

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

Attendees:

Steve Mroczek - Chairperson

Members:

Shirley Bucci	Tim Cannon	Jeanne Kuperberg
Brian LeCates	Terry Satchell	Dave Stepp
Ruth Sullivan	Debbie Timms	Matt Watkins

Steve Mroczek opened the meeting at 6 PM 1 March 2023 at Talbot Center.

The meeting began with a moment of silence in memory of Board Member Richard Smith

The minutes of the 1 February 2023 meeting were reviewed, and Matt Watkins offered a correction. They were then approved with Matt's correction.

Brian LeCates began with a review of the plans for the development of a Public Safety Center at Mary's Court. The design is being finalized. The County Engineer is preparing a request for proposals in the coming weeks. The costs of this move will be a major component of this year's budget.

Brian then provided a brief overview of activities in the Department.

The Emergency Management Division continues to update the Emergency Operations Plan. The University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security is assisting. During the COVID Emergency the Department was called on to do things never previous considered. Brian wants to capture these lessons.

The EMS Division is still working the North County Station issue. Soil tests continue to fail and the search for an alternative location has begun. Lieutenant promotions are underway. A new process is being used, focusing on soft skills. Evaluation of the process will be conducted when complete. Recruiting of new Paramedics is also occurring. These are needed to fill to vacancies created by retirements. The Division is working with the Office of Medicaid/Medicare is conducting an Audit looking at costs and reimbursement rates. Renovations of the County's EMS stations is now underway. Brian also noted that the Department has recently been notified that an ambulance ordered in July 2022 will not be delivered until June 2024. This will require a rethinking of the ordering process as it will extend over multiple Fiscal Years.

The Communications Division has completed the cut over to the Next Generation 911 System. Some legacy gear still needs to be disconnected. The RFP that Mission Critical Partners developed for the new CAD system awaits funding in the FY24 Budget.

Brian then previewed to the Board his presentation to County Council for the Division's FY24 Budget. Included in this year's budget request are several areas where increases in revenue are possible. He will highlight Talbot County reimbursement rates that have been

constant for years and do not reflect actual costs. In his presentation to Council Brian plans to show how these revenue increases will more than offset the increased spending DES is requesting.

The billing of municipalities for police dispatches was discussed. Currently Oxford and St Michaels are not billed for their calls while Easton is billed. Easton accounts for the overwhelming number of calls. The combined cost of the Oxford and St Michaels calls is approximately \$35,000. The consensus of the Board was that all municipalities should be treated equally even if the amount owed to DES is small.

Debbie Timms provided an update on the Hospital's ER. Patients being "boarded" in the ER stays an issue. A "boarded" patient is one being held in the ER while awaiting admission. As an example, Debbie said that this morning 22 patents were being boarded in the ER, giving the ER only 8 beds to work with. She said that increasingly if a ER patent was ambulatory they were being place in the waiting room. Nurses would see them there; they might have blood work done there and possibly treated without ever being put in a bed. She said they have the staff but not bed space to handle surges. Opportunities are being looked at for adding additional beds such as in the ER hallways.

Scott Mergenthaler was absent so there was no update from the Sheriff's Office.

Steve Mroczek reported that the budget submitted by the TCVFRA reflected increases in Operating Appropriations as well as the Incentive Program. They are also requesting a new line item to cover Hose and Pump testing as well as the Foam bank.

The consensus was no meeting was needed in April and our next meeting would be on May 3rd.