

Meeting of the Talbot County Emergency Services Advisory Board (TCESAB)  
July 1, 2020

Attendees:

Wayne Dyott - Chairperson

Members

Brian LeCates

Richard Smith

Debbie Timms

Scott Mergenthaler

Ruth Sullivan

Steve Mroczek

Clay Stamp

Wayne opened the meeting by discussing the impact that COVID 19 Pandemic has had on our schedule. He thought it was time to get back together via a virtual meeting. He acknowledged a lot has happened and thought Clay would be the one who could begin to bring us up to date.

Clay Stamp began by reminding the Board that today was the 111th day since the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated in response to the Pandemic. Clay said that the team effort was made possible by a number of people in the community who worked to make elements of the effort possible. He particularly took note of Geneva Harrison (Schaffle) the Emergency Management Coordinator for the county. Not only has the EOC manage the Pandemic response but also the County's response to Hurricane Isaias

Clay said that the Department of Emergency Services (DES) went into FY 21 with an essentially flat budget. Due to the revenue challenges of the COVID crisis the Council had fenced a portion of it and gave Andy Hollis authority to release portions at the year proceeds. Among items fenced is the new ambulance. The three positions for the 911 center will proceed as they are paid for with State funds. The sixth paramedic unit is on hold pending the outcome of the Revenue Cap Referendum. For now PM91 will continue 3 days a week. The request for a power increase on the paging system was denied. As an interim solution 700 mh pagers have been acquired and distributed for Station 50 & 80 members. The Cordova Firemens Association is in discussion with a private company to build a radio tower on their land from which they could receive income. The Village Zoning Code limits such towers to 100' and to meet DES needs it would need to be 195'. The Council has the authority to waive that limit and discussions about it continue.

Clay said that the Pandemic has placed a lot of stress on employees. To help with it they have worked to keep current information flowing to the staff, acquired PPE and disinfecting equipment and arranged for hotel rooms if staff ( including volunteers) need to isolate themselves from their families.

Brian LeCates said that a new LUCUS device and two new LP15s were able acquired with FY 20 funds. As a result all six paramedic units as well as the supervisor vehicle are fully equipped. All LP12s are now out of service.

Steve Mroczek told the group that the Chief's Committee was beginning to meet again. The Pandemic had severely impacted meetings and the companies ability to fund raise. New efforts such as drive through sales were being tried and it was too soon to tell the impact on ongoing budgets. Clay said they had worked to assist the companies to recover COVID related costs through the CARES Act. He also observed that the Council has expressed a willingness to step in if companies get into trouble. The Tax Cap Referendum and its implications for the Sheriff, DES and the seven volunteer companies was discussed. Wayne noted that the Council had mentioned that they might be asking

the Board for support in providing public information but as of now no request has been made. Clay said he would remind them of the Board's interest.

Richard Smith discussed the bill passed in the recent Legislative Session that moves the enforcement of the Residential Sprinkler mandate to the State Fire Marshal's office. As with some other legislation, the Governor did not sign or veto it. As a result it will go into effect on October 1.

Scott Mergenthaler said the big thing in this year's budget from his point of view was the agreement to fund the study of the costs of moving the Sheriff Office to the State Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS). While he recognized that was no guaranty that such a move would occur, the study was a necessary step. Scott also reported that their fifth dog, Chief, was now in house and certified. He is a drug and tracking dog.

Debbie Timms discussed the impacts of the Pandemic on the ER and hospital in general. The county has been fortunate that the number of cases and hospitalizations have been low. The Patients admitted have been incredible sick with long ICU stays, much of those stays on Ventilators. She noted that she was totally unprepared the overwhelming positive community support she received. The Hospital had assigned staff members to keep track of donations so that they could be acknowledged.

Ruth Sullivan commented on the positive effect telemedicine was having on the senior community. It has relieved the stress of having to do doctor visits in person. Debbie commented on the surprising success to telemedicine in almost all areas except for mental health.

Wayne said that the board still needed to find a representative from the St Michaels area but the Pandemic restrictions has limited his ability to get out to talk to folks. He hoped that we could soon get back together for a face to face meeting.