

Meeting of the Talbot County Emergency Services Advisory Board (TCESAB)
7 February 2024

Attendees:

Steve Mroczek - Chairperson

Members:

Shirley Bucci

Tim Cannon

Steve Elliot

Jeanne Kuperberg

Brian LeCates

Terry Satchell

Dave Stepp

Ruth Sullivan

Steve Mroczek opened the meeting at 6 PM 7 February 2024 at Talbot Center.

Brian LeCates began the meeting by providing the Council with an update on his Department of Emergency Services (DES) operations over the last month.

Work is under way on the new Public Safety Complex on Mary's Court. Interior demolition is nearing completion and construction begin shortly. Willow Construction projects completion in early July. The Sheriff expects to move in early fall, DES later in the winter. Phase II will begin after the interior is complete and that will consist of building two Sally Ports: one for the Sheriff and the other for DES. The 911 center will not move until early 2025 after redundant Fiber has been laid between there and the existing 911 Center.

Emergency Management Division has had their new Operations Plan approved. A tabletop exercise has completed in January. A Functional Exercise is planned for June. A new coordinator has been hired. In addition to assisting Geneva Harrison she will be leading the Departments Drone efforts.

The Communications Division has hired three new dispatchers who are currently in training. Unfortunately, the Division still has two vacant positions. One of next year's budget requests is to move the Division to a 24/72-hour schedule. This schedule is an attractive one for employees and the additional manpower helps manage unplanned surges. The RFP for the new CAD system is going out this month.

The EMS Division has several new EMTs in training. However, the Division remains two Paramedics down with a third about to leave. This is forcing the Division to consider alternatives to current operations. One is to staff PM91 as a BLS unit. Since it operates mainly in Easton the proximity of the hospital and the EMS Captains in chase vehicles makes feasible. Having both ALS and BLS units will force the Dispatchers to triage calls to degree not currently necessary. Lastly Brian said that the lease for the land for the North County Station is being reviewed by the County's lawyer and returned to the landowner's Lawyers.

The FY25 budget is significantly larger than any Brian has put together before. The major reason is the new Public Safety Building. Radio Consoles for the new 911 Center will cost \$4.5M. Since the existing Center will be a backup, the existing Consoles cannot be moved. Furniture for the offices and the EOC and Training rooms will be another \$195K and \$253K respectively.

Another significant special item being requested is three new ambulances. The remaining International TerraStars Ambulances in the fleet need to be replaced. Current lead time for new ambulances is two plus years. The manufacturer stopped production of this line in 2017. Continued maintenance of these units is both a cost and reliability issue with new parts difficult to obtain.

Additional changes involve the change in budgeting for overtime which will add a line item containing the total estimated cost of OT, additional staff for schedule change in Dispatch and salary adjustments be remain competitive with near counties.

The Sheriff's Department Budget was briefed by Steve Elliot. The Airport construction is putting pressure on them to move as soon as possible. They will when the interior is complete but prior to the Sally Port being constructed. Since their current office will be demolished, they plan on moving all their current furniture. They will be asking for salary adjustments to maintain pay parity. The change in budgeting overtime will also increase their budget bottom line. Patrol Cars are being added. Due to the growth of the Department older vehicles are being retained. Like ambulances, the pipeline for new patrol cars has slowed. They plan on continuing to lease their vehicles, so the annual budget has no capital shown.

Steve Mroczek briefed the Talbot County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (TCVFRA) Budget. They will be requesting a 10% increase in operating budgets. As part of the R&R budget an addition of a \$1,000 educational stipend is being proposed. This benefit would be capped annually. A 10% increase in the annual payments under the Incentive program is also being requested. Additionally, TCVFRA will be requesting the Council drop the age requirement allowing a member can draw their benefit as soon as they have 25 years of service. Lastly the association is proposing the creation of a Grant Program that would allow individual companies to propose company specific programs for funding. Each grant would be for one-seventh of the funds budgeted for the program.

Due to the current schedule for presentations to Council the March meeting is cancelled. The next meeting will be on April 3rd.