

Meeting of the Talbot County Emergency Services Advisory Board (TCESAB)  
1 February 2023

Attendees:

Steve Mroczek - Chairperson

Members:

Shirley Bucci  
Terry Satchell

Tim Cannon  
Scott Mergenthaler

Jeanne Kuperburg  
Matt Watkins

Steve Mroczek opened the meeting at 6:03PM 1 February 2023 at Talbot Center

The minutes of the 4 January 2022 meeting were approved as prepared.

Brian LeCates is on vacation. Matt Watkins is filling in. He told the board that he would only be discussing the budget requests for the EMS Division.

Matt began the by discussing FY23 statistics. The number of transports was down slightly although the total number of calls was slightly up. The increase was in non transport calls. There are falls and other cold responses. This observation supports the plan to resurrect the Mobile Integrated Health (MIH)Program. This year it will focus on falls.

Matt told the Board that the EMS Divisions priority this year is to “fill out” their shifts. Currently existing staff members fill out the shifts with overtime. With demands on the staff from the Pandemic, this additional demand is a negative impact on the staff. Matt wants to add four clinicians, two Paramedics and two EMTs. These additional staff members will reduce the amount of overtime required to staff the shifts. Paid time off will still require over time. Matt said he believes that budgeted “paid time off” and the reduction in overtime expenses will reduce the actual impact on the budget.

Today the Division has 53 staff members. Historically the Division has relied on the Hospital and the College for training. The Pandemic demonstrated this approach was a problem when these organizations declined to train outside staff. The Division wants to hire a full time training officer. They would develop training programs focused on new protocols and on needs identified by QA reports.

Matt told the Board that they plan to raise the billing rates for ambulance calls on July 1. Current Talbot County rates are lower than most nearby jurisdictions. This change will bring them in line.

As a method to aid in recruiting and retention of clinicians the Division wants to implement a “Career Ladder”. Positions for EMT 1, 2 and 3 as well as Paramedic 1, 2 and 3 would be defined. In addition to visible career paths, this will assist in developing future leaders. This subject generated a general discussion of about mentorship programs and their role in retention.

Matt said that DES was not requesting a new ambulance FY24 but will be requesting three response vehicles. Two of these had been deferred in the current budget and the third is to support MIH. They are also requesting to replace all their remaining V1 & V2 LIFEPAK 15 Monitor/Defibrillators. These devices are reading end of life and will no longer be supported by the manufacturer.

Scott Mergenthaler discussed the Budget Requests from the Sheriff's Office. He began by discussing the efforts the previous councils had made to get the retirement program for officers and salaries competitive. Most recently, they did a 2% across the board raise January 1. The problem is near by Counties gave double that. As a result, the Sheriff is asking for a \$4,000 across the board increase. Scott discussed their logic around asking for "across the board" vs percentage of salary increases.

Another priority budget item will be the addition of three new School Resource Officers. Scott told the board that through a series of meetings with school administrators, there is strong support across the TCPS for these new officers. In response to a question Scott said that although these officers will be assigned to the schools, they are in the budget of the Sheriff's Department. Generally these positions are filled by experienced officers and new hires back fill their positions.

In the FY24 budget the Sheriff will be asking for eight new Patrol Cars. There was a general discussion about the Sheriff's Office preference for leasing fully equipped vehicles rather than buying vehicles and equipping them.

Steve Mroczek discussed the developing budget requests from the Volunteer Fire Companies. Most of the County Companies are in the in the process of capital acquisitions. As a result he said that an increase in County allotments for operating expenses will be requested. There was a discussion of the impact of the volunteer time dedicated to fund raising on R&R and operational activities.

Debbie Timms was absent. No update from Shore Health was available.

Richard Smith was absent. No update from the State Legislature was available.

## Old Business

The lack of a Cell Phone Tower in the Cordova area was discussed. Tim Cannon told the Board that the tower proposed at the Cordova Fire House was not moving forward. The individual whose business was going to build the tower had died. A general discussion followed on the need for this tower and alternatives including locating it on the new North County Station property.

## New Business

There was a discussion of making a report to Council regarding budget recommendations. Steve provided a suggested template for such a letter. A discussion followed about a number of issues and priorities. It was suggested that any letter should highlight a few points and be about two pages. Steve said he would try to summarize in letter form and distribute to board members prior to the next meeting. See attachment 1.

There was another discussion about whether an in-person meeting with Council should be requested. There was general consensus that a meeting was not necessary unless requested by Council.

Our next Business meeting will be March 1 at 6PM. It will be held at Talbot Center.

Attachment: Draft Letter