



Department of Emergency Services

Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2023

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Executive Director Haas has called the recorded virtual and in-person meeting to order at 6:05 pm on February 9, 2023. We have a quorum.

**Present:**

**Non-Voting Members:**

- DES Director Scott Haas
- Assistant Chief Lori Morris
- Assistant Chief Jeff Morgan
- Assistant Chief Phil English
- Assistant Chief Zach Yerkie
- Medical Director Dr. Joseph Ciotola

**Support Staff:**

- Office Coordinator, Kelly Nelson
- Office Coordinator, Amanda Darling

**Voting Members:**

- Chad Angelini (Consumer)
- Steve Pringle (Consumer)
- Steve Wilson (Consumer)
- Ben Hammock (Consumer)
- Steve Souder (Consumer)

**County Commissioner**

- Chris Corchiarino

**Approval of Minutes**

- November 17, 2022, Minutes: Approved
  - Motion: Ben Hammock Seconded: Steve Pringle

**Announcements/ Special Guests**

None

## Commissioner Update:

None

## Director's Update- Director Scott Haas

- **Welcome to our two new Chiefs:**
  - Phil English
    - Started with the County in 1996
    - Supervised almost every division at the Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office
    - SWAT, Sniper
    - Was the CAD project lead for QACSO
    - Started in his new role as Assistant Chief of Communications on 1/18/2023
  - Zach Yerkie
    - Replaced Assistant Chief Wheatley
    - Has worked with EMS since 2014
    - Held the ranks of Sgt. And Lt. in the EMS division
    - Represents the MICH program at the State level
    - Is on the state advisory committee for MICH
- **Budget:**
  - Due to Finance 2/17/2023 and will be presented to the County Administrator on 3/1/23
  - Currently requesting for the Administrative Division:
    - Office Coordinator I
      - To assist with: EMS Billing, social media, Grants Management
        - The Paramedic who currently handles EMS billing got promoted.
    - Administrative vehicle replacement
      - Vehicle being replaced is 10 years old and has reached its life cycle
- **Comments/ Questions:**
  - Q: Who currently handles social media for the Department?
  - A: Beth Malasky handles all the social media for the county
    - She will be stepping back some
    - DES social media accounts will be on our shoulders again

## Medical Director's update- Dr. Ciotola

- **COVID**
  - Case rate is at 3.94 cases per day
    - Lowest case rate in the State
  - Per the Federal Government COVID funding is over in May
  - Booster vaccines that are being administered currently are bivalent
    - Only giving out 8-10 boosters a week

- Flu and RSV peaked in December and the first two weeks of January
- Transfer of Care times have improved across the University of Maryland Hospital System
  - The Capital region is still an issue though
- **MICH**
  - Program is back to full steam
  - Queen Anne's QI stats:
    - 33 visits
    - 0 re-admissions
  - Frequent utilization of Station 1 by a patient in Shipping Creek for lift assist is all but over
    - Health Department funded money to install a chair lift in the residence
  - Preview for March Commissioner meeting
    - Will be a presentation by the MICH Team on the outstanding positive cases
- **Hospital Wait times:**
  - The State Medical Directors have formed a committee
  - This is a very hot topic for the Legislature and the new State Health Secretary
  - All facilities have improved by 50-60% since
    - AAMC still has issues
- **Comments/ Questions:**
  - Q: Will the end of Federal funding for COVID affect the Health Department
  - A: The Health Department has funded and is being reimbursed through FEMA for masks, hand sanitizer, and other PPE
  - Q: Suggesting an annual vaccine like the flu vaccine. Where/ how will that impact Doctor's Offices and the Health Dept.?
  - A: It will mostly be available at routine Doctor's visits, Pharmacies, and Local Health Depts.
    - Variants will make a vaccine difficult
      - COVID virus changes too frequently
      - Current vaccines do not cover the newest variants
  - C: Appreciate the work that went into the hospital wait times
  - R: All facilities have improved by 50-60% since the State has taken the lead instead of local jurisdictions
    - AAMC is the only location we are still having some issues with
  - Q: Grasonville was reporting an increase in cases from Slippery-Hill and is Four Seasons causing an issue with call volume?
  - A: There has been an increase in calls at the assisted living facility at Slippery Hill.
    - Majority are memory patients making calls from personal phones.
    - Four Seasons is not causing as much increase in call volume
    - Ellendale community is seeing an increase in calls as well
  - Q: Are the calls coming from the Memory Care Unit or a different unit?
  - A: Calls are coming from Assisted Living Units and Memory Care Unit calls are coming from the staff.

