

Meeting of the Talbot County Emergency Services Advisory Board (TCESAB)  
June 2 , 2021

Attendees:

Wayne Dyott - Chairperson

Members

Shirley Bucci

Lois McDonald

Richard Smith

Jeanne Kuperberg (T)

Scott Mergenthaler

Ruth Sullivan

Brian LeCates

Steve Mroczek

Debbie Timms

Guest

Matt Wakins

Tonight's meeting is our first in person meeting since before COVID 19 restrictions began . All members were physically present except Jeanne Kuperberg who was on the phone.

Minutes from the April 7 2021 meeting were accepted as submitted.

Jeanne Kuperberg has joined the Board representing the Bay Hundred replacing Jack Harrald.

Brian LeCates provided the following update on the Budget approved by the Council for the coming Fiscal Year.

- A 10% salary increase for EMS Clinicians and Communication Specialists.

- Hiring four new staff members. Currently the Surge unit is being staffed with employees working on over time. Some days there is not sufficient staff to cover the unit. These new staff will allow the Surge unit to be expand to 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

- \$600k for two new ambulances, one is the normal replacement and the second is for the

Surge unit

- \$ 7,500 LEOPS study for Emergency Services Staff

- \$27,710 for replacement of dispatch computers.

- \$15,000 for repairs to several station.

- \$5,000 increase in funding for additional hours for our Medical Director, Dr Thomas Chic-

cone

- Land acquisition to create a new station to service North County and build the station. The plan is to move the Surge Unit to that station and add additional staff to make it a 24 hour unit serving the northern part of the county.

Ruth Sullivan suggested that Dr Chiccone attend a TCESAB meeting. Brian said he would love to and will make it happen.

The raises in this years budget restores Talbot position as being above the salaries offered by Dorchester and Caroline and below Queen Annes County in most positions. A previous set of increases were done in the 2018 budget to correct the situation that Talbot County salaries for these positions were the lowest in the four county area. In 2020 we found ourselves back in that position. It appears that the those other counties are using a higher Grade and Step scale. The County is planning to bring in an outside consultant to create a new salary grade and step scale.

The year over year call volume still appears to be increasing. The first three months of 2021 is up 1300 calls when compared to the first three months of 2020. Considering TCDES does about 7,000 calls a year, this is a huge percentage increase. The first quarter of the calendar year is normally the slowest month of the year. This trend will be monitored carefully.

Richard Smith asked if there was an increase in the number of calls out of county. Brian said that currently the percent has not changed. Given the issues ongoing in Dorchester it is something they are watching.

Today is day 444 of EOC activation. The EOC is reducing its community wide Bi-weekly meetings next week. They will continue meetings with the business community working on grants and other issues for some time. Emergency management will be continuing all its work supporting EOC operations.

Talbot County has received a grant to assist with an update of the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Brian said that they have contracted with the company who previously created the plan to do the update. Over the summer they will be meeting with various stakeholders. New in this update will be include an annex looking at "manmade threats" such as cyber security.

Hurricane Season has begun. Planning for the season has kicked off.

Several new software systems are being rolled out across the department. Operative IQ, an inventory system to support vehicle checks and First Watch, a data integration program to provide an emergency management dashboard.

Brian said that the Department will be proceeding with their Ultra Sound project. Working with Dr Steve White, the Medical Director in Dorchester County, and Dr Chiccone have developed a Pilot Protocol for its broad use in EMS. Together with the Paramedic Foundation they will be looking at rolling it out this year. Talbot and Dorchester Counties will be leading the State on this rollout. Brian said they plan on equipping all ambulances and supervisor vehicles with an Ultra Sound device. The manufacturer of the device being acquired is Butterfly IQ. Wayne said that the Paramedic Foundation has agreed to help with funding and upcoming fund raising mailings will discuss the project. Jeanne Kuperberg said that she works for Medtronic on the intravenous side of the business and is a Cath Lab nurse. She said she works with many Registered Vascular Techs so if there is a crunch when it comes time for training she may be able to help.

The new 911 telephone replacement system has been awarded, installation and online. It is a Vesta system. Training terminals were installed the EOC room so training could be conducted on the new system. The 911 center has completed training new employees.

One Communications Specialist quit today so the 911 Division have an opening again.

Lois McDonald asked if Brian knew the status to the proposed cell phone tower in Cordova. Brian said that the Cordova Fire Department was working with a company that was acquired by American Tower to build a tower. TCDES has no direct role. Brian said he has no updated information subsequent to that acquisition. Steve Mroczek took an action to address the question to the President of Cordova Fire Company at the next Talbot County Volunteer Firemens Association and get back to the Board

*On May 13 Steve reported in an e-mail to the Board that AmericanTower has been unresponsive to phone calls from the Cordova Fire Company looking for an update on their tower.*

Scott Mergenthaler said now that the budget has been passed, the Sheriff's Department now has LEOPS. Due to the average age of the Department members the State required no buy in to the retirement plan. The study cost \$6,800.

Scott told the Board that planning for the new Public Safety Building is moving forward. Meetings with the space planner continue tomorrow.

The Sheriff has currently has 3 vacancies. LEOPS has caused several individuals to reconsider Talbot County.

Debbie Timms said that the ER is down to 7 full time staff members. There are 10 traveling nurses to fill out the staff. Among the 32 beds in the ER there are an average of 8 holds who can not be moved to a ward primary due to lack of staff in the wards. There is a significant increase in the number of ambulances from Dorchester coming to Eastern Memorial. Specialties have been moved to Easton in preparation for the closing of Dorchester. The Dorchester General is scheduled to close in September when the Freestanding ER in Cambridge opens. EMS Protocols frequently dictate that patients must be taken to a Hospital based ER not a Freestanding ER. Alert status will soon be meaning less as there will be no other local choice. Potential use of Urgent Care Centers for patients not needing a monitored bed is being studied.

Steve Mroczek reported they the Talbot County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association received notification that they will receive a 20% increase in the County Appropriation. Additionally the Longevity Program will receive an appropriation of \$321,310 which translates to a \$20 per month increase for eligible members, \$10,000 for training, \$20,000 for Recruitment Initiatives and \$5,000 for High School Career Tech Program.

Old Business:

Wayne nominated Steve Mroczek to be the new Chairman of the TCESAB. Debbie Timms seconded the nomination. He was elected by a voice vote with no nays.

New Business: - None

Next Meeting will be on August 4 at 6PM. It will be an in person meeting at Talbot Center. It will also be available for call in.