

Ad-Hoc Emergency Committee Meeting

October 30, 2014 @ 3:00 p.m., Eastville, Va.

Members Present: Pat Coady, Granville Hogg, Larry LeMond, Dr. Federico Molera

Member Absent: Willie Randall

Also present: Hollye Carpenter, EMS Director
Janice Williams, County Administrator's Office
Susan McAndrews, Riverside Health Services and guest
Dr. Erwin Jones, citizen

The meeting of the Ad-Hoc Emergency Committee was convened at 3:00 p.m.

Motion was made by Mr. LeMond, seconded by Dr. Molera, that the agenda be approved as presented. All members were present with the exception of Mr. Randall and voted "yes." The motion as unanimously passed.

Motion was made by Mr. LeMond, seconded by Dr. Molera, that the minutes of the meeting of September 23, 2014 be approved as presented. All members were present with the exception of Mr. Randall and voted "yes." The motion was unanimously passed.

There were no public comments offered.

Update from RSHS – Susan McAndrews

Ms. McAndrews noted that the institution of Saturday hours at Cape Charles and Nassawadox, which had started out as a pilot program, will be made permanent. Strong results have been seen so far.

Mr. Coady complimented Ms. McAndrews on the newspaper advertisements regarding the Saturday office hours program but noted that an increased Riverside presence is needed at the campgrounds and bed-and-breakfast establishments.

Ms. McAndrews commented that the Saturday hours program is also being promoted internally and they will continue to distribute flyers. She noted that an open house program was conducted with Northampton's new teaching staff.

Ms. McAndrews noted that Riverside is "mostly" prepared to deal with any ebola crisis and does have a supply of isolation suits. Ms. Carpenter said that the EMT system is prepping too,

but would prefer to follow the patient rather than take a chance on contaminating the ambulance, although she confirmed that they could not refuse to transport.

Mr. Hogg said that he had heard that the CBBT has selected a type of insurance that is declined by Riverside. Ms. McAndrews responded that Optima will not allow their patients to go to Riverside. Ms. McAndrews said that Riverside is trying to work with both counties in meeting the needs of the patients and have engaged a new medical director, Dr. Scott Hines.

As an update on the new hospital construction, Ms. McAndrews said that “real dirt” will be moved in November. Water and sewer lines are being surveyed at this time. There will be four contracts let: (a) hospital (b) water & sewer lines (c) cancer center, and (d) medical office building. The hospital will have 52 beds and an entire project cost of \$86 million. The three contracts (other than the hospital) will be completed sooner than the hospital itself, which has a 20-month construction schedule.

With regard to the Nassawadox campus, she noted that Riverside continues to work with the PSA on a wastewater solution there. The other clients of the wastewater system will eventually have their own wastewater package systems. Other properties owned by Riverside in Nassawadox can be sold and returned to the community.

Mr. LeMond questioned if the doctors’ offices were owned by Riverside. Ms. McAndrews said that the offices were not owned by Riverside. She said that the Nassawadox cancer center will be redesigned for diagnostic services. There has been some initial interest in the hospital building itself, which is owned by Riverside. Eventually the building will have to be torn down, as well as the nursing school, and Riverside will be responsible for that. She anticipates this to be a substantial cost due to the presence of asbestos in both buildings.

Mr. Hogg asked about the elevated water tank and Ms. McAndrews indicated that Riverside pays for the maintenance costs for the upkeep of that structure. The Town of Nassawadox has indicated that they do not have the funds to maintain it.

Ms. McAndrews reported that a new team has been established consisting of three members of the Riverside board and three members of the Eastern Shore Rural Health board as well as lead staff of both entities and has had its first meeting. She said that Riverside has also hired its own outpatient case manager. Mr. Coady questioned how this committee and/or the County could help with this; i.e., cut down on unnecessary ambulance trips. Ms. McAndrews said that she would welcome Ms. Carpenter’s input, who indicated that they do have some regulation hurdles but that there are definite cases which could benefit from increased outpatient contact.

