

## **Ad-Hoc Emergency Committee Meeting**

**September 23, 2014 @ 5:00 p.m., Eastville**

Members Present: Pat Coady, Dr. Pam Gray, Granville Hogg, Larry LeMond, Dr. Federico Molera and Willie Randall

Also present: Hollye Carpenter, EMS Director  
Katie Nunez, County Administrator

The meeting of the Ad-Hoc Emergency Committee was convened at 5:00 p.m.

Willie Randall moved to approve the agenda and was seconded by Larry LeMond. The motion was unanimously passed.

Willie Randall moved to approve the August 21, 2014 minutes as corrected and was seconded by Pam Gray. The motion was passed with Larry LeMond abstaining.

There were no public comments offered.

### **Update on Membership**

Granville Hogg stated that he has checked with George Proto to see if he would like to serve on this committee but he has indicated that his plate is full and not able to participate at this time but would like to be kept informed. Granville Hogg is checking with Karen Mahaffy to see if she would be willing to serve.

Larry LeMond stated that the Board will keep working on new appointments to fill the remaining vacancy.

### **Old Business**

In terms of scheduling for the upcoming meetings, it was asked if Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) and Sentara Hospital should be placed on one of our agendas. After discussion, it was agreed that it is premature to meet with both of these entities at this time.

It was noted that Riverside is offering expanded hours at the Cape Charles Medical Center which has not been wholly utilized due to the timing of the year as well as the lack of publicity on this issue. The committee needs to approach the hospital about offering these expanded hours next summer and to develop an appropriate public relations campaign to include in next summer's visitor materials so that it becomes widely known by the visitors to the lower end of Northampton County.

Pat Coady will follow up with Eastern Shore Rural Health to determine if the committee is invited to their strategic retreat. In addition, Pat Coady will also follow up with Riverside Hospital to receive a report on the expanded hours at the Cape Charles Medical Center and how it has been utilized to date.

Granville Hogg asked if we should help solve the sewage/water need for a new facility for Rural Health through our Eastville government system or from a Machipongo location. This is an item that should be considered in the future when we talk with Rural Health.

It was noted that the committee should ask former member, Spencer Murray, to be on a future agenda to provide an update on the forming the Foundation. We should also ask Heritage Hall to attend an upcoming meeting to hear about their strategic plans in light of the pending hospital move.

The committee discussed what support or assistance is needed for the County EMS department as they prepare for the next budget cycle. Hollye Carpenter stated that the big issues she will be facing is looking at a replacement & funding cycle for vehicles; on the personnel side, the focus has been on adding personnel in preparation for when the hospital moves so she is okay with the personnel level at this point.

#### **Discussions with Volunteer EMS representatives**

Pat Coady indicated that he is looking to cover the relationship of the paid County department to the volunteer squads; the funding/finance/capital needs of these agencies; and how the use of County paid staff is assigned to the volunteer stations and how the revenue generated through ambulance billing is handled for each station.

Larry LeMond stated that if County staff continues to expand for EMS services then there should be a consideration of reducing the number of volunteer companies in the County so that we are focused on one station each in the north, middle and south of the county. Hollye Carpenter clarified that the Towns do not provide financial support to the EMS squads.

At this time (approximately 6:00 p.m.), Greg DeYoung of Exmore Fire Station, Rhonda LeCato and Amy Wilcox of Northampton Fire & Rescue, and Kevin Buckley of Cape Charles Rescue Squad joined the meeting.

Pat Coady stated that the intent of this meeting is for us to understand how this committee, through the Board of Supervisors, can assist the volunteer services in your mission and to understand the relationship between the volunteers and the County-paid staff and what works and doesn't work. The committee is looking at the financial impact of the hospital move and how to provide service and the cost to provide service when the hospital moves and to look at ways of reducing "non-emergency" use of ambulance service.

