

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY FIRE/EMS BOARD**  
FEMS BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021– 1631 HOURS

A virtual meeting of the Albemarle County Fire/EMS Board Executive Committee was held on Monday, April 5, 2021, at 1631 hours.

The following members were in attendance:

Dan Eggleston, Albemarle County Fire Rescue  
Virginia Leavell, Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad  
Mike Grandstaff, Scottsville Volunteer Fire Department  
Kostas Alibertis, Western Albemarle Rescue Squad

Others in attendance:

Heather Childress, Albemarle County Fire Rescue  
David Puckett, Albemarle County Fire Rescue  
Nicole Jones, A/V Specialist  
David Smalley, Unknown - Public  
Christina Davis, Albemarle County Fire Rescue

**I. Call to Order**

Chief Eggleston called the meeting to order at 1631 hrs. He read the following statement aloud: "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](http://www.acfirerescue.org) under the Fire Rescue and EMS Board section."

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

Chief Alibertis asked whether there is an update on Scottsville, and Chief Eggleston agreed to address this.

**II. Approval of Consent Agenda**

A. February 8, 2021, Minutes

**MOTION:** Chief Alibertis moved to approve the February 8, 2021, meeting minutes. Chief Leavell seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**III. Executive Session**

There was no executive session.

**IV. Unfinished Business**

A. Chief Eggleston said he did not have any unfinished business at this time, other than to talk about the Scottsville update briefly, as it had been talked about before. Chief Eggleston said that he did not have anything else to add about this except to mention the court date being scheduled for this Thursday. He noted that it was postponed from the past week and was uncertain of the reason, but said it was rescheduled for this week in the afternoon on Thursday. He said that hopefully there will be some news coming out of that case. Chief Eggleston asked for any questions on that. He received none and was thanked by Chief Alibertis.

## **V. New Business**

### **A. Mutual Aid**

Chief Eggleston said that at the last FEMS Board meeting, he went through a small presentation to talk about challenges related to mutual aid calls. He said just to refresh those that were there, the way the protocol reads right now is that any mutual aid request for fire is an automatic dispatch to the locality making the request. He stated that on the EMS side, it really depends on where it is; if it is a Western call, it goes to the Western duty officer; if it is a non-Western call, it goes to the battalion chief.

Chief Eggleston commented that this leaves a little challenge in terms of consistency and really a lack of coordination to ensure that coverage is still provided while trying to honor a request from an adjacent locality for mutual aid, so the point was to talk about this to some degree. He said he has some ideas but is interested, since it was reviewed last month with the FEMS Board and asked if anybody else had any ideas on how to perhaps streamline this process.

Hearing none, Chief Eggleston relayed what he did just to make sure that he tried to get a handle on how often this happens and what the magnitude is. He stated that he had gone through three months' worth of battalion chief reports just to get a feel of how often this happens and the issues that arise when that is not coordinated. He said that there were a couple of cases where there was a large portion of the county uncovered to help out some localities, which had him concerned, as he shared last month—and this needs to be better coordinated.

Chief Eggleston stated that he wanted to let the board know his thinking about this and also wanted everyone else to think about it, and he wanted to wait 30 days for input before the final decision is made. He stated that his position is that he thinks it's best if it is coordinated through the battalion chief. Chief Eggleston explained that this is the one person who, although he does not have all the news of what resources are in the county, is probably best positioned to make the call to determine what resources are being requested, what the current activity is in the county at the time, and what is currently being engaged with—and then to make the call based upon those factors.

He stated that in addition to that he went through the last three months of reports, and they spoke to a need to coordinate things at a much higher level in general, especially when it comes to multicompartment responses. Some of those incidents he reviewed,

particularly related to something large like a technical rescue, a water rescue, strongly reflect the need for more coordination. In some cases, he said, there may be four or five companies responding to one call and a lot of coordination that needs to happen; when there is not coordination, it is confusing in some cases. He said that he did notice in some of the cases he reviewed that when the battalion chief did have an active role in helping to manage those resources, it went much smoother.