- Q: How many beds are they adding to the back?
- A: 40 additional beds will be added to the assisted living at Slippery Hill when the addition is completed.
  - Also, the addition of a 3 or 4-story building at Slippery Hill
- C: This raises some concerns over their staffing. We operate on the policy to automatically transport any unwitnessed falls.
- Q: Are transport times between Queenstown ER and Easton still bad?
- A: 4-6 hour wait time for Butler transports
  - Patient was waiting 29 hours for a bed to become available
  - Butler estimated a 12-14 hour wait for pick up
    - AAMC was going to cancel the bed due to extended transport times
- A: EMS is handling priority transports if the transport company gives an estimated time of over 1 hour
  - We take some so we can bring some
- A: this is a topic that is brought up all the time at UMHS quarterly meetings
  - Butler is making more money doing transports across the bridge

**Emergency Medical Service Update- Assistant Chief Yerkie**

- **End of the Year Stats**
  - 8,374 Medical Alerts
  - 3,817 Transports
    - Top 5 transport destinations
      - Anne Arundel Medical Center- Annapolis
      - Queenstown ER- Queenstown
      - Chester River Hospital- Chestertown
      - Easton Hospital- Easton
      - Bayhealth Hospital- Dover, DE
  - 67 Flyouts
  - 3,210 Medications
    - Top 10 medications administered:
      - Oxygen
      - Lactated Ringers
      - Zofran
      - Fentanyl
      - Aspirin
      - Nitroglycerin
      - Epinephrine
      - Albuterol/Ipratropium
      - Midazolam
      - Naloxone
  - Top 10 Procedures performed
    - ECG
    - 12 Lead ECG

- Venous Access
    - Pulse Oximetry
    - Medical Consultation
    - Capnography
    - Blood Glucose Analysis
    - Wound care
    - Cervical Collars
    - Ventilation Management
  - Call volume increase
  - Transports increased
  - Lift assists increased
  - Initiated a new policy for transfers
  - High acuity incidents
    - 9 cardiac arrests in January 2023
  - ROSC and Survival to Discharge Rates are up
- **Budget**
  - Capital requests
    - New ALS transport unit to staff Station 200
      - Will need to be fully outfitted
    - Cardiac monitors and AEDs
      - Purchase 1 Zoll Cardiac Monitor
      - Purchase 15 AEDs
    - Personal Protective Equipment
      - New turnout gear
      - Ballistic gear for Rescue Task Force
  - Operational requests
    - Increase in the Overtime budget
      - To alleviate having to pull shift supervisors to cover units
    - Uniform and Medical supplies
      - Inflation across the board for all items
        - 300% increase in Oxygen
    - Fuel and printing/publishing increased 20-40%
- **Comments/ Questions:**
  - Q: is there an increase in false alerts from smartwatches
  - A: Apple crash alerts and Vehicle crash alerts during maintenance
    - Has not happened here in QA yet
  - Q: Is there an update on the future Grasonville station?
  - A: In December all positions were filled
    - There has since been a series of resignations/retirements
    - All new hires are fresh out of school
      - Have little to no real patient interactions
        - Due to some COVID factors
        - Hospitals are short-staffed and do not have time to allow classes in

- To train them properly it takes
  - EMT: 1-2 months
    - It is now closer to 3-4 months for clearance
  - Paramedics: 3-4 months
    - It is now closer to 6 months for clearance
- 6 new hires start 2/15
- 1 will start on 3/1
- There are currently 14 trainees in total
  - The EMT group that started in January will finish up precepting in April
    - We are close to having to hire persons with no experience and send them through EMT school