Mr. Hogg referenced an upcoming survey initiated by STAR Transit relative to the possibility of a more southern route in Northampton County and/or extension of a route to transport across the bay and asked if such a new route or route extension would assist Riverside. Ms. McAndrews noted that the Nassawadox facility is “just a bus stop” for many STAR Transit riders

although some do use the hospital's services. Mr. Hogg confirmed that he will be doing his best to get the survey out to his constituents.

Mr. Hogg said that in light of the County's efforts to attract volunteers to the EMS system, could we partner with Riverside to expand training opportunities. Ms. McAndrews referenced the American Medical Response contract with Riverside and said that it had organized training in other areas. She also suggested that WHRO, which works with the school system, could possibly help with volunteer recruitment.

Mr. Coady said that Eastern Shore Rural Health has a significant percentage of missed appointments because of transportation issues and asked if Riverside shared this same problem. Ms. McAndrews replied in the affirmative. Mr. Coady wondered if we could get a small fleet that was capable of being medical "taxis", which would go a long way to lowering the overall costs and provide better medicine. Ms. McAndrews said that Medicare / Medicaid do have funding available for medical transport such as is used in Hampton Roads through the Black-and-White cabs.

Update on Membership

It was noted that three potential candidates have been brought to the attention of the Board.

Old Business

Mr. Coady read a report from Mr. Spencer Murray which indicated that the foundation was registered in February and tax exempt status was received in July. Current officers/directors include: Spencer Murray, President; John Coker, Secretary; Furlong Baldwin and Cela Burge. The group continues to look for a few more members; Dr. Jones' wife may be an ideal candidate. The foundation is planning a fund-raising campaign.

On another note, Mr. Coady said that if we were going to try to do more tech-medicine, there is already an established group through Virginia Commonwealth that serves the prison community. This group already has the talent and skills in place to do telemedicine and could be contracted with for local service.

In response to a question from Mr. Coady, Ms. Carpenter responded that an OMD has not been chosen yet and that they were still working with Dr. Hatch.

New Business

Mr. LeMond reported on action taken by the Northampton County Board of Supervisors this past Monday to deny continued funding for daytime staff support for Northampton Fire & Rescue.

Mr. Hogg asked if there was any possibility of setting up concentrated training sessions where trainees are paid room-and-board. A Virginia Tech group is doing something like this utilizing full weekends.

Mr. Coady asked if the membership wants to take a position on the question of an EMS garage. Ms. Carpenter said that an ambulance bay facility with a minimum of 3 bays is needed (one bay can accommodate a vehicle + the mass casualty trailer), as well as a shower, double sink, mop sink and washer/dryer. These constitute a “decontamination” area. Additional storage is also needed. She noted that such a facility can be constructed on the existing site, either attached or detached to the existing office. She said that a maximum of 4 bays would carry the department well into the future and that it made sense to build the four bays now; an expanded or new office/bunk space can be added later.

Mr. LeMond said that the Board recognizes that there is an immediate need for an EMS garage and that in his opinion, the existing office location is the best site. Mr. Coady agreed.

Dr. Molera commented that he believed that a lot of hospital staff and some Northampton residents will relocate when the hospital moves. County taxes will be higher with less population to bear the cost. He feels there will be no funds or population to justify a new medical campus.

Mr. Hogg said that his biggest issue was the change in demographics and wondered if it would be better to do a lease-purchase arrangement so that we could back out if necessary.

Other Business

Mr. Hogg asked Dr. Jones for his impressions. Dr. Jones said that he felt that there were solutions and that based on a reading of the committee’s minutes, the primary care site and attached helo pad was a good idea. He said that there needs to be a combination of a local facility that takes care of a certain level of illness and another level of care that is supplied elsewhere. His wife has worked for non-profits and has been very successful in receiving funding. He believed that she could contribute to the Committee’s efforts.

Next Meeting

Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday, the next meeting will be scheduled for Thursday, November 20, 2014, 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. LeMond, seconded by Dr. Molera, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice K. Williams
County Administrator’s Office