Chief Eggleston said that the problem is in not having a consistent way of doing that, so he would like to not only empower the battalion chief to make those calls on mutual aid but be the person who coordinates the multicompartment responses until getting an incident commander on scene who can better size up the situation and take command, then coordinate resources from there. Chief Eggleston reiterated that was his decision at this point, but he wanted to wait 30 days for the committee to engage with other members and see if they could come up with a better way for consideration before this decision is instituted.

Chief Alibertis queried whether Chief Eggleston was talking about mutual aid calls where the battalion chief coordinates things and not in-county situations that would not change.

Chief Eggleston responded that he was saying both mutual aid and multicompartment responses like a structure fire.

Chief Alibertis wanted to clarify because he felt that is not broken in-county. He said that if there is a county chief going to a call, he did not want to see a battalion chief overriding him.

Chief Eggleston replied that it is broken—when it works, it works well; when it does not, it does not work well, and it is not consistent. He said that the biggest challenge is that if a department is paged and no one is en route, the dispatcher is often left having to make a decision and is not sure.

Chief Alibertis said that is not the situation he was talking about. He explained that he was talking about is where there is a chief officer responding from the agency in his primary area, and the battalion chief should not override that.

Chief Eggleston began to give an example of a structure fire.

Chief Alibertis provided an example of a structure fire in Crozet, and Chief 50 is going to it; Chief 50 is on the air, and it is his primary first due. Chief Alibertis expressed concern about the battalion chief overruling him.

Chief Eggleston asked about what happens in the case that another department is due to assist Crozet in this example, but then there is lack of response or there is a decision to roll that call.

Chief Alibertis responded that when Chief Eggleston had said “is in charge until somebody arrives on the scene,” that specifically meant to him the incident that is occurring. He noted that it did not necessarily reference what might be happening with a different station.

Chief Eggleston agreed and explained further that using that example of a structure fire and an assisting department were not responding, the decision that needs to be made is whether or not to roll that department or add additional resources or change the assignment. He said it is often the case that what happens is that, even within this case, the Crozet chief officer responding may not know what other units are committed within the county, so they are not aware how to compensate for lack of response or how to make system changes if there is not a response from a particular station.

Chief Alibertis then said that when talking about other agencies, he thought that seems reasonable because the Crozet chief would not know that—but that does not put the battalion chief in charge of the call; he may be in charge of the secondary response agencies. Chief Alibertis expressed that it will have to be carefully worded and that he thought the [precinct chief] should be responsible for Crozet, but if the battalion chief wants to be responsible for East Rivanna or North Garden or the additional responses, that is a little bit different.

Chief Eggleston said that what he was trying to be clear about was that there needs to be a person who coordinates the resources until someone gets on the scene, a multicompany resource. He added that he was talking about multiple stations like a structure fire or major incident where it involved not just a single or two units from one station respond but a multicompany response. He has noticed there is a trend in terms of coordinating those responses.

Chief Grandstaff said he was concerned that if it were a water rescue call in Scottsville on the James River—where they have the most knowledge of the river and run it all the time—to have somebody coming from Charlottesville coordinate where units are going until he gets somebody on the scene, when he could be doing that while en route, does not make sense.

Chief Eggleston stated that it does make sense if you have units that are not marking up or units that are trying to add on. He stressed that he was not talking about access issues and things like that. He said he would see in this case where there would be some exchange with the battalion chief and the local chief, if that unit is responding to help coordinate where those units go. Chief Eggleston emphasized that when units are due but do not respond, there is a decision to be made, or in some cases as he saw in the reports, there are a lot of add-ons—and that needs to be controlled.

Chief Eggleston commented that there would still be some amount of freelancing if needed, either be put back in service or told to just stand by, so there is more than just a coordination for that particular area. He said that in cases where he saw where somebody marks up right away and has a handle on it, that works out well—but that is

not consistent, and there is not consistently someone who marks up and who is available to make the call systemwide. Oftentimes, he said, the problems are when there is not a response from agencies and decisions need to be made.

Chief Alibertis replied that he thought the qualifier would be when there is not an agency response and asked for confirmation of his point.

