

Meeting of the Talbot County Emergency Services Advisory Board (TCESAB)
26 January 2022

Attendees:

Steve Mroczek - Chairperson

Members:

Shirley Bucci

Jeanne Kuperberg

Brian LeCates

Lois McDonald

Scott Mergenthaler

Richard Smith

Ruth Sullivan

Steve Mroczek opened the meeting at 6PM 26 January . This meeting was delayed from 5 January due to COVID. The meeting was virtual.

The minutes of the 10 November were approved as prepared.

Brian LeCates provided a quick update on the Department of Emergency Services (DES).

The Emergency Management Division has continued to support the Health Department needs as the COVID 19 emergency continues to evolve. They are also working with a contractor to update the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Individual Stakeholder meetings are underway and feedback is being incorporated. They recently conducted a large Stakeholder meeting at the Community Center.. It's planned that they will adopt the plan this Spring prior to County Council adopting it. When those steps are completed it will go to FEMA for their approval in the Fall.

The Emergency Medical Services Division has completed implementing the new inventory management system for supplies on vehicles and the supply room. They are beginning to implement fleet management functions of the software that will track all of the maintenance for each vehicle. The Ultrasound project continues. All of the devices have been received and introductory training is nearing completion. This does not get the staff to a level of proficiency. Interviews are underway for three paramedic positions. One is the fourth position for the surge unit and the others are replacements for two retirements. Brian said he anticipates that in the next Fiscal Year the Council will approve an additional 4 to staff the surge unit 7/24. The Council has approved the order of the two new ambulances in this years budget. Delivery is expected in the Spring.

The Communications Division has begun the migration of the the 911 System to the "Next Generation" system Implementation is expected to be complete in 2nd quarter of the year. Currently they have one vacant position.

Brian then discussed the current planning for the FY 23 Budget. In addition to "normal" budget expenses he highlighted several significant initiatives.

1. 25 Year Retirement Plan: In the area of personnel DES hopes to move forward with a 25 year retirement program. Such a program would be a major boost to recruiting. This year's budget funded a study of the costs of moving DES to the Law Enforcement

Officers Pension System (LEOPS). The results of that study will be due just about the time for this years Budget. Brian is hopeful that DES will join the Sheriff's Office who moved into this system last year.

2. Morale Committee: Covid has adversely moral everywhere. When Brian was promoted he was concerned that the department did a poor job of recognizing performance that went above and beyond expectations. The Department has never had a dedicated budget to support a Moral Program. It small budget item, \$4,000, but from Brian's point of view an important new new initiative.

3. North County Paramedic Station: Relocation of the Serge Unit to a new station is a major priority. A location for the station has been identified and soil testing is underway. Funding for the land acquisition is in this years budget, construction will be budgeted in FY23. Construction is planned to begin in the Fall. The budget will also request \$285,000 to hire an an additional four clinicians to staff that unit 7/24.

4. Replacements: The budget will contain a request for \$300,000 to acquire another ambulance. This is the "normal" annual replacement of a high mileage ambulance. The replacement to one "Chase" vehicle and two early model LP15s are also being requested.

5. In conjunction with building the North County Station will be the creation of a live backup 911 center. This facility would protect that system from an outage if the Port Street facility could not be occupied. Currently the back up for the 911 Center is a small relocation facility located at the Easton Police Station. The budget will be requesting \$1.9 million for 7 new 700 Mz radio consoles. Additionally, new network servers and CAD work stations who's costs are still being estimated will be requested. Not being requested from the County will be approximately \$400K for generators, access controls and moving of the radios from Easton PD which will be requested from Maryland's 911 Board.

Scott Mergenthaler provided a update from the Sheriff's Office. He told the Board that they had a retirement on January 1, for whom have identified a replacement starting January 31st. The School Resource Officer for St. Michaels High School position is vacant. It has been staffed through these of overtime. An individual has been identified to fill that position and they should start March 1st.

Kent and, Queen Annes Counties did a mid year \$10,000 across the board pay raise and Caroline County did a 3% mid year pay raise. These raises were motivated by the increases given by the State to all State Law Enforcement Officers. That puts Talbot at a significant disadvantage. Pay parity will be a major focus of the new budget.

Another large item for FY 23 is adding three new officers, two for the Patrol Division in order to get to three officers per shift and an additional one for the Investigations Division. Five new vehicles are also being requested, four for the Patrol Division and one for the Narcotics Division.

Debbie Timms was not present to provide a report from Shore Health. The group discussed the current congestion in the hospital due to COVID and staffing shortages.

Steve Mroczek told the board that the Talbot County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (TCVFRA) leadership is meeting with the Presidents of the seven Companies later this evening to develop their joint budget submission. He said he expected that they will be requisitioning a 10% or greater increase in the allotment provided to each company for their operating funds.

Richard Smith provided a brief overview of bills coming before the 2022 General Assembly session that will impact Career and Volunteer Emergency Services. He reported that they are currently monitoring 35 bills. Additional bills may be filed up to the deadline of February 8th. Two he highlighted is a bill regulating Foam used by fire companies for fire suppression and one dealing with 911 Operators and Post Traumatic Stress.

Old Business : None

New Business:

Steve gave a brief overview of the new fire training facility being planned by the Easton Volunteer Fire Company. It will be on land donated by the Town of Easton in the Mistletoe Industrial Park. He promised updates as it proceeds.

Next meeting will be on March 2 at 6PM in person