

Crawford County



County Commissioners

Chairman

Eric S. Henry

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Francis F. Weiderspahn, Jr

Secretary/Treasurer

John Christopher Soff

EMS Commission Members

Neil Fratus, City of Titusville

David Basnak, EMERGYCARE Inc.

EMS Commission

c/o Crawford County DPS

632 Pine Street

Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335

EMS Commission Members

Jason McPherson, Meadville Ambulance

Kurt Dennis, Greenwood Township

Maderia Paraskos, Conneaut Lake Amb

Austin Bates, Springboro Ambulance

Krista Geer, Active Aging

Megan Mason, Linesville Ambulance

Bill McClincy, EMMCO West

Jodi Greer, Centerville Ambulance

Josh Manuel, Crawford County DPS

Bill Taylor, Townville Ambulance

MINUTES of MEETING

April 28, 2022, 9:00am

Crawford County DPS and via GoTo Meeting Virtually

Attended:

Neil Fratus, City of Titusville

David Basnak, EMERGYCARE Inc. (Virtual)

Jason McPherson, Meadville Ambulance

Kurt Dennis, Greenwood Township

Maderia Paraskos, Conneaut Lake Ambulance

Austin Bates, Springboro Ambulance

Megan Mason, Linesville Ambulance

Bill McClincy, EMMCO West

Jodi Greer, Centerville Ambulance

Josh Manuel, Crawford County DPS

Bill Taylor, Townville Ambulance (Virtual)

Eric Henry, Crawford County Commissioner

Greg Beveridge, Director, Crawford DPS

Allen Clark, EMA Coord., Crawford DPS

Don Bovard, Ops & Trng Off, Crawford DPS

Garrett Dvorkin, Titusville Herald

Excused:

Krista Geer, Active Aging

I. Commissioner's Welcome

Crawford County Commissioner Eric Henry Welcomed everyone to the EMS Commission's first meeting. He said this committee is one of the most important committees that has been established by county government and that all three of the Crawford County Commissioners are supportive of Commissions. He asked that they all come with an open mind. We've all been on committees and had breakfasts with state legislators for years with no advancements or improvements. Commissioner Henry is open to any suggestions that this group comes up with. At the end of the day if we do nothing the system will collapse. EMS personnel are tired and it takes a longer time to respond. The commissions have the full support of the county including financial assistance. The solution has to come from the County EMS Commission. He talked with State Representative Kathy Rapp about the EMS issues recently. He will have people testify to this Commission so everyone can hear various points of view of the EMS System.

II. Introduction of Commission Members

Everyone introduced themselves to the group.

III. Purpose, Scope, Responsibilities, and Administration

We need local level buy in from municipalities. There is an authority bill which allows counties to work with municipalities to include funding. There has been some push back by PSATS and fire unions. Sales tax bill which would fund the EMS System in each county. There is a paid EMS providers group that have met for years with all the same exact problems.

The EMS Commission will meet bi-monthly and have subcommittee meetings as needed. The GoTo Meeting webinar is available for all meetings.

IV. EMS Commission Members Opening Comments

Neil Fratus: He has an EMS and Sheriff background and listens to the scanner all day. Many times, he hears delayed response from EMS. Has talked with EMS, fire, Commissioner Henry, and Director Beveridge regarding the time of response of EMS in Titusville. How do we help EmeryCare provide for quicker response working together? He is open minded to any solution that would help the City of Titusville and surrounding areas.

Maderia Paraskos: The number one concern is providing patient care service to the community. Goal has to be patient care. Lack of people is the number one problem. If we had two crews on, we could respond to more emergency calls. We need more training opportunities and thanked the County Commissioners for providing funding for EMT training. Need funding for EMS system. People do not have a stake in it unless they need the EMS system.

Bill McClincy: The state that the EMS system is in is not something that was dropped on us or the pandemic caused, it has been going on for 20 years. 10 years ago, SR60 was released and in 2018 SR6 was released and there's been so many meetings by all levels of government, but we are still in the same condition. What does a new EMS system look like? Community medicine or 911 call screening to send the appropriate level of EMS? Where do we want the system to go from here?

Jason McPherson: He worked 3,700 hours last year to cover the county. Meadville Area Ambulance has 7 paramedics to cover their area and fill other ALS areas 24/7. We have allowed ourselves not to manage ourselves for 20 years. Lack of funding, lack of personnel, and the average age of responder is 50 are contributing causes. The EMS System is close to system failure. We have some suggestions but need the funding.

Jodi Greer: Biggest concern is the lack of volunteers to run EMS. Pandemic hurt volunteers responding on calls. Younger personnel are difficult to get involved into EMS.

Austin Bates: Monday to Friday daytime there is 1 BLS ambulance at Springboro Fire Dept. and 1 ALS ambulance at Conneaut Lake Area Ambulance to cover all of western Crawford County. Austin and Maderia have partnered on a calls. Springboro and Conneautville have teamed up and are dual dispatched for EMS. Borrows Conneautville's ambulances when needed. Utilization of resources should be looked at. They are looking at supplemental paid staffing. Need insurance companies to increase payments.

Megan Mason: I wish Linesville Ambulance could handle more calls. During the day only one EMT is available. COVID exemption for staffing had helped provided needed personnel to drive. We need to push for the continuation of non-EMS certified drivers especially in rural areas. Need more EMR courses which are much shorter courses and EMR to EMT Bridge and AEMT trainings to be conducted. By July BLS optional protocols. Megan is an instructor to teach that course. Need funding sources such as 1% sales tax and talked to legislators. Need to look at short term solutions. Community paramedicine program initiated. Nurse triage at the 911 center to triage calls and send appropriate response.

Bill McClincy: COVID crew changes expire June 30th. Services can apply for Act 17 for BLS during a certain time frame.

