members are able to attend the presentations and speak if they'd like.

Nick Venuto; with the new construction on Kent Island, will there be an increase of new units?

Executive Director Haas advised; I would say these increases will be two budget cycles out. Kent Island will decide if increasing their staffing is a step they will take.

Assistant Chief Wheatley informed; the call loads have decreased, transports are down. Prior to the MICH program we were transporting more frequently.

Executive Director Haas advised; the Church Hill increase will be a huge difference for us. During the nighttime there is the largest hole in coverage.

Nick Venuto; there are factors to consider over next few years; traffic, call volume, there is a need to expand. Communities are concerned with support capabilities, public safety is a factor. At what point is it more beneficial to hire full-time employees?

Executive Director Haas advised; I had this conversation with Human Resources. Numbers are being calculated and we will need to determine what is most cost effective for us with these changes. Our contractual staff did not adhere to set schedules but now we are planning to assign each to a 24-hour shift. We are trying to get four on each of our four shifts. If we are fully staffed we can put an additional unit in service. When we made this plan we did not have the sick time scenario, so right out of gate we are paying a week off. Our part-time employees work full time for other agencies so they likely will not take advantage of the insurance option. Staffing, Next Generation 9-1-1, and retirement options are the three big factors we are focused on departmentally.

Motion made to support the submitted budget request.

All agreed, none opposed

Assistant Chief Alfree informed; Next Generation 9-1-1 updates are coming. National Capital region awarded AT&T as the vendor. Once put into effect, all Maryland agencies can utilize AT&T, which will cut eight months off of the bidding process. Montgomery County has a request in with the Emergency Number Systems Board; they are at the forefront with this project. Baltimore region council is also purchasing services and we can piggy-back off of them. We went to the Emergency Number Systems Board for equipment requests to get ahead of the game, which have been approved. Text-to-9-1-1 will be the two-year solution until Next Generation 9-1-1 is activated. If approved, we will wait to push advertising until the entire state is equipped. We are coordinating with GIS as well, for mapping software; their team thinks our system is ready. We anticipate the rollover to occur after Montgomery County, so we are arranging the other project pieces now.

Assistant Chief Rivett informed; at our previous meeting we mentioned hiring an Emergency Management Associate for community outreach. We have since brought on an Associate, a person who happened to have been a part-time Animal Control Officer with the county, Joe Cichocki. The aim for the position will be outreach and CERT; revamping the LEPC. The Special Operations Division is also involved with an intern program with the high school. I have been working with school counselors in their interview process. We only took on one intern this year; a bright young man who started with us yesterday. Chris will be working with the EM team. We have also been in the process of updating

the county's hazard mitigation plan. Through a grant we were awarded funding to contract a vendor to update the plan. Studies have already taken place; sewer plant studies, which can be applied as a portion of the grant match.

Executive Director Haas; are there any questions from the council, old or new business?

Doctor Ciotola informed; Senate Bill 682 has been introduced. This is substantial for EMS; it formalizes the MICH program allowing it to be billable. There are some restrictions in this bill. Introduced by Senators Hershey and Middleton, under this bill, Medicaid can reimburse for services. Treat and release can be invoiced; to this point some services could not be billed. Another piece of this bill is alternate destination, meaning EMS does not have to transport a patient to be able to bill for service. There is a heavy load on MIEMSS for a protocol for transporting to other locations. There is an overload of visits, allowing transport to other destinations reduces volume.

Executive Director Haas informed; this is a building block, it is a next step for EMS. The evolution of this program has been interesting to watch, these changes will be the largest EMS has seen in years. Our group, and specifically Doctor Ciotola, has made this happen through the Rural Workgroup.

Doctor Ciotola informed; this has been a collaboration pilot with five health officers on the shore. A grant proposal has been submitted for \$175,000.00 to develop the program under the Department of Health, to pay and sustain. We will see what happens with this.

Nick Venuto; these are changes in the right direction; they have been saying we are going to see a new hospital.

Doctor Ciotola; a Medicare waiver funds the hospital system but the next phase is for total cost of care. The first step is EMS, so EMS has to take the lead on this.

Executive Director Haas; if there is no other business I will call this meeting to an end. The next DESAC meeting will be held on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm.

Meeting adjourned 7:30pm