### **Special Operations Update -Assistant Chief Morris**

- **Support work:**
  - CERT:
    - Teaching high school program in both High Schools
    - Teaching at Kent Island middle schools
    - Trying to push students to public safety careers/ internships
      - Con: Internship program is broken
        - Struggle to train our own people let alone train interns
  - Stop the Bleed:
    - QACPS- all administrative staff and teachers
    - Private schools
      - Start next month
    - Queen Anne's County High School health program students
    - Scout groups
    - Faith based community
      - Putting feelers out for interest
  - Assisting Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office with Run, Hide, Fight training
- **Planning:**
  - iPAWS lab visit
    - ticker messages on TV
    - Mass communication system alerts
  - Cloverfields drainage project
    - Was approved for grant funding
    - Website is up and running
    - Scoping project was awarded
    - Request for Quotes (RFQ) was posted yesterday (2/8/2023)
  - Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
    - Is sent to all EOC partners
    - Currently in draft status
      - Waiting for Department Directors to approve
  - Active Assailant

- COVID caused a restart from previous planning points
  - Major concepts are being agreed upon
    - Starting to purchase equipment for Rescue Taskforce warm zone work
  - Meeting and planning with allied agencies
    - Law Enforcement
      - MDTA
      - CPD
      - NRP
      - QACSO
      - MSP
    - Fire Chiefs
    - FEC
    - School Board
    - Department of Health
    - Social Services
  - Training
    - QAC TV is assisting with the production of training videos
- Strategic Plan
  - Starts at the end of February
  - 5-year plan for the department
- **CERT**
  - 2 Classes at QACHS
    - Part of the Homeland Security Program tract
  - 1 Class at KIHS
  - Teen CERT at Stevensville Middle
    - Abbreviated program
  - Symphony Village
    - Has had a CERT team for over 15 years
- **Animal Control**
  - 717 Calls for Service came in through dispatch
  - 171 Animals transported to the Shelter
    - 90 dogs
    - 77 cats
    - Ferret
    - Pig
    - Duck
    - Bird
  - 4 Dangerous dog hearings
    - Done with Animal control commission
    - Are emergency hearings
  - Have seen an increase in livestock calls post COVID
    - Do not normally handle livestock
    - Have assisted with developing a foster program for these animals

- Mostly goats, pigs, cow
  - New employee starts 3/1/2023
- **Budget:**
  - Merge Support Services into Special Operations
    - 1 Central point of contact for ancillary/administrative duties
  - Training Coordinator for EMS
    - Current Training Coordinator has a dispatch history
      - Currently training:
        - Dispatch
        - Animal Control
        - EMS
    - Will assist with avoiding burn out from EMS providers who are assisting with new hire academy
  - Communications Systems Tech/ Logistics
    - To assist and distribute the workload on current COM System tech and logistics
      - No back up for either position currently
  - 50/301 Split Tower
    - Partnership with the State for the construction of a new tower
  - Radio Subscriber enhancements
    - cover the radio needs of all Queen Anne's County agencies
      - Not just DES
        - Sheriff's Office
        - Parks
        - DPW
  - HAZMIT Plan Update
    - Is a requirement through FEMA for any grants
    - Current one is set to expire in 2024
    - Takes 12-18 months to write
      - Will need to contract a vendor to assist with
  - Animal Control vehicle replacement
    - 2 vehicles on order
      - 1 was canceled and reordered
      - 1 still pending from last year
    - Vehicle costs have increased during this whole process
      - Can no longer just call to order
    - Ordering windows for the production year close quickly
      - A week or less to place order
      - 2-3 year wait times
    - Currently the fleet has from 90,000 to 200,000 miles on all Animal Control vehicles
    - Funds keep getting moved from Capital budget to Operational budget by County Finance
      - Operational funds go away at the end of the fiscal



- This shifting back and forth makes it difficult to keep track of remaining funds

