

County Commissioners
Chairman
Eric S. Henry
Vice-Chairman
Scott T. Schell
Secretary/Treasurer
Christopher R. Seeley

EMS Commission Members
Earl Mook, Cochranon Fire Dept.
David Basnak, EMERGYCARE Inc.
Dan Bresee, Cochranon Fire Dept.
Amanda Harber, Linesville Borough

Crawford County



EMS Commission
c/o Crawford County DPS
632 Pine Street
Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335

EMS Commission Members
Tom Perry, MMC Campus Safety
Kurt Dennis, Crawford County DPS
Maderia Paraskos, Conneaut Lake Amb
Austin Bates, Springboro Ambulance
Krista Geer, Active Aging
Casey Dickson, Meadville Resident
Mike Forbes, Union Township
Dan Miller, Blooming Valley Fire Dept.
Bill Taylor, Townville Ambulance
Altay Baskan, Paramedic
Evan Kardosh, Meadville Fire & EMS

Crawford County Emergency Medical Service Commission MINUTES

March 7, 2024, 7:00pm
Crawford County Department of Public Safety and Virtually

- I. Commissioner's Welcome – Crawford County Commissioner Eric Henry welcomed everyone to the meeting. He said with the new Board of Commissioners in place, they wanted to have a restart of both the Fire and EMS Commissions. The EMS Commission will be meeting bi-monthly but Committees need to meet in the off months to discuss and work on the various projects. He said that he is now on the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee for the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania which is where a lot of work can be done both at the county and state level to help the emergency medical system.
- II. Introduction of Commission Members: All members that were present introduced themselves except for Austin Bates and Maderia Paraskos who were excused due to work. County Commissioners Scott Schell and Chris Seeley attended along with Public Safety Director Greg Beveridge and EMA Coordinator Allen Clark.
- III. EMS Commission Overview
 - a. Meetings, Agendas, Minutes, and Information can be found on the County's website at – www.crawfordcountypa.net
- IV. Committees
 - a. Communications – Kurt Dennis, Chair with Greg Beveridge
 - i. 911 Enhancements – Director Greg Beveridge gave an overview of the 911 system in Crawford County. They receive over 100,000 calls for assistance each year and dispatch 55,000 calls with 35,000 of those calls being law enforcement. They employ 16 telecommunicators to cover 24/7 operations. Over the past couple years, they have introduced a lot of new technology in the 911 center and for public safety agencies.

- ii. P25 Radio System – Director Beveridge reported that the county has hired a consultant to conduct an independent inventory of the current radio system and project what the cost of going to the digital P25 system would be. The consultants have visited all the tower sites in the county already. The rough cost at this time is around \$15 million. There will be a survey sent to everyone that uses the current UHF communication system to gather what works, areas to improve, and what their communication needs are. The study should be done in six months.
- b. Government – Kurt Dennis, Chair with Dan Breese, Chris Seeley, and Mike Forbes.
 - i. Commissioner Henry reported that over the last couple years there have been several meetings with; municipalities, state and federal elected officials, and with the French Creek Council of Government. There seems to be a lot of finger pointing from the state to the locals and vice versa as to where the funding should come from to pay for EMS personnel to provide EMS. Forest County Commissioners obtained an USDA Grant to purchase two ambulances and form an EMS Authority with the municipalities contributing to the cost at \$115 per parcel. Personnel to run during weekdays daytime is where the help is most needed. The state did increase the Medicaid fees and Commissioner Henry has spoken to US Congressman Kelly regarding raising Medicare fees.

ACTION ITEM: This committee should meet to discuss how to continually educate municipal, state, and federal officials regarding the EMS crisis and possible solutions.