Chief Eggleston replied that it could be—or in some cases, he has even had situations where someone is en route to the station, but they do not know whether or not anybody else is en route to the station. He noted that in those situations, they keep paging and will go past the rollover spot because this person has made a call on whether or not to just take a chance on seeing if anybody shows up. Chief Eggleston stated it really depends on the type of call. If it is a lower risk call, that is probably fine, but if there is a structure fire or high-risk-type incident, then somebody needs to make the call to add additional resources if a particular station is not getting out. He said that oftentimes, they go past the rollover time, and he does not think that's the right thing to do.

Chief Grandstaff asked whether, in the event that happens and then the original company does respond, that battalion chief was going to put those extra resources that they added in service. He emphasized that this was not happening at all currently, and sometimes they will end up with eight engines and 18 tankers on the road for a shed fire.

Chief Eggleston agreed and expressed that he would say if there were an adequate response and the units that were added beforehand are en route, then those units could be put in service. He said another thing he noticed and they need to do a better job with is that some units are responding understaffed, but they are not reported out like established in policy, so an engine may respond with one or two people. He said that needs to be clarified to ensure adequate resources are on the scene.

Chief Eggleston added that those were his thoughts and his position on the decision for both mutual aid and multicompany responses. He said he planned to give it 30 days and said that if anybody has any better idea on how best to do that, he certainly would consider it—but feels at this point, they are getting busier and resources are more scarce than ever, which calls out for much more countywide coordination than what exists today. He reiterated this was his best proposal for how to coordinate this but would give it 30 days, and he asked for suggestions to be emailed to him. He stated that he would talk to Chief Todd Richardson about this also and welcomed engagement with others, including other chiefs. He reemphasized that a change needed to be made.

Chief Grandstaff said he wanted to confirm that this does not affect his first due areas of Fluvanna or Buckingham.

Chief Eggleston replied that it did not and added that Chief Puckett had reminded him that there was an automatic joint response on Afton Mountain as well.

Chief Alibertis confirmed that this was correct and commented that he would not think it applied to that either.

Chief Eggleston agreed that it did not apply to that.

Chief Alibertis said that he would also like to discuss how it applies to EMS calls because the battalion chief is rarely aware of what they have for staff or availability, saying that this would just mean the battalion chief would make a decision and the station chief or duty officer would step in and change it.

Chief Eggleston stated that he thought a lot of this sort of fits together with the next item on the agenda regarding being able to adequately capture what the staffing levels are at any one time, which is really important to ensure that it be known collectively what resources are available. He said that if they are light, then can compensate; if they're okay, they can be a little more aggressive in terms of responses, even to help out localities that request mutual aid.

Chief Alibertis replied that this did not necessarily reflect for his station. He stated that they may do their station staffing, but they also have the house that is not reflected anywhere and an [ambulance] that are available on backup that is not necessarily reflected anywhere, so there is no tracking mechanism for that right now. He reiterated that again he would reference the EMS stuff is working unless you want to break it, for them anyway. He said that he did not to be contentious but wanted to stress that if it is not in line with what they needed to do, they would not subscribe to that. In other words, he said, they would not respond if they were going to leave their first due short.

Chief Eggleston said that the whole purpose is not to leave your first due short.

Chief Alibertis stated that there is nobody that knows that better than whoever the duty officer is.

Chief Eggleston stressed that he felt extremely strongly, especially related to mutual aid, that there have been a couple of cases where the mutual aid will call and go right to Western. He said that if it is denied for whatever reason, which are probably good reasons, then it goes back, and then they will turn around and they will page the battalion chief for the same request. He emphasized that if it could be handled with just one call, it is a lot more efficient. He gave an example that when Staunton called for water rescue resources, that got bounced around for a long time before the request was filled, and when someone is in a dire need like that, they need to be told quickly whether or not a station can help. He emphasized that he did not want it bouncing around.

Chief Alibertis expressed that a situation like that is maybe a call between the battalion chief and the station chief.

Chief Eggleston agreed and stated that this does not mean that there won't be some conversation or collaboration; that still needs to happen because in a lot of cases, they

all know what their resources are—but they were going to try to do a better job to understand what they may be. He stressed that he was not saying in this case the battalion chief would make this decision in a vacuum, especially with units responding, but may need to help coordinate what kind of resources they have coming to this call, whether a change was needed, whether there was enough. He emphasized that they do not want to shortchange themselves on a multicompany response, in the same way they don't want to shortchange themselves by sending a lot of resources outside the county and leaving their own county uncovered.

Chief Alibertis replied that this did not make sense because now that is two calls. He explained that the battalion chief is going to get toned and then reach out to them to determine whether they can make mutual aid or not. He said he would then make another call to say yes or no, which would delay a response—and that seemed counterintuitive to him. He added that he felt they needed to come up with something a little bit better in those circumstances.

Chief Eggleston said that he thought the chances of it bouncing back and forth between the battalion chief and an officer is probably rare. He stated that if things are really busy and lots of units are tied up and there is a mutual aid request for a lower priority call, in his opinion that would be denied. He said that if resources are adequate and there is not a lot going on and a critical call came in, that would be an easy call to make that decision to send units outside the county, and it is done all the time.

Chief Alibertis stated that it would be his decision to make it, but it would be theirs to override it because they would not do it if they felt like they were going to be short in that circumstance.

Chief Eggleston replied that ultimately, he is just trying to create a better coordinated system. He said that what they have right now is not coordinated, and it needs to be consistent. He reiterated that things are getting busier, and resources are much more scarce, and they need to have a better system than what they have today.

Chief Alibertis said that he was not disagreeing with Chief Eggleston but felt they had something that has worked so far.

Chief Eggleston interjected that it is not working.

Chief Alibertis expressed concern that the decision had already been made and would be implemented regardless.

Chief Eggleston disagreed and stated that he wanted to hear any other better ideas on how to coordinate this. He then emphasized that he did not think it was working today, and that was where they sort of differed. He said he felt there were problems and he did not want them to get worse and wanted a much more coordinated system than what is in place today. Chief Eggleston said that he wanted ideas and was giving an opportunity for that.

Chief Grandstaff stated that he agreed with Chief Alibertis that the decision had already been made, so there was no point in waiting 30 days. Chief Grandstaff commented to Chief Eggleston, "That's what y'all are famous for anyway."

Chief Eggleston responded that if they wanted to give up the opportunity to provide input and recommend different ideas, he could proceed without that. He noted that it was obvious that they were upset about this right now, but this gave them an opportunity to think about it.

Chief Alibertis warned of potential consequences of this decision and wanted to put that on the table.

Chief Eggleston spoke about his personal accountability to making sure that this county was covered adequately. He said that he takes that job very seriously, and this is an item that has been on his plate for a while to address—so while he understood it may not be liked, he is the person that is held accountable for this to the Board or to the citizens. He said that he was asking professionally for input, noting that if a member did not want to do that, it was his prerogative.

Chief Eggleston asked for any other questions or comments on this item before moving on. There were none.

#### B. Tracking Staffing

Chief Eggleston referred to Chief Puckett being online and asked him to cover what he knows so far for the objectives that they had gone over and how they were going to address that at the Operations Committee.

Chief Puckett stated that the chief had provided an email to FEMS to outline the broad goals and objectives and a few criteria, and the criteria mainly centered around being able to report out on staffing level systemwide, but also to try to have some real-time availability and up-to-date information so that it could be used to make decisions in the moment. He stated that the first meeting with the Operations Committee is this Thursday, and they would start sort of working through that.

Chief Puckett said that he had a number of questions in his mind that potentially would have to be worked through to figure out the best possible solution for that without duplicating systems if at all possible, but there are some challenges to any one system, CAD as an example. He said that they can put quite a bit of that information in CAD, but it is not readily accessible all the time.

He said that there are some limitations to what they would want to capture, particularly in situations like Chief Alibertis had mentioned where people are at the annex and not necessarily in CAD. He said that it needed to be determined how to have real-time awareness of what those resources are and their availability. He again stated that they will start working through that this week.



Chief Grandstaff asked Deputy Chief Puckett if there were any indications as to how it was going to affect those responding from home.

Chief Puckett replied that this was not necessarily to change the response model of any agency—just to capture what people are doing. He explained that as an example, in Scottsville they are reporting out whatever the engine or tank or whatever it is that there is personnel for and that it is staffed from home versus in station. He said there might be a couple of different ways to do that, but he did not think it would necessarily be just in-station staffing that they are tracking.

Chief Grandstaff replied that he was just checking because they did not have the ability to do that; they staff in the afternoon but do not have any nighttime availability because of their current building situation.