### **Communications Update- Assistant Chief English**

- **Next Gen 9-1-1**
  - Went live on 8/30/2022
  - Still not 100% on the system
    - Cellular carriers must still switch over
      - Are still using the old network
  - Trunk overload issue
    - Supposed to transfer from QA to Kent when busy
      - Carriers were transferring to a 20-year-old number
        - When that line was busy it would transfer to other agencies not associated with DES
          - Calls went to Zoning and Corrections
      - Took 2 weeks to get carriers to correct this issue so calls could transfer
        - All ESCA counties have fixed this issue
  - Talbot County has cut over 2/7/2023
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> county to cut over
  - Whole shore should be done by April
    - The 1<sup>st</sup> region in the state to be 9-1-1 compliant
      - The only region to cut over as a group
- **CAD**
  - Still experiencing hiccups
    - Fire Reporting
      - Working on issues
      - Hope that call on 2/13 will alleviate some of the issues
    - Sheriff's Office has the most issues
      - Should not affect DES
    - Estimated 18 months to get things straight
  - IT from DES merged with County IT
    - Longer process is causing more delays
      - 2-week delay w/o dispatch or print capabilities in the station
        - Due to roadblocks with IT and 3<sup>rd</sup> party
    - Need for more direct communication for Emergency Services
- **Staffing Updates**
  - Lt. moved over to Special Operations Division
  - A PSD I started
  - PSD I in the hiring process
    - Every shift will have a trainee
      - one will have 2 trainees

- **9-8-8**
  - Had to write a policy for handing calls
  - National Program is area code based not location based
  - Asante Group is the contractor for the shore
    - did not have the correct number to contact Dispatch
- **MD 9-1-1 Board Update:**
  - Recently attended an in-person session/ workgroup
    - Meeting gave a 30K' view of the future
    - Another meeting is scheduled for 3/6/2023
    - Agree with some but not all of the proposed ideas
  - Ex-Director resigned
    - Substitute Director is doing great things
- **Budget**
  - Public Safety Network (Re-occurring)
    - Final buildout of the Backup Center
      - It is close to operational
    - Price increase enhancements
      - 20-40% increases
        - Service contracts have all increased
- **Comments/ Questions**
  - C: Would like to go to bat if we need to get changes made to IT or to go back to the old way
  - R: not quite to that point
    - Gave them 4 full time employees
    - Turnaround times are not matching up with expectations
      - When a problem arises, it should be fixed on the spot
      - Old staff have been bogged down with other tasks outside of 9-1-1
      - Need to continue educating the Director that when phone or CAD systems are down it is a crisis
    - Ticketing system limits direct communication to relay urgency
    - Service level is not the same

### **Fire Marshal Update- Assistant Chief Morgan**

- **Division overview**
  - Conducts plan reviews
    - Residential sprinkler plans
    - Site plans
    - Concept plans
    - Building plans
    - Fire Sprinkler plans
    - Fire Alarm plans
  - Conducts tests and inspections

- Hydrostatic test
    - Bucket/ finals
    - Fire alarm/ Fire alarm 24-hour battery test
    - Final Use & Occupancy inspections
  - Conducts Fire Safety inspections
    - Schools
    - County buildings
    - Marinas
    - Liquor Licensed establishments
    - Hotels & Motels
  - Investigates complaints
- **Staffing**
  - 1 Full time Fire Marshal
  - 2 Part time Fire Inspector II positions
    - Plan examiners
    - 30 hours per week max.
  - 3 Part time Fire Inspector positions
    - 30 hours per week max
- **Budget**
  - Convert 1 Fire Inspector II position to Full time
    - Would be a backup for Assistant Chief
      - There is currently no plan B
      - Would build the office in case of retirement
    - On call for after-hours/ holidays
      - Call outs
      - Assist Fire companies
- **Projects in Progress**
  - YMCA, Centreville
  - Postal Road Apartment Buildings, Chester
  - Four Seasons Building 8 & 9, Chester
  - Sugar Doodles, Kent Narrows Boatel, Chester
  - Kent Island Library renovation, Stevensville
  - Queenstown Assisted Living addition, Queenstown
  - Everside Health Office for Employees, Centreville
- **Completed Projects**
  - Hyatt Place Hotel, Kent Narrows, Grasonville
  - Kent Island Filipino & Asian Market, Chester
  - Ram's Head Shore House renovation, Stevensville

### Old Business

- No old business

### **New Business**

- Budget is due to County Administrator 3/1/2023
  - Director Haas would like to have next DESAC meeting in March not May
    - To go over the Budget

### **For the Good of the Order**

- N/A

### **Adjournment**

- Motion was made by Steve Pringle for Adjournment
  - Ben Hammock seconded
- Director Haas concluded the meeting at 7:35 pm.