- c. Volunteer Services – Bill Taylor, Chair with Austin Bates, Earl Mook, Dan Miller, Dan Breese, and Amanda Harper
 - i. Bill Taylor reported that his service only has five EMTs and are limited during the day. The change during COVID that a driver did not have to be a trained EMR or EMT to drive but have taken EVOC and CPR was a great help. Dan Breese reported that it is himself and Earl Mook that run during the day at their station and both are in their 70's. They have eighteen EMTs but only seven runs actively. Amanda Harper reported her department has a lot of EMT's but only seven runs on calls. Allen Clark reported that the dual dispatch with his department and Springboro along with assigning crews has helped maintain 24/7 BLS staffing in their areas.
- d. Paid Services – Dave Basnak, Chair with Altay Baskan, Evan Kardosh, and Maderia Paraskos
 - i. Evan Kardosh reported that they are good on staffing and it's a cost to operations. Altay Baskin reported that all paid services are hurting to hire more staffing but there are not enough trained EMS personnel to hire. More EMS personnel are getting out of EMS than those being trained and

entering the profession. Dave Basnak reported staffing his service is hard but paying for the staffing is harder due to the lack of true emergency responses and his department is one of the higher paying services. The patient payment for an EMS call does not cover the cost of readiness and most of the time does not even pay for the total expense of the call. The cost of an ALS service is at \$1 million a year to operate and a BLS service costs \$850,000 per year to operate. For paid services there is increased cost in human resources, billing, Workman's Compensation, and other expenses that volunteer service does not have.

e. Stakeholders – Krista Geer, Chair with Tom Perry, Casey Dickson

- i. Krista Geer from Active Aging reported on the lift assist situation in the county which the Stakeholder Committee has been working on for a couple years. Lift assists have tripled in Crawford County due several factors: long term care centers are unable to hire the needed staff to increase the number of patients they can take, home healthcare services are unable to hire the needed staff to take care of those at home in need of services, and Crawford County's population is aging and most children are moving away for jobs leaving no other family members to help their aging parents. Active Aging Agency does follow up with individuals who frequently ask for assists in getting picked up but the resident must accept the help, they can refuse help. If anyone knows of a senior citizen who frequently calls for help in getting up please call Active Aging during the weekday at 814-336-1792 or if it is an emergency call Crawford County 911 at 814-724-2548. The committee is working on establishing a network of personnel from their agency and other agencies to be able to assist residents who need picked up and to also do a home safety evaluation instead of sending fire, EMS, or law enforcement.

Director Greg Beveridge reported there has been 189 lift assist calls in Crawford County this year. Dave reported that Erie County has a medically certified person respond on all lift assists to see if there is any medical illness or injury needing emergency care. Townville Ambulance allows up to three lift assists to with their paid EMS membership then they charge the resident \$50. Cochran reported that they are afraid of hurting patients that have fallen because some of their membership are older and they do charge \$50 per lift assist. Amanda Harper asked if there were training for emergency personnel in proper lifting techniques? Altay said one of the departments he runs with charge \$100 per lift assist. Commissioner Henry reported that a lot of home healthcare and even long-term care facilities have a policy that they are not to lift a patient up who has fallen but to call 911. Most EMS services have various equipment to aid in lifting patients but sometimes they are unable to get the equipment to the patient or operate the equipment due to the location of the fall. Commissioner Schell said that there should be medically trained personnel responding on lift assists. It was also highly recommended to have the patient sign a patient refusal form after a lift assist.

Director Beveridge reported that the Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) cards for lift assists do fall under a fire department response. COVID pandemic greatly decreased the number of people working in all healthcare from emergency medicine to hospitals including all healthcare agencies. Tom Perry reported Venango County dispatches only QRS or BLS services on lift assists. Currently in Crawford County there are two fire departments that are not QRS certified that are being dispatched to lift assists. It was mentioned that fire departments can ask for EMS assistance if they feel the patient may need medically evaluated after a fall. Casey Dickson reported that families of elderly fall patients should also be educated on the situation. Commissioner Henry reported that Crawford County was 48th out of the 67 counties in terms of being healthy in the state. It was reported that some ambulance services respond with one medical person in hopes that the fire department can provide a driver for the ambulance. One borough pays another fire department to provide QRS to their municipality since their fire department does not provide QRS.

MOTION: Motion by Kurt Dennis and second by Dan Miller assign lift assist calls discussion to a subcommittee to discuss and report back in May, motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEM: Identify patient safe lifting training and facilitate rolling the training out county-wide.

ACTION ITEM: Educate chief officers how to report patients with repetitive lift assist requests to Active Aging.

- V. Next Meeting, May 9, 2024, 7:00pm at Crawford County DPS or virtually
- VI. Adjournment: The Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm