

Ad-Hoc Emergency Committee Meeting

January 22, 2015 @ 3:00 p.m., Eastville, Va.

Members Present: Pat Coady, Granville Hogg, Dr. Federico Molera, Willie Randall, Dr. Ervin Jones

Members Absent: Larry LeMond, Linda Ashby

Also present: Hollye Carpenter, EMS Director
Katherine H. Nunez, County Administrator
H. Spencer Murray

The meeting of the Ad-Hoc Emergency Committee was convened at 3:05 p.m. One of two new appointees, Dr. Ervin Jones, was introduced to the Board. The second appointee, Ms. Ashby, was absent. Mr. H. Spencer Murray, former member of the Northampton County Board of Supervisors, was welcomed.

Motion was made by Mr. Randall, seconded by Mr. Hogg, that the agenda be approved with the amendment of comments [status on the Emergency Medical Services Foundation] to be provided by Mr. Murray before Item #5. All members were present with the exceptions of Ms. Ashby and Mr. LeMond and voted "yes." The motion was unanimously passed.

Motion was made by Mr. Randall, seconded by Dr. Jones, that the minutes of the meeting of November 20, 2014 be approved as presented. All members were present with the exceptions of Ms. Ashby and Mr. LeMond and voted "yes." The motion was unanimously passed.

Mr. Murray stated that the foundation was named "Northampton County EMS Medical Services Foundation". The board of directors consists of Spencer Murray, John Coker, Furlong Baldwin and Cela Burge. The address is Post Office Box 1374, Eastville, Virginia. The long-term goal is to raise funds for an emergency room and stabilization facility in Northampton County. A short-term goal is to ensure the best EMS facility is built in Northampton County as well as in the state of Virginia.

When questioned by Mr. Randall, Mr. Murray stated that the group is not willing to advance at this point a goal of fund-raising within the first year; it is still being formulated.

Mr. Coady commented that the immediate focus is the building of an EMS garage with a long-term goal of looking at whether we develop a "medical campus" or such concept.

Dr. Jones said that he was glad that the short-term focus is EMS and that we need to figure out a solution for decreasing the pressure on the EMS department (workload/personnel). He stated that he was also concerned that there needs to be a focus on the long-term medical needs/facility of our population. He questioned how could we decrease the number of people relying on 911 calls and the number of transports. He also said that we need to look toward telemedicine and noted that UVA has great experience and depth in this area. Dr. Jones has reached out to the UVA Telemedicine program and is awaiting a return call.

The Committee discussed what was needed:

- * space – some space, not very large
- * equipment – telemedicine cart
- * personnel – some training.

It was noted that Rural Health might help fill that void.

Telemedicine programs are available through UVA, Virginia Commonwealth and a mid-Hudson or mid-Atlantic program. Existing facilities have broadband capability so that is not an issue. Hurdles to overcome include lack of “smart” phones for everyone and the mind-set of ambulance “frequent flyers”.

Motion was made by Mr. Randall, seconded by Dr. Jones, that the following resolution be adopted. All members were present with the exceptions of Ms. Ashby and Mr. LeMond and voted “yes”, with the exception of Mr. Hogg who abstained. The motion was passed. Said resolution as adopted is set forth below:

Resolved: The Ad Hoc Emergency Medical Committee recommends that the Board of Supervisors institute an EMS tax starting in 2015. It is further recommended that this tax be established at a rate that will cover both the current expenditures and a major portion of the increases which will be necessary to maintain coverage after the hospital moves.

This recommendation is based on the following factors:

- 1) The impending move of the hospital will require a significant increase in EMS expenses due to additional coverage required by the increased travel times; mandating additional equipment, staffing and coverage to provide appropriate service and protection for all the citizens of Northampton County. This increase is expected to be up to \$600k.
- 2) EMS will require a substantial period to recruit and train the additional staff and obtain the additional equipment required to meet our new demand.
- 3) Volunteer coverage for our community ambulances is a continual and increasing problem—though efforts are being made to reinforce those companies. This places additional demand on our paid staff.
- 4) The added hours and run time required after the hospital moves will only increase the volunteer strain.

- 5) Establishing the tax in 2015 may make the impact the following year of expected increased real property tax rate to equalize revenue due to reduced assessments easier to understand.
- 6) A separate tax shows the taxpayer what the demand is and where the funds are being used.
- 7) Our public needs to understand that EMS is a real community and government service and a real expense that needs reinforcement to continue to provide excellent service after the hospital move.

New Business

Mr. Hogg stated that he has mentioned to the School Superintendent as well as the Community College the idea of offering high school students an EMS Training Program. He also suggested additional education on the proper use of the E-911 system.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 26, 2015, commencing at 3:00 p.m. in the main conference room of the County Administration Building, 16404 Courthouse Road, Eastville, Virginia.

Motion was made by Mr. Randall, seconded by Dr. Molera, that the meeting be adjourned. All members were present with the exceptions of Ms. Ashby and Mr. LeMond and voted "yes". The motion was unanimously passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice K. Williams
County Administrator's Office