

**PINELLAS COUNTY  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

June 18, 2015

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

Mayor Travis Palladeno, Mayors' Council (Madeira Beach) – Chair  
Chief Joseph T. Connors, Clearwater Fire Department  
Capt. Eric Dinan, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue  
Chief Jeffrey Parks, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association  
Gayle Guidash, Pinellas County Health Department  
Mayor Maria Lowe, Mayors' Council (St. Pete Beach) – Secretary  
William Israel, Citizen Representative  
Beth Rawlins, Citizen Representative  
Joy Lewis, Citizen Representative  
George McCarthy, Citizen Representative  
Kelly Cullen, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter  
Chief Bob Markford, Pinellas Advanced Life Support Providers Association  
Mark Postma, Sunstar Paramedics  
Dr. Kenneth Webster, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society  
Dr. David Weiland Jr., Pinellas County Medical Association

Absent:

Assistant Chief Deputy 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)  
Ray Neri, Citizen Representative  
William Holmes, Citizen Representative  
Anne Scofield, Citizen Representative  
Dr. Scott Kuebler, Citizen Representative  
James Terry, Independent Fire District Elected Official  
Kathleen Litton, Independent Fire District Elected Official

Staff Present:

Dr. Bruce Moeller, Safety & Emergency Services Director  
Craig Hare, EMS & Fire Administration Director  
Dr. Angus Jameson, EMS Medical Director  
Dr. Donna Dooley, Associate EMS Medical Director  
Carl Brody, County Attorney's Office  
Greg Woodrum, EMS & Fire Administration  
Steve Fravel, EMS & Fire Administration  
Melissa Hiles, EMS & Fire Administration

Also Present:

Amber Boulding, Pinellas County Health Department  
Susan Byrd, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter  
John Peterson, Sunstar Paramedics  
Chief Guy Keirn, Pinellas Park Fire Department  
Chief Stefancic, Largo Fire Rescue  
Chief Sal D'Angelo, Pinellas Suncoast Fire Rescue  
Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics  
Kim Lacina, Sunstar Paramedics  
Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics  
Shane Hudak, Citizen  
Melissa Hudak, Citizen  
Chief Rob Angell, Pinellas Park Fire Department  
Lieutenant Tony Tedesco, Clearwater Fire Department

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

Mayor Palladeno 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 15 voting members in attendance.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the March 19, 2015 meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Israel made a motion to approve the minutes and Mayor Lowe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **ELECTION OF SECRETARY**

Due to term limitations, Mr. Neri stepped down as Secretary. Mayor Palladeno asked if anyone was interested in serving as Secretary. Both Mayor Lowe and Dr. Weiland expressed interest. Upon call for a vote, Mayor Lowe received a majority of eleven votes.

Mayor Palladeno then called for a nomination. Ms. Rawlins nominated Mayor Lowe as Secretary and Mr. Postma seconded the nomination. The nomination passed unanimously. The elected slate of officers is now:

Chair: Mayor Palladeno  
Vice-Chair: Chief Weiss  
Secretary: Mayor Lowe

## **REPORTS**

Dr. Moeller announced that this was his last meeting and that he was leaving County employment to spend more time with family and pursue some teaching and consulting opportunities. He commended the EMS Advisory Council for their role in making this one of the best EMS systems in the country.

Mayor Palladeno thanked Dr. Moeller for his hard work and leadership over the past few years.

**EMS Director:** Mr. Hare announced that Dr. Jameson's contract had been extended for another year and that he and Dr. Dooley would be operating County emergency vehicles to respond to emergencies and to visit clinicians in the field.

Mr. Hare briefed that ambulance dispatch had been relocated to the Regional 9-1-1 Center and that the complete radio system has been updated from an analog to a digital system.

Mr. Hare stated that the ambulance buses were being painted and outfitted for emergency operations.

Mr. Hare gave an update on the narcotics control program and discussed the improvements being made such as biometric access and electronic tracking.

Mr. Hare informed the Council that approximately \$450,000 in funding had been identified to support the Technical Rescue team and to bring it to the same level as the Hazardous Materials team. Additionally, approximately \$150,000 had been budgeted to support water rescue operations.

Mr. Steve Fravel, EMS Data Systems Coordinator, provided a presentation on the Florida EMS Tracking and Reporting System (EMSTARS), the Health Information Exchange Program and the FirstPass software module.

Mr. Hare congratulated Paramedics Plus on being awarded a new five-year ambulance services agreement and touched on some of the improvements that came with that contract. He then asked Mr. Postma to give a more detailed summary.

Mr. Postma provided a detailed summary of quality improvements included in the new agreement to include sixteen new ambulances, three new supervisor vehicles, remount and refurbishment of the Critical Care Transport (CCT), new tactical EMS vehicle, new Fleet pickup, new Kubota for special events, all new "black box" technology, all new WiFi technology, seventy-one new hydraulic stretchers, new CCT equipment such as monitors, I.V. pumps, ventilators and video laryngoscopes, emergency compliance

goes from 90% to 91%, \$100,000 toward education and training equipment, \$250,000 toward a new computer network infrastructure, eighty new ePCR laptops and a \$7.5 million commitment to retool the Sunstar system as a NAEMT training center.

Mayor Palladeno asked that, in lieu of the increased call volume, were there efforts in place to make sure that personnel levels were maintained to support the extra units being deployed.

Mr. Postma responded that the ambulance agreement is a performance based contract that is monitored by Pinellas County EMS and requires his company to maintain an adequate workforce level to enable them to meet response times. Mr. Postma said that he also has a recruitment team that is constantly working to recruit and retain a high quality workforce sufficient to meet current and future staffing demands. Mr. Postma said another ongoing aspect of maintaining workforce levels is making sure that clinicians are properly certified to perform their duties.

