

Meeting of the Talbot County Emergency Services Advisory Board (TCESAB)
November 29, 2017

Attendees:

Wayne Dyott - Chairman

Jack Harrald

Lois MacDonald

Richard Smith

Brian LeCates

Diana Mautz

Ruth Sullivan

Scott Mergenthaler

Steve Mroczek

Debbie Timms

Wayne Dyott called this meeting of the TCESAB to order at 7 pm.

Wayne began by reviewing the Minutes from the last meeting on September 27. There were no changes suggested and the Minutes were approved as prepared.

Wayne opened the meeting by reviewing the current schedule for the Board's meeting with Council. It is scheduled for 6 PM on January 9, 2018. Wayne said he did not expect we would use slides for the meeting.

Wayne then asked Brian LeCates if there were issues he would like to discuss with the Board for possible inclusion on our discussion with Council. Brian said that a review of the Department of Emergency Services Five Year Strategic Plan and where the Department stood with it's implementation would be a good place to start.

With general agreement, Brian walked through the plan pointing out areas completed, underway, planned and not yet begun. When he completed the walkthrough, he summarized four areas needing work: employee Recruiting and retention, bringing Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) to Talbot County, Service Delivery in North and South County and implementing Medical Hotline Triage.

Recruiting and retention of EMS staff remains challenging due to salary issues.. Although the Council addressed this issue last year, our neighboring counties have more than matched us. Our salaries are now below Dorchester's. Additionally our part time provider hourly rate has not been increased in several years.

The EMS Division and Shore Health continue to explore a Mobile Integrated Health Program based on the protocols currently being used in Queen Ann's County. This would pair a Paramedic and Nurse to work with frequent users of the ER to find alternative ways to meet their needs.

Due to the distances involved, rapid EMS service delivery in North County and the Bay Hundred region of South County continues to be a challenge. A location or locations for potential new EMS Stations need to be considered as a solution to this challenge. Another ambulance and staffing for it would be required to staff a station in North County, while relocating the ambulance in Tilghman further north to better utilize it would staff a new South County station.

TCDES is investigating the potential of medical triage on 911 calls for help. Today all calls get a Paramedic unit and a trip to the ER. By developing a protocol that allows a nurse or paramedic speak to "less urgent" calls; a more appropriate response might be indicated. As with MIH, long term sources of funding need to be considered.

Wayne asked Steve Mroczek about issues from the county's volunteer fire companies. Steve said that the Recruiting and Retention (R&R) campaign supported by funding from the Council has helped all companies. 2016 staffing numbers indicated all companies gained membership since the beginning of the program, reversing previous negative trends. Additionally, by increasing the public awareness that Talbot County fire departments are all volunteer, donations are also up. We need continued support from Council to maintain this program. The Talbot County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association is conducting it's annual budget workshop on December 13. After that date, an update to the Board on volunteer companies anticipated needs can be provided.

Scott Mergenthaler was asked if there were issues from the Sheriff's Office that he would like the Board to consider. Scott said that moving of the Sheriff's office to the Talbot Business Center (aka the old Black and Decker building) had freed up space to create a Central Booking facility. This move is not however a long term solution. That building will eventually need to be demolished to allow for the Airport's expansion. He suggested now might be a good time to study the possibility of a joint location for both the Sheriff and the Department of Emergency Services, creating a one stop Talbot County Public Safety office.

Wayne said the Board had lots to consider and should get back together for a Special Meeting to consider what we wanted to address with Council on January 9. Monday December 18 at 6PM was selected. It will be held at Talbot County Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Next Regular meeting is as below. All will held in the Talbot County EOC at 7PM.

January 31 2018

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.