Greg DeYoung stated that they are supportive of alternate transport to other facilities for the non-emergent care cases but due to state regulations that is not currently allowed. He stated

that the community para-medicine concept is being explored at a regional level. The focus right now is on education of the community about this concept.

Granville Hogg asked about when 911 is called and the EMS ambulance responds and ascertains during said transport that the individual really does not need the ER – is it possible to transport to a more appropriate facility rather than to the ER. Mr. DeYoung responded that this is not currently allowed. The only two courses of action allowed by the law are for the patient to refuse transport or to be transported to the ER.

Larry LeMond asked what percentage of patients does Mr. DeYoung feel do not need the ER to address their medical issues when calling the ambulance. Mr. DeYoung indicated that he feels it is about 30-40% that do not require treatment at the ER but would be better served through a primary care facility. Amy Wilcox felt that it was about the same for the patients that run through their facility.

Dr. Molera asked how the volunteer agencies are financially supported. Mr. DeYoung indicated that we do practice ambulance billing and we receive payments from health insurance companies or the state for Medicare/Medicaid; if those payments do not fully cover the cost of the ambulance bill, then the balance is written off. The towns do not provide funding to the rescue squads nor does the County. The volunteer companies are all non-profit organizations. Rhonda LeCato stated that we do substantial fundraising to supplement the revenue stream to keep the agency open.

Rhonda LeCato stated that there is a protocol at Heritage Hall that if there is a “patient fall” then they need to call 911 and cannot call a private provider to handle this transport.

Pat Coady asked about each company’s volunteer recruitment and retention. Rhonda LeCato indicated that they have 3 people in the testing process and should be coming on board as EMT Basic – hope they are back on the upswing with recruiting new volunteers. Greg DeYoung indicated that we are at our lowest point for EMS volunteers, in his experience with Exmore for the last 20 years. There are new requirements that are impeding getting volunteers, such as the requirement for fingerprinting and to receive clearance from the police & FBI background check – OEMS makes the ruling on this. This ruling has been detrimental to both EMS and Fire. Kevin Buckley said that Cape Charles has been in the same position for volunteers and they are at a true low point – they have 11 members right now. They have a stipend plan for the volunteers - \$50 per shift for 12 hours plus \$12 if you stayed at the station during that shift (and not just responded to a beeper). This was done in an attempt to lure volunteers from across the bay but it hasn’t had the desired effect.

Larry LeMond asked what is the ideal number of volunteers for a station. Kevin Buckley indicated that about 20 to 25 volunteers would be the ideal number.

Amy Wilcox indicated that they have a similar stipend but she doesn’t avail herself of the stipend.

Kevin Buckley indicated that during the tornado when he worked most of the day as an EMT volunteer and did not report to work with his primary employer and he did not receive any compensation from his primary employer. This is typically the case with most of the employers.

Pat Coady said that this is an item that we can take and try and address through an educational component with the business community.

Granville Hogg asked if there is an opportunity to utilize the veterans of our community in filling our need for EMT volunteers.

Kevin Buckley indicated that the Cape Charles Station is paying the County for weekend shifts to run with the volunteers – that is being done for Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. The volunteers are wholly responsible for only three shifts (Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights). Greg DeYoung indicated that Exmore is paying the County for 4 night shifts. Nassawadox is covering the night shifts on their own without County staff. As a whole, they all reported that use of County staff and their assignment with volunteers is working fine. There is sometime an issue about having the volunteer driver available to respond with the county staff, especially when it nears the end of a shift and that volunteer will need to go to their full-time employment.

The group discussed about the possibility of revenue sharing moving forward but not certain how this would work. Pat Coady thanked the volunteer stations for attending the meeting.

### **Other Business**

Dr. Gray stated that she is submitting her resignation from this committee. She will be leaving the Shore due to a personal health issue. The committee thanked her for her service and contribution to this effort and wished her all the best.

Motion was made by Pat Coady, seconded by Willie Randall, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie H. Nunez  
County Administrator