Josh Manuel: He is both a responder and works in the 911 center. 911 dispatchers ask a lot of questions to the caller based on national protocols. The most frequent call of mental health does not need an ambulance. Lift assists moving to BLS and fire departments instead of ALS services. 911 tries to send appropriate resources to the call instead of ALS. What about wheel chair services added as a resource to dispatch? Look at other resources to be able to respond to appropriate level.

Kurt Dennis: 911 questions the caller and the caller knows how to answer the questions for higher level of response. Years ago, most people would take themselves to the hospital instead of calling for an ambulance compared to today when people call for an ambulance for any medical situation. He knows it's the municipality to provide for the emergency care of their residents. We need to let BLS services be BLS services and not always need ALS. Load and start heading towards a hospital and not waiting for an ALS to arrive on scene.

Don Bovard: He has been a supervisor for 5 years and past Fire Chief at West Mead #1 Fire Dept. West Mead Township funds their two fire departments well. They have two good departments with some EMS providers at West Mead #1 Fire Dept. West Mead Township will budget \$5,000 a year towards EMS, which comes to \$1 per person. Health insurance need to be able to fund the costs of providing EMS in the county.

Allen Clark: Agreed with what has been said so far. He is the Conneautville Borough Mayor and an Assistant Fire Chief. It is tough for some municipalities that take in limited funds. Most municipalities are concentrated on roads and water systems with limited funds left for public safety. Most services rely on that one or two people to keep their EMS Services operating. The lack of daytime personnel is the greatest struggle to overcome. Conneautville is fortunate to have the dual EMS dispatch with Springboro to cover weekdays.

Bill Taylor: Commend the 911 Center for a great job they do. IRP Program might solve some of the issues. Overuse of ALS is a problem. Cardiac arrest should be load and go. Lack of volunteers during the day. Sit down with Neil and Dave to talk about EMS coverage in the City of Titusville. Bill works Tionesta Ambulance with two staffed people per day. There are 8 townships that pay for EMS coverage each year. Would like to staff two BLS ambulances but currently only staff one. They

could wait up to 20 minutes for ALS to arrive. They also have a large response area and it is very rural area. The municipalities give \$8,000 to the EMS system. Don Hall was also instrumental in helping to get that system in place.

Commissioner Henry: Talked about the IRP, immediate response personnel, program. Issue is insurance coverage similar to program in Indiana County. Person can be there quickly to determine appropriate level of EMS response and what resources to respond.

Dave Basnak: He said the most aggressive efforts to address the EMS crisis has been done in Crawford County. Human capital is the biggest problem with only band aids being applied to fix the EMS system. Inflation and raising the minimum wages will increase our expenses with no increase in insurance review. It is difficult to recruit and retain younger responders. The entry wage turns people off to working in EMS. EmeryCare started with 50 students in their in-house training program and ended up with 1 full-time employee. When you complete training you are put on the ambulance right away compared to nursing where there is shadowing and mentoring. Funding for EMS needs to be a priority to get the right people in the EMS system. It is wrong for volunteer fire and EMS have to conduct fundraisers to be able to fund the EMS System. Everyone needs to be on the same page from elected officials to EMS agencies working together. We need to make changes

Greg Beveridge: Agreed with what was said. It's difficult to find ambulances to respond to medical emergencies in the county. There have been changes in society and volunteerism in all organizations is at critical low. Dual income families now with less time to volunteer. Compensation and consolidation may be some solutions. EMS at youth sports events have been extremely difficult to staff. How do you fund nurses who want to sit at the 911 center and the funding? Even for cities with career services they are waiting for EMS.

Commissioner Henry: Meeting in Titusville with several agencies. Police budget over 1 million, less funding to fire, and no funding to EMS. EMMERGYCARE loses money every year in the amount of ½ million a year in Titusville. There is a lack of doctors and medical services at Titusville Hospital which EMS transports to Erie and Meadville. Interfacility transports off sets the cost of having emergency response capability for some services. Municipalities do not directly financially support EMS in the county.

Megan Mason: Asked if MMC could provide funding or support to EMS System since they are receiving most of the patients.

Maderia Paraskos: Asked if there was any way ALS equipment can be staged or stored with BLS ambulance? Bill McClincy reported, not at this time and it would have to be a state-wide change or order.

It was noted that Dave Basnak would be having a meeting with Dr. Aaron Rhone, the Acting EMS Bureau Director today. Several questions were given to Dave to ask Director Rhone. Maderia asked if an EMR and a Paramedic could make a legal crew?

V. Action Items for Next Meeting

Commissioner Henry said we need to define what emergency and non-emergency system looks like. We need to keep these meetings to 60 to 90 minutes every other month. Commissioner Henry will meet with the following subcommittees before the next meeting in June; Municipal Government, Paid EMS agencies, 911 Communication Center, and Volunteer EMS Services to find solutions. He asked if recruitment and retention objectives are needed or a viable objective. The media is important to get the word out on the situation EMS is in now. He thanks Garret for attending the EMS Commission Meeting. Commissioner Henry said Crawford County can pay for EMS training and recruitment. Discussion followed regarding suicidal patients being transported by an ambulance and the police following behind them to the hospital. Another item subcommittees can discuss with coroner is EMS being dispatched to obvious DOA incidents. We need to plan with an open mind for sustainability and send the right resource to medical emergencies. We are paying someone who can do surgery on a neck less than people can make at convenient stores. Seniors use the EMS system. PA Lottery funds programs for senior citizens. Would establishing an Omega call be useful to call for social services and not an ambulance?

VI. Next Meeting

June 30th at 9:00am at Crawford County DPS and via GoTo Meeting virtual platform

VII. Adjournment

With nothing further to discuss the meeting adjourned at 10:30am.

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