

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

June 19, 2014

The Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council met at Emergency Medical Services, First Floor Conference Room 130, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Largo, Florida, at 10:00 A.M. on this date with the following members present:

Kelly Cullen, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter (Chair)  
Chief Robert Weiss, Clearwater Fire Department  
Chief Ian Womack, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue  
Chief Joe Accetta, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association (Vice-Chair)  
Gayle Guidash, Pinellas County Health Department  
Mayor Travis Palladeno, Mayors' Council (Madeira Beach)  
Mayor Patricia Gerard, Mayors' Council (Largo)  
William Israel, Citizen Representative  
Beth Rawlins, Citizen Representative  
Ray Neri, Citizen Representative (Secretary)  
Joy Lewis, Citizen Representative  
William Holmes, Citizen Representative  
Anne Scofield, Citizen Representative  
Dr. Scott Kuebler, Citizen Representative  
Chief William Scott, Pinellas Advanced Life Support Providers Association  
Mark Postma, Sunstar Paramedics

Absent:

Maj. Sean Jowell, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office  
Capt. Glenn Luben, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office  
Mayor Chris Arbutine, Mayors' Council (Belleair Bluffs)  
Mayor Doug Bevis, Mayors' Council (Oldsmar)  
George McCarthy, Citizen Representative  
Dr. Phillip Nicotera, St. Petersburg College, Health Education Programs  
Dr. Kenneth Webster, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society  
Dr. David Weiland Jr., Pinellas County Medical Association  
Anissa Raiford, Pinellas County Medical Association  
James Terry, Independent Fire District Elected Official  
Kathleen Litton, Independent Fire District Elected Official

Also Present:

Craig Hare, Emergency Medical Services  
Dr. Angus Jameson, EMS Medical Director  
Carl Brody, County Attorney's Office  
Greg Woodrum, Emergency Medical Services  
Shawn Tatham, Emergency Medical Services  
Chief Joseph Connors, Clearwater Fire Department  
Capt. Scott Zweifel, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue  
Chief Jeffrey Parks, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association  
Susan Byrd, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter  
Chief Bob Markford, Pinellas Advanced Life Support Providers Association  
Vicki Glenn, Sunstar Paramedics

Carol Bissinger, Bayfront Medical Center  
Bill Lewis, Citizen  
Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics

## **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chairman Cullen called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Roll was taken and it was determined that there was a quorum present. There were 16 voting members in attendance.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the March 20, 2014 meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Neri made a motion to approve the minutes and Mayor Palladeno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **REPORTS**

**EMS Director:** Mr. Hare briefed the Council on the recent senior management changes in Pinellas County government as well as organizational structure reassignments.

Mr. Hare provided a detailed update on the status of ALS First Responder Agreements with cities and fire districts and the fiscal sustainability efforts applied toward those discussions.

Mr. Hare reported that the new Public Safety Complex was nearing completion and that a Certificate of Occupancy had been issued. The Emergency Operations Center is up and running at that new location. The Regional 9-1-1 Center will go live at the new location on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and the Sunstar ambulance dispatch center will move in toward the end of the year.

Mr. Hare updated the Council on new software that will allow EMS Coordinators to track the clinical performance of their agencies without having to go through a stack of paper records.

**EMS Medical Director:** Dr. Jameson reported that Pinellas County was recently one of the first EMS systems nationwide to win the American Heart Association's Mission Lifeline Award.

Dr. Jameson provided updates on the new pediatric medication administration tool called the Handtevy system, the Center for Prehospital Medicine and the improved paramedic orientation program.

Dr. Jameson announced the addition of two new online medical control physicians to the Office of the Medical Director. They are Dr. Amanda Feusner-Hidalgo from Morton Plant and Dr. Ramy Nasr from Tampa General.

Dr. Jameson described initiatives to enhance quality improvement and data sharing capabilities.

**Sunstar:** Mr. Postma described the increase in volume this spring most likely influenced by the influx of visitors due to the cold weather in the Northern U.S.

Mr. Postma stated that Sunstar Paramedics broke a monthly transport record in the month of March 2014 by transporting 13,311 patients. This was an increase of over 800 transports from the previous March. Mr. Postma anticipated that 2014 would be a record transport year overall.

Mr. Postma reported that Sunstar Paramedics had fully implemented 80 new Philips ECG monitors into the system and that all Sunstar employees had been properly trained. This meant that all ambulance and fire units were now operating on the same ECG monitor allowing for a standardized electronic platform for patient care reporting.

Mr. Postma briefed that Sunstar is only two vehicles shy of replacing the entire fleet with clean diesel technology. Mr. Postma stated that all ambulances are also equipped with solar technology. This results in a cleaner, quieter and more environmentally safe fleet.

Mr. Postma also said that Sunstar is introducing lithium technology into the fleet that will meet emerging industry standards in battery performance.

**First Responders:** Chief Accetta briefed statistics that showed first responder agencies are still on track with their average response objectives of 4.5 minutes.

Chief Accetta pointed out that Charlie/Delta calls or “life threatening” calls are still the highest volume of calls that are responded to.

Chief Accetta covered the incident statistics by EMD Determinant with “FALLS” being the number one response incident.

Chief Accetta concluded by briefing the dispatch statistics by department.

Mayor Palladeno asked if water rescue incidents were up and Chief Accetta responded that they were definitely higher without a doubt.

### **UPCOMING TERM EXPIRATIONS**

Mr. Woodrum presented a list of members whose term would expire prior to the next scheduled meeting and asked whether those members present would like to serve another two-year term. Staff will contact those not present in between meetings and a membership update will be provided at the next scheduled meeting.

