

ALBEMARLE COUNTY FIRE/EMS BOARD
FEMS BOARD MEETING
VIRTUAL MEETING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021– 1800 HOURS

A virtual meeting of the Albemarle County Fire/EMS Board Executive Committee was held on Thursday, December 2, 2021, at 1800 hours.

The following members were in attendance:

Dan Eggleston, Albemarle County Fire Rescue
Virginia Leavell, Charlottesville/Albemarle Rescue Squad
Will Schmertzler, Crozet Volunteer Fire Department
Todd Richardson, Earlysville Volunteer Fire Department
Jason Tetterton, East Rivanna Volunteer Fire Company
John Shifflett, North Garden Volunteer Fire Company
Michael Grandstaff, Scottsville Volunteer Fire Department
Dennis Hahn, Seminole Trail Volunteer Fire Department
Kostas Alibertis, Western Albemarle Rescue Squad

Others in attendance:

Celeste Baldino, ECC
Heather Childress, Albemarle County Fire Rescue
Christina Davis, Albemarle County Fire Rescue
Nicole Jones, Albemarle County IT Department
Greg McFadyen, Seminole Trail Volunteer Fire Department
Alyssa Mezzoni, Albemarle County Fire Rescue
Kathryne Presson, North Garden Volunteer Fire Company
David Puckett, Albemarle County Fire Rescue
Sonny Saxton, ECC
Doug Walker, Albemarle County Fire Rescue

I. Call to Order

Chief Alibertis called the meeting to order at 1800 hrs.

Meeting Statement

Chief Alibertis read the following statement: “This meeting is being held pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 20-A(14), ‘An Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Government During the COVID-19 Disaster.’ The opportunities for the public to access and participate in the electronic meeting are posted on the Albemarle County website at www.acfirerescue.org under the Fire Rescue and EMS Board section.”

Ms. Davis identified all who were attending the virtual meeting.

II. Work Session

There was none.

III. Approval of Consent Agenda

A. Moment of Silence

Attendees observed a moment of silence.

B. From the Board: Matters Not Listed on the Agenda

Chief Eggleston stated that he had one thing to add to the agenda.

Chief Leavell stated that she had one minor addition.

Chief Puckett stated that he had one addition under Unfinished Business.

Chief Shifflett moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Chief Hahn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (9-0).

C. From the Public: Matters Not Listed on the Agenda

There were none.

IV. Committee Updates

A. Executive Committee

B. Training Committee

C. Operations Committee

D. Recruitment & Retention

E. Quartermaster

F. Apparatus Committee

Chief Alibertis reported that the Executive Committee and Apparatus Committee had reports attached, but the other committees had not met.

V. Unfinished Business

A. Career Staff to Volunteer in County Station – Update

Mr. Walker reported that the County Attorney has advised that he had reviewed the information provided by the County Attorney in 2014, and he has done research on changes to federal law or Department of Labor regulations that has not yielded a different opinion than the one he provided in 2014. Mr. Walker clarified that this means the County Attorney has had no change in opinion regarding career staff serving as volunteer in the County.

Mr. Walker acknowledged that the FEMS Board had been frustrated at the lack of response on this issue, but he can now confirm that if the FEMS Board were to ask the Board of Supervisors about this issue, they would now have the County Attorney's opinion in hand.

B. 2021 Tax Credit List

Ms. Childress reported that the tax voucher lists are due back to Ms. Davis by December 31, 2021 so that personnel can receive their vouchers in a timely fashion.

Chief Eggleston noted that there is a policy that provides criteria for people to meet the tax voucher criteria, and they must meet 100 hours of service to meet that threshold.

C. Staffing Availability Update

Chief Puckett reported ACFR had just received approval this week from the County's EAC Committee, which allows them to pursue a new software technology system and start working toward procurement. He said that early next year they should be able to get the purchase order and start doing some configuration. He said they were looking at First Due to provide a mobile response/staffing and personnel database, and more information should be forthcoming in the future.