Chief Puckett agreed and stated they were not trying to necessarily overcome that; they just need to have a more complete picture. He explained that in Earlysville, they did not have enough personnel for a crew for every night, so Thursday night crews and then every fourth weekend, they did not have a crew. He said that in a separate meeting where they were talking to Stony Point, it was revealed that they also did not have enough people, and so they did not have a crew on Thursday night.

Chief Puckett stated that because this information is not necessarily readily apparent until you have a call, there is never any connection that the north side of the county is largely sort of “browning out” on the same night. He noted that in some cases, perhaps something could be done about that and in some cases not. He suggested the possibility of a shift at one station to where they have no staff on Tuesday instead of Thursday, so that there is a more complete picture of that countywide.

Chief Puckett expressed that he thought that was a good example of some of the things that hopefully could be overcome. He referenced the chief as having described it as “coordinating at the system level” and that being one of the missing elements currently.

Chief Eggleston asked Chief Puckett if he had said that this Thursday was the Operations Committee meeting.

Chief Puckett confirmed that it was on April 8.

Chief Eggleston asked if there were any questions on that or anything else before adjournment.

## **VI. Next Meeting**

Chief Eggleston announced that the next Executive Committee meeting would be June 7, and the next FEMS Board meeting was being changed to Thursday, April 29. Chief Eggleston said that Christina Davis would send out a change of notice for it. He

explained that the reason for the change was that Nelsie Birch and Doug Walker of Albemarle County staff would be attending to discuss additions to appropriation language and wanted to both be available that night, with a conflicting Board meeting that Wednesday that they have to attend.

## **VII. Adjournment**

At 1702 hrs, the FEMS Board Executive Committee adjourned their meeting to June 7, 2021.



# ***FIRE RESCUE***

## **ALBEMARLE COUNTY**

460 Stagecoach Road, Suite F Charlottesville, VA 22902-6489  
Voice: 434-296-5833 FAX: 434-972-4123

***www.ACFireRescue.org***

### **ALBEMARLE COUNTY FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BOARD**

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

#### **ATTENDANCE LOG**

Date: April 5, 2021

#### **VOTING MEMBERS (OR DESIGNATES)**

Chief Virginia Leavell (CARS): Virginia Leavell

Chief Todd Richardson (Earlsville): \_\_\_\_\_

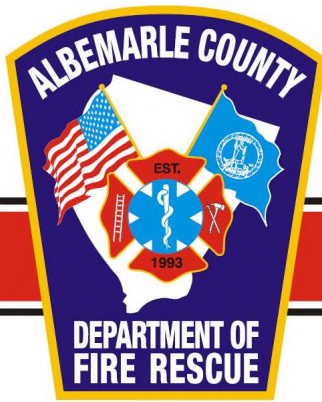
Chief Michael Grandstaff (Scottsville Fire): Michael Grandstaff

Chief Kostas Alibertis (WARS): Kostas Alibertis

Dan Eggleston (Albemarle County): Dan Eggleston

#### **GUESTS & OTHERS**

<i>Guest/Other</i>	<i>Organization/Agency/Affiliation</i>
<u>Heather Childress</u>	<u>ACFR</u>
<u>David Puckett</u>	<u>ACFR</u>
<u>Nicole Jones</u>	<u>A/V Specialist</u>
<u>David Smalley</u>	<u>Unknown – Public</u>
<u>Christina Davis</u>	<u>ACFR</u>



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### ALBEMARLE COUNTY FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTION RECORD

AGENDA TITLE/ISSUE:	AGENDA DATE:	
Approval of Consent Agenda	April 5, 2021	
MOTION:	MOTION MADE BY:	SECONDED BY:
Approve minutes from February 8, 2021	Chief Virginia Leavell	Chief Michael Grandstaff
SUBSEQUENT MOTIONS/AMENDMENTS:		
1.		

CALL OF THE QUESTION:	Yes	No	Abstain
Chief Dan Eggleston (ACFR)	<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 Todd Richardson (Earlsville)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chief Michael Grandstaff (Scottsville Fire)	<input checked="" 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 M. Davis  
 Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
 April 5, 2021  
 Date