### **OPEN FORUM**

Mayor Palladeno raised a concern of radio communications during water rescues not being adequate. He was concerned that responders in the water are not able to communicate effectively with responders on land.

Mr. Hare said that staff would look into water communications and that there have already been a number of initiatives to improve water rescue capabilities such as new boats in St. Petersburg and Tarpon Springs and that Seminole is looking to outfit a boat also.

Capt. Zweifel noted that from his experience with the swift water rescue team, once the radio is under the water at all it will not transmit. He stated that hand and arm signals should be used until the rescuer is able to get back onto the vessel. Another consideration is that rescuers may be dealing with a victim in panic that may strip the radio from the rescuer.

Mr. Neri asked if there was a fire hydrant density standard for the County.

Chief Womack replied that water supply systems vary widely depending on factors such as community needs and infrastructure. The Chief stated that the goal is to provide a minimum flow for the occupants in the vicinity. This may mean that if the area is heavily commercialized then there will be more hydrants than in a residential area for example. Chief Womack said that other areas have a minimum flow requirement that may be met through the use of tanker trucks. So, there are a lot of considerations to determining the minimum fire hydrant standard.

Mr. Neri expressed concern that the fire hydrant density for the Lealman area was not adequate especially compared to other areas such as unincorporated Seminole. Mr. Neri said that this not only negatively affects fire protection but also adversely affects insurance ratings for residents in that area creating higher premiums.

Mr. Hare responded that, although he doesn't have anything definitive, he is aware of an initiative made by both the County water system and the St. Petersburg water system to bring the Lealman service area up to a higher level of service.

Ms. Scofield asked if there was an alternate location for the Public Safety Complex in the event of a disaster that destroyed communications.

Mr. Hare replied that the Public Safety Complex is a Category 5 structure and it will be the primary communication site. The secondary backup will be the communications center located at the EMS Center which is a Category 3 structure. The third backup location will be the Emergency Response Building located at the Highway Department complex. This is also a Category 5 structure. A fourth backup is a portable laptop system that is carried in heavy duty Pelican cases and can be relocated to whatever location is most appropriate. To compliment this fourth option, there are two mobile radio towers that can be installed to create two zones of operability.

Dr. Kuebler asked for clarification on how coordination is made with other agencies such as lifeguards and the U.S. Coast Guard. Mr. Hare responded by saying that because response time on the water is much slower than that of ground response, when there is a water rescue incident all agencies are contacted that may have a boat in the water. In the case of the Coast Guard, their primary mission is not water rescue but more law enforcement/drug interdiction. As a result, Mr. Hare said that the fastest most reliable response from an EMS perspective is that of our fire rescue agencies.

Chief Accetta added that there are three types of marine units. They are light marine (jet ski), marine unit (recreational type boats) and fire boats. Marine and fire boats have communications with 9-1-1 and the Coast Guard. A District Chief responds to all water rescues and their command vehicles are also capable of communicating with the Coast Guard and other units that are on the water.

Dr. Jameson reported that he recently visited the Eckerd College Search & Rescue Program and learned that a regional water search and rescue council is also being rekindled to address these issues.

Dr. Kuebler requested to know what agency the Clearwater lifeguards reported to. Chief Weiss responded that the Clearwater lifeguards are employees of the Parks & Recreation Department however they work hand-in-hand with Clearwater Fire & Rescue. They have been issued a pager and Clearwater Fire & Rescue is working with Communications to make sure that they are notified right away of water rescue incidents in their vicinity so that they are able to respond immediately if they are available.

Mr. Hare added that there are two or three sets of lifeguards in the County. One is at the main Clearwater Beach which also covers Sand Key and the County has lifeguards at Ft. Desoto.

Chief Parks pointed out that there are also State lifeguards at Honeymoon Island on a seasonal basis.

Dr. Kuebler complimented and thanked all the first responders for their hard work on challenging water rescue events and asked that everyone continue to focus their efforts on improving response for water rescues.

Mayor Palladeno stated that tourism and water safety are closely related and asked if there was funding available through the Tourist Development Council to cover the cost of water safety craft and training. Mayor Palladeno reasoned that since revenue was being generated through bed tax dollars and increased tourism contributed to increased water rescue incidents that funding from that source may be available.

Mr. Neri stated that he would like to see the EMS Advisory Council regularly brief the EMS Authority so that the EMS Authority could anticipate receiving input from the EMS Advisory Council on a consistent basis. Mr. Neri felt that published minutes are not sufficient to allow Commissioners to ask questions and receive feedback from the EMS Advisory Council.

Mayor Gerard commented that over the years she has learned an awful lot about the system by attending the EMS Advisory Council meetings and agreed that Commissioners need to hear what is being discussed at EMS Advisory Council meetings.

Ms. Rawlins questioned whether there was a conduit between the EMS Advisory Council and the EMS Authority other than through County staff.

Mr. Hare introduced and welcomed Ms. Rawlins and Mr. Holmes as new citizen representative members and addressed Ms. Rawlins's question by stating the Chairman of the EMS Advisory Council is the advocate for the group before the EMS Authority.

Mr. Hare said that staff would support any discussion or strategic planning that the Council deemed necessary.

Mr. Postma suggested that the Chair brief the EMS Authority twice a year to clarify and highlight issues that impact the EMS System such as increased tourism and changes in Medicaid requirements.

Mr. Hare complimented Clearwater Fire Rescue for their performance on a recent technical rescue incident and provided details on upcoming community events.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on September 18, 2014 at 10 A.M. at the EMS Center, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room 130, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL 33774.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Neri made a motion to adjourn and Dr. Kuebler seconded the motion. Chairman Cullen adjourned the meeting at 11:25 A.M.

An audio recording of this meeting as well as any correspondence received is on file at the Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services.