D. Membership Roster

Chief Puckett reported that they had backed off of Image Trend until they could figure out the First Due part, but in the meantime are doing an Excel roster. He said that everyone should have that now, but if they have questions or need anything, they should let ACFR know. He noted that if you don't open the roster in Excel, you lose some of the features—particularly the drop-down menus, which are needed to have things entered in a consistent manner. He stated that they also embedded a feature to maintain the headers, but that isn't displaying well if it's in a browser.

E. New Radio Infrastructure (additional item)

Chief Puckett reported that the pager testing had gone well the previous week, and they had fixed several glitches experienced at the station level. He said that in January, they would probably need to touch all the radios, which would add the new features and enhancements to get it on the radio system. He stated that the programming would be engaged too but would likely be on an off channel, and he would soon have more information including dates and times. Chief Puckett emphasized that if they had portables, they would all need to be in the station at one place to have access.

VI. New Business

A. New Electronic Protocols

Mr. Sonny Saxton introduced himself as the new Executive Director of the Emergency Communications Center for Charlottesville and Albemarle County. He also mentioned Chief Richardson's role and introduced Celeste Baldino.

Mr. Saxton reported that the new electronic protocols were going live the following week, and Ms. Baldino shared her screen. Mr. Saxton reported that the company being used for dispatch protocol is Priority Dispatch Corporation, and they are unique in that they are the only provider of International Academy of Emergency Dispatch protocols. He explained that this is an international dispatch program used all over the world, and he is hoping that the chiefs will take the information provided to their teams and give them a heads-up on changes happening the next few weeks.

Mr. Saxton stated that the FEMS Board has been very supportive, but a lot of people have asked why they are transitioning dispatch systems. He noted that they have had the same dispatch system for more than 20 years in relation to how they talk to their callers. He said that it's important to talk about protocols, because in the past it referred to both call-taking and dispatching resources to the scene of an emergency. He said that what they're discussing now is the call-taking, and that's what they are switching and enhancing. He noted that the dispatch protocols are being addressed separately.

Mr. Saxton explained that the reason for the transition is to gather key information better, prioritize fire and rescue, identify threats to callers, and deliver necessary instructions. He said that the next slide provides an example of the International Academy emergency dispatch, its origin, and its future. He reported that it dates back to the 1970s with the first recorded PIs (pre-arrival instructions), with first editions in the 80s including EMDs, with fire protocol developed in the early 2000s. He said that it is used today in 25 countries and is available in 25 languages.

Mr. Saxton explained that the program has over 60,000 people certified. He noted that they are always proponents in emergency fields, particularly ECC centers, to provide service to the community—which often included finding the training and going to certification classes. He said that with the programs used in the past, they did not have a good outlet for that, so this is really raising the bar. He mentioned that everyone is certified in multiple disciplines now, with a certification or badge that can be taken and used anywhere in the world that uses these protocols.

Mr. Saxton reported that there are 65 million calls per year processed through this system, and he wanted to address the evolution of the call-taking and eliciting the best information possible to relay that to responders. He noted that Chief Richardson and Ms. Baldino are often providing instructions over the phone for helping someone who is not breathing, how to birth a baby, control bleeding, and other situations that need to be addressed before first responders arrive. He mentioned that the processing volume puts this system at the highest level of distinction of any being used.

Mr. Saxton reported that they reduce variance between call-takers so there is the same level of service, and he wants to be sure that community members have the same level of service from a first-year coworker as that from a 30-year coworker. He said they do that through consistent prioritization and prearrival instructions, and there is also a large quality assurance component, which is amplified through this program. Mr. Saxton noted that they are struggling to attract new people to this profession, and it's hard to get applications now. He said they are short some positions and have had some recent retirees, so they need to rethink how they train new people, and having an effective protocol allows new hires to interact with callers safely and more quickly.

Mr. Saxton stated that the American Heart Association (AHA) has a lot of crossover with the International Academy, and they adopt each other's standards. He noted that communication officers—frontline staff—receive 24 hours of medical training, 16 hours

of fire, 16 hours of police, and software training. He said that on top of that, people like Chief Richardson, Ms. Baldino, and the QA team have received more, with over 100 hours of education done over the last few months through the academy. He commented that he is proud of that and proud of the ECC management board to be able to provide these opportunities for the communities served.

