

Meeting of the Talbot County Emergency Services Advisory Board (TCESAB)
7 September 2022

Attendees:

Steve Mroczek - Chairperson

Members:

Shirley Bucci

Tim Cannon

Brian LeCates

Scott Mergenthaler

Terry Satchell

Debbie Timms

Matt Watkins

Steve Mroczek opened the meeting at 6PM 7 September 2022 at Talbot Center

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

Two new members of the Board were introduced. Tim Cannon, representing the Cordova area and Terry Satchell representing Easton.

Brian LeCates, Director of Talbot County Department of Emergency Services(TCDES) began the meeting with an update on the Department.

Efforts are underway to acquire property to relocate the Departments facilities current located at 700 Port St. The building being looked at is a two story building located on Marys Court in Easton. Marys Court is off of Mistletoe Drive. It is currently occupied by the Avon Dixon Insurance agency. If it is acquired the Sheriff's Department would occupy the first floor and TCDES the second. All of the TCDES offices and the 911 center located in the Port St building will move to this new location. The radio tower will remain and be linked to the new building. When the move is complete on County Roads will take over the entire Port Street building.

Work is beginning on updating the Five Year Strategic Plan. The current one is expired as COVID required efforts to be placed elsewhere. Brian said he plans on meeting with every employee with either Matt or Holly depending on Division.

The County's Hazard Mitigation has been approved by all of the municipalities in the County except Trappe. That should occur tonight. County Council will review it next week and if approved it will be sent to FEMA. This plan is a requirement for applying for Federal Funds in the event of a disaster.

The University of Maryland Center for Health and Home Land Security is compiling an after action report on the COVID related activities in the County. They are doing this under a grant. Talbot's EOC had an activation period far longer any ever planed. The Division took on responsibilities never previously envisioned. Learning what worked and where improvements were needed will be invaluable if we are ever faced with a similar emergency.

Brian reported that the EMS Division is currently fully staffed. This includes the new staff authorized by this years budget for the sixth unit. Some new employees are still undergoing orientation. He also said that security upgrades have been completed at all stations. These include cameras linked back to the 911 Center as well as proximity readers for door access.

Engineering and Architecture work has begun on the new North County Station. The favorite location is on the Gannon Property which is across from White Marsh Elementary School. The hope is that soil testing there will be successful. If that fails, land currently owned by the Cordova Firemens Association is the backup plan. The current plan envisions a three bay station with room for a back up EOC and 911 center. Brian does not currently plan to move the sixth unit north until a station is built. The targeted locations will allow for better service to county citizens in North County while still being available to support the call volume in Easton.

Brian discussed the new Patient Handing Policy at Eastern Memorial ER. As discussed at previous meetings patient transfers times had become unacceptable. Meetings with Hospital management including Ken Kozel developed a new procedure. It involves the EMS clinician coordinating with the ER charge nurse after a 20+ minute wait to find a solution to safely transition patient care and expedite returning the ambulance to service.

Ultra Sound training has taken longer than planned. Brian said they hoped to have devices deployed with trained clinicians in the coming weeks.

TCDES is planning to transition from The American Heart Association to the American Red Cross for all ACS, CPR and PALS training. The administrative requirements are lower for the Red Cross as well as they allow local Medical Directors to add local material. Brian said most of the other Eastern Shore jurisdictions are making the same change.

TCDES will request permission from Council to hire a contractor, Public Consulting Group, to assist preparing inputs for the EMS Supplemental Payment Program. This program was created by the State last year to provide supplement payments for services to Medicaid Patients when the agency providing the service is running a deficit. Brian said he expected this project could net the county \$400k.

Lastly he will be requesting Council permission to order the new ambulance that is in this years budget. He explained that they generally order at least one new ambulance every year replacing the highest mileage one(s) in their fleet.

The Communications Division is in the process of hiring three new staff members. If they all complete training the division will be fully staffed. He also noted several promotions in the department which has provided supervision on all shifts.

The Division is still preparing to cut live the next generation 911 System. Competing requirements in other states has pulled the contractors from Talbot to meet those states

requirements. He is pushing to get support back. The delay has given staff the opportunity to get our location data 99.8% accurate.

The Division has a contract in place with Mission Critical Partners to develop an RFP for a new CAD System. They are holding meetings with EMS, Fire and Law Enforcement identify each areas requirements for the system. Once that is done they will help evaluate the proposals. The goal of this effort is get funding for the selected CAD System procurement into the FY24 Budget.

Scott Mergenthaler presented an update on the Sheriff's Department.

During the last part of last Fiscal Year several Law Enforcement organizations on the Shore plus MSP made some large salary adjustments. If Talbot County went forward as planned it would have left the Sheriffs Office at a significant disadvantage in hiring and retaining officers. Late negotiations found funding in the budget to bring the Department into near parity with competing Departments. They also freed the Sheriff to restructure their salary structure to better recognize supervisors.

The Department entered the Fiscal Year with three vacancies. They had identified two candidates, one who is a lateral and another a new officer who will need to complete the Academy. They are looking at other potential lateral candidates.

Currently the High and Middle Schools have full time School Resource Officers (SRO) the four Elementary Schools share a single SRO who splits their time among the schools. The Department is working with schools to see if they want a dedicated officer in each. The Sheriff is also investigating if the 911 Center could get access to the Schools security cameras.

Reviewing "Calls for Service" trends, Scott said that the 5 Year trend for Part 1 or serious crime calls was close to flat. Where there has been significant growth is in Part 3 / less serious crimes, particularly Warrant Service for Failure to Appear. Changes in Bail Laws have allowed the release of more suspects pending trial. Tracking down and returning prisoners is labor intensive.

Scott expressed concern about the size of the Lake Side development in Trappe. With the dis-establishment of Trappe Police Department the Sheriff and MSP need to take a hard look at the staffing impact of this development. There was general conversation of the impact of this and other new developments of all public services.

Steve Mroczek reported there was no scheduled August meeting of the Talbot County Fire and Rescue Association

Debbie Timms reported the the Emergency Room at Easton Memorial Hospital is still with 14 -15 traveling nurses. The new patient transfer procedure has been helpful in creating a formal collaborative relationship between the Charge Nurse and the EMS clinicians focused on patient care. The procedure also, for the first time made an over crowded ER a problem

to the Hospital, not just the ER staff. It allows escalation of the problem up to the Hospital Administrator on Duty. Matt Watkins agreed its creation was a step forward by bringing focus on the issue. Since its implementation on 1 September there has not been a need to use it.

Old Business - None

New Business

Traditionally our November meeting has been a dinner meeting. Scott had reached out to Scossa who hosted last years dinner. After some discussion of dates, October 20th was decided as the target date. Steve will poll the members for commitment and Scott will get dinner choices from Scossa to distribute

Our next Business meeting will be January 4th at 6PM. It will be held at Talbot Center.