Mr. Saxton reported that the priority is “dispatch triage,” and you are only as good as the information received, as the chiefs know. He said they have to have a multi-layer response and instructions that are based on the primary complaint, acuity signs and symptoms. He stated that regarding EFD and EMT questions, there are some key elements for awareness that he would like the chiefs to share with their personnel. He said that number one is scene and responder safety, and fire/rescue response would show up, as well as caller bystander instructions (prearrival). He noted that in the cities, they are doing well with responses—but with rural area calls, they will stay on the phone with the caller for high-priority calls until responders arrive, so they might be on the phone 10-15 minutes for remote areas of the County.

Mr. Saxton reiterated that this is all about better information for responders, and they can also anticipate timely situations and dispatches. He said that they would probably hear in the community that the 911 dispatchers “asked a lot of questions,” but there is a myth versus reality that asking questions means delaying response—and that is simply not true. He emphasized that they would likely see gains in the amount of time that the phone rings until they are dispatching apparatus and the first one is out the door. He stated that they are very focused on that time and FPA standards, but will also get back on the phone with that dispatch and ask more information, diving into the scene safely and sending information to the MDT or smartphone.

Mr. Saxton said that phase one is rolling in the call-taking phase, and that outcome is called a “determinant code,” where dispatchers ask questions and get information from callers, and the output of that is a code that is mapped to a response—or the dispatch side. He stated that MDT layout may be different in terms of where they get information, but the information would be the same and would be provided in the same pattern. He said that today, comments and notes are speckled through the information as responders are heading to a call, and this system would make it concise and hopefully would be improved. He noted that this isn’t carved in stone and could be adjusted.

Mr. Saxton reported that phase two is dealing with an enhanced response, using more accurate information and being able to make key decisions about the response matrix. He emphasized that this is groundbreaking work, and I&R community members have some good opportunities coming next year.

Mr. Saxton explained that they would still use the terminology “priority one, two, three, and incident types would be the same—but they would start to see Alpha, Charlie, Omega, and Echo. He said that this is a basic idea for medical, and an Echo call is the highest-priority ALS hot response; an Alpha would typically be a BLS call initially, with a cold response having no lights or sirens. He added that it takes a lot of work to get to a

model like this, and it wouldn't be ready out of the gate, but this is the goal they're driving to. He reiterated that this would yield safer community responses and better prioritization of Echo calls such as hangings, gunshots, and knifings. Mr. Saxton said that the other end of the spectrum is Omega calls, which may not get a response today but may eventually have needs filled by someone besides fire or rescue.

Ms. Celeste Baldino presented information on a routine chest pain call and questions asked before they get to a send point. She said that the information gathered includes the address, alertness, breathing, color changes, clammy skin, etc., and it's already sent as an ALS call (10 Delta 3), which will come across as a "chest pain call." She noted that this slide is really showing early dispatch after key questioning. Ms. Baldino presented information on an Echo call—with two questions asked for a structure fire, so this is expected to yield a quicker response for the high-acuity incidents.

Ms. Baldino presented post-dispatch instructions for a structure fire, as soon as they get to that send point, which provides direction for getting out of the structure. She said that additional information is also obtained, based on their questioning, to find out if someone is injured—and the shift in determinant code will add a suffix of "x" that means someone is hurt, which will be a key to the dispatcher that there is an injury on scene.

Ms. Baldino presented what an MDT would look like, and she pointed out the mini map on the righthand side that would be where the EMD narrative appeared now. She said the second box shows the chief complaint as an assault, which is a dispatch code of 04-Bravo-01, possible dangerous body area. She said that this would come across as an injured person from an assault, which would be the incident type. She noted that they had done a significant amount of testing with Chief Puckett and Chief Rogers, as well as on Active-911, which should not need any changes.

Ms. Baldino reported that for police officers, they would be trained on what's called "send," so they would have a few quick questions to answer: the primary problem, age of person(s), consciousness, breathing, chest pain, illness/serious illness, severe bleeding, accident, etc.—and this will help responders know exactly what to expect when police request assistance. She noted that they hoped to be doing a lot more QA than in the past, hopefully to get accreditation certified through the academy. She said this is hoped to ensure they are doing medically correct patient care and that all dispatchers are asking the right questions, receiving the proper prearrival and post-dispatch instructions, and ensuring uniformity and consistency. She added that there will be some reports run out of that.

Ms. Baldino said that the dispatch review committee, dispatch steering committee, and quality review unit are the entities receiving reports. She said the dispatch steering committee is the ECC management board; the dispatch review committee is the operating committee that has members from fire/rescue, law enforcement, and ECC. She stated that the quality review unit would be from ECC. She stated that the review members from ACFR are Chief Puckett and others, as shown, and also includes law enforcement partners.

Ms. Baldino reported that there would be a field feedback form because field participation ensures systemwide quality, so they will need input from responders. She stated that if responders get on scene and something is different than how it is reported, and they want to look into protocols used and questions asked, or any other matter, the feedback report is filled out and distributed to a dispatch review committee member for immediate input returned. She said that there are also opportunities to provide positive feedback and proposals for change—so the academy accepts those suggestions, and if they feel through their system that it is a good proposal for change for the international protocols as a whole, those can be sent to the academy.

Ms. Baldino emphasized that they still have local control over policies and procedures, and responders still have control over response configurations. She said that they still have control over the CAD interface and QA program. She noted that change isn't liked by anyone, including dispatchers, and there would be an acclimation period and times of fatigue to get used to by all involved.

Mr. Saxton said that the ECC management board had really empowered him and his team to excel with this, which started several years before he arrived, and he is proud to lead the team through this. He stated that they have some public safety communication officers (PCSOs) with a high degree of professionalism and superb job skills, and they are adapting to the new approach. He emphasized that they would all be learning and would do a good job, but they need the support of fire/rescue. He encouraged them to provide suggestions to his team, noting that the proposal is to start strong with field work and get adjusted with input from those responding—and he needs their help dispelling myths and providing realities.

Chief Alibertis thanked Mr. Saxton and reminded him to send the presentation out, and he asked if there were questions.

B. New Volunteer Physicals

Chief Childress reported that they have found a good resolution to the issue of volunteer physicals, as WorkMed had been unable to conduct LODA physicals because of a staffing and training shortage. She said they have just cleared up some spots for ACFR volunteers to get physicals, and ACFR would be prioritizing those signed up for Firefighter I so they would be eligible to get into the class and cleared for the use of a respirator before the start of class. She noted that they have reached out to all those signed up already by email, with a list of times made available from WorkMed.

Chief Childress stated that the County and specifically Leanne Knox have done a good job with tracking down ways for them to get physicals. She noted that Augusta Health has been very interested in occupational health services, Sentara/Martha Jefferson has been doing some, and Life Scan was approached—but there were time and distance barriers to each of those options, so the short-term solution is to get Firefighter I participants handled through WorkMed to get them ready for class. She said they would continue to explore options and hopefully have more than one choice for physicals. She

noted that there was a waiting list of about 10, and they should be able to get everyone done in a timely fashion moving forward.

Chief Hahn asked if someone could not get an appointment whether that could be waived before Firefighter I starts, as long as they get it before the live burns and the SCBA requirements.

Chief Childress responded that they have discussed this as well, and there are a few options. She said that these include a temporary waiver if they cannot get in for a physical and have those results by the start of class, and she has spoken with the training division about possibly moving the PPE part farther back so they can complete some training through a rearranged schedule. She said that she and Tate McCracken would continue to work to ensure that everyone in class is prioritized to the greatest extent possible. She added that they didn't want anyone to be delayed getting into class, and they are happy to shift the schedule as much as is allowable. She noted that 8 of the 25 students currently enrolled in Firefighter I do not have a physical, so those are being prioritized.

C. UVA Hospital Badges

Chief Childress stated that UVA is not issuing individual hospital badges for EMS people currently, and they are exploring ways to get access to the building—including one badge for each apparatus—so people are not able to get new badges. She noted that UVA hospital is renewing current badges without an expiration date.

Chief Alibertis confirmed this and said that his station has transitioned to two badges per truck, and the issue pertains to security and the fact they can't capture the old badges, as well the cost associated with this.

Chief Childress asked if the badges could be obtained from the ID office.

Chief Alibertis responded that they can be, and [Sally] will assign two per truck, which allows the driver to clean the stretcher while someone gets a drug box, for example, which is how they came up with that compromise. He stated that WARS has been doing that for several months now and has not had any issues.

Chief Childress stated that they would try that, and many people have badges that are nearing their expiration dates. She offered to assist stations with this as needed.

Chief Alibertis said they have also looked at several options such as punch codes, but the issue is getting out the door to go to the pharmacy, getting back in from the lobby, etc.—and the badges access several points. He noted that Augusta had to change their code recently due to punch code integrity after it was compromised. He stated that security has given this a thumbs down, particularly when it goes into lockdown.

D. Virginia Fire EMS Conference – February

Chief Eggleston reported that the conference slated for February in Virginia Beach would continue in person, and in the past the FEMS Board has met there and has done some teamwork around certain topics—so he wanted to gauge their interest again. He noted that there was funding in the budget for this.

Chief John Shifflett stated that he and Chief Stephens from North Garden usually attend and always enjoy it but missed it last year, so at least the two of them would attend this year and would be happy to participate in FEMS Board meetings.

Chief Eggleston said that ACFR would send something out to gauge interest, but they needed to get the date out there, and the previous work sessions at the conference have gone well.

E. FEMS 2022 Meeting Dates

He stated that the FEMS Board packets have a list of 2022 dates for board meetings, and those need to be scheduled ahead of time, so people know when they are.

F. IDLH Burns (added to agenda)

Chief Childress reported that they have annual IDLH burns that they conduct in the fall, and it was recently discussed at the training officers meeting, with those folks expressing an interest in offerings for volunteer partners. She said that the training division put together a schedule and associated costs, and they are excited to be able to offer the training for four days: January 8, 9, 15, and 16 at the training center. She noted that this would be the same training that the career staff got, which was really well done and received.

Chief Childress said they must have 12 participants per session for it to be conducted, and registration would close on January 1 so they can establish instructional ratios and participating volunteers, which can only be from ACFR because of insurance. She noted that the email went out just after 3 p.m., and they already had 22 registrants by 5 p.m., with a lot of excitement in the training officers meeting. She noted that if it goes well and there is continued interest, they would like to have it incorporated into the lab burn training every year and the weekend opportunities for volunteer partners to participate.

Chief Richardson stated that he did not get an email in Earlysville on this.

Chief Childress responded that it went out to ACFR group training officers and the FEMS Board, but she would make sure it was forwarded to him.

G. Live Fire Training (added to agenda)

Chief Eggleston stated that as Chief Childress said, the training division went above and beyond to configure live burns to be different what is normally seen, with more challenging scenarios. He said they have reconfigured the basement of the burn center to create a more realistic search pattern, and that is why a lot of members have contacted the training center and wanted to participate. He stated that he hoped they could continue to provide these.

VII. Adjournment

At 18:50 hrs., the FEMS Board adjourned its work session.



FIRE RESCUE

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ALBEMARLE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE EMERGENCY AND MEDICAL SERVICES BOARD ACTION RECORD

| AGENDA TITLE/ISSUE: | AGENDA DATE: |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Consent Agenda | December 2, 2021 |
| MOTION: | MOTION MADE BY: SECONDED BY: |
| To Approve the Consent Agenda | Chief John Shifflett Chief Dennis Hahn |
| SUBSEQUENT MOTIONS/AMENDMENTS: | |
| | |

| CALL OF THE QUESTION: | Yes | No | Abstain |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Chief Dan Eggleston (Albemarle County) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chief Virginia Leavell (CARS) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chief Will Schmertzler (Crozet) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chief Todd Richardson (Earlysville) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Assistant Chief Jason Tetterton (East Rivanna) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Assistant Chief John Shifflett (North Garden) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chief Michael Grandstaff (Scottsville Fire) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chief Dennis Hahn (Seminole Trail) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chief Cara Metcalf (Stony Point) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chief Kostas Alibertis (Western Albemarle) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I hereby attest that the foregoing is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Christina Davis

December 2, 2021

Clerk

Date



- Building the Model Volunteer-Career Fire & EMS System -