There was a discussion on the impact of tourism on call volume and transports.

Mr. Postma said that there was a 10% increase in transports this year and in the month of March alone there was a record of nearly 15,000 transports. The previous one-month transport record was just under 13,000 transports.

Mayor Palladeno added that there is an estimated 1,500 to 1,600 rooms coming online by next year and that there was a 27% increase in tourism this year so all areas are being taxed and he wondered if perhaps the County was looking to subsidize some of these additional costs.

Mr. Hare responded that he had received a number of ALS First Responder unit requests. Those requests were processed and forwarded to County Administration and the Office of Management & Budget to be part of the County Administrator's budget briefing in mid July. Mr. Hare said that he expects a number of initiatives from those requests will be funded while others will not. They will be rank ordered for consideration over time.

Mayor Palladeno said he would like to see bed tax dollars go to support the costs of increased demand on emergency resources. He suggested that we begin by working with our County Administrator and County Commission toward that goal.

Mayor Lowe asked what type of data security is used as part of the electronic patient care network and also requested clarification on current outcome data received from hospitals.

Mr. Hare responded by stating that we use a product called Zoll RescueNet and that it comes with encryption that meets the HIPAA and HITECH requirements for protection of electronic data. Mr. Hare said that system clinicians do not store data on the laptops so if there is one lost or stolen it does not become a HIPAA concern. Mr. Hare also clarified that we currently do not receive outcome data electronically from hospitals and that is what the Health Information Exchange group is working to achieve.

Mr. Hare reported that the Pinellas Advanced Life Support Providers Association (PALS), which consists of EMS Coordinators from all fire agencies, ambulance, EMS & Fire Administration and St Petersburg College, had recently met in a strategic planning session and had set two strategic goals. They are to improve continuing medical education and to standardize medical bags and gear across the system.

Mr. Hare briefed the group on the challenges being faced with the Continuing Medical Education Program. There are some components that are not functioning properly such as recruiting & retaining CME instructors, curriculum development, video based training and attendance and training transcripts. Dr. Eric Carver has been hired as the interim provost to replace Dr. Nicotero who has taken a position in Dallas, TX. A task force is being assembled to review and approve potential solutions and the action plan will be presented to the EMS Advisory Council at the September meeting.

**EMS Medical Director:** Dr. Jameson briefed that the system recently received a Train-the-Trainer class on Stress First Aid from a nationally acclaimed instructor. This training will eventually be rolled out to the entire system and will serve to greatly enhance provider wellness programs.

Dr. Jameson announced that the Pinellas County EMS System has received the American Heart Association Gold Mission Lifeline award. The system is one of only a few in the State of Florida to receive this distinction.

Dr. Jameson gave a presentation on FirstPass which is a module of the FirstWatch software that is used by public safety agencies across the country to review data, identify trends, identify sentinel events and provide situational awareness.

Chief Markford added that all fire agencies currently review 100% of their reports manually and will be incorporating the FirstPass component into their quality assurance process.

Dr. Jameson reported that as an EMS system, Pinellas County is required to provide the State with a Trauma Transport Protocol (TTP). After discussions with Bayfront Medical Center Dr. Jameson and staff drafted a TTP that met State trauma transport criteria as well as added local criteria. This protocol was submitted to the State and it was approved. It was also presented to and approved by the EMS Medical Control Board.

Mr. Hare added that there would be in-service training on the new protocol in July and that it would be implemented in August to meet the State's requirement.

**Sunstar:** Mr. Postma said that he had covered most of his items earlier in the meeting but he did want to comment that of the sixteen new ambulances being received thirteen would be gasoline powered engines as opposed to diesel.

Mr. Postma shared that up to the late 1980s, the entire ambulance industry was gasoline powered but because of safety concerns from ambulance fires caused by gasoline the industry converted to diesel in the 1990s. In 2014, the Federal Government put strict compliance requirements on diesel to reduce pollution. Both Ford and General Motors made the determination that they would not be able to meet the diesel compliance criteria and informed all ambulance transport providers. As a result the new units will be gasoline powered.

Mr. Postma said that he wanted to reassure people that his company does not anticipate a danger of ambulance fires due to improvements that have been made with gasoline engines. He said there would be impacts in the form of added costs due to gasoline efficiency, storage, etc.

Mr. Postma announced that Ms. Debbie Vass, the Chief Administrative Officer of Sunstar has been promoted to the Director of Corporate Strategic Initiatives with Paramedics Plus and that Mr. John Peterson would be taking over the position of Chief Administrative Officer at Sunstar.

Mr. Postma said that former Sunstar employees had also been placed in charge of Paramedics Plus operations in Ft. Wayne, Indiana and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. This demonstrates the confidence that Paramedics Plus has in the Sunstar model by replicating it in other locations.

**First Responders:** Chief Parks presented the dispatch statistics by department as well as the incident statistics by dispatch determinant.

Chief Parks reported that on June 6<sup>th</sup> the Fire Ops 101 was conducted. It was attended by elected officials and community members and was a huge success.

Chief Parks thanked County officials for identifying funding for Technical Rescue and Water Rescue programs.

Chief Parks stated that the Fire Chiefs Association supported the reorganization of the Continuing Medical Education Program and committed to help to make the process go smoothly.

Mayor Palladeno stated that he attended the Fire Ops 101 course and that as an elected official it was a very educational experience. He encouraged all elected officials to attend. Mayor Palladeno said that he was also at his first working fire that previous weekend and it was very educational to watch the mutual aid system work in an actual emergency. Mayor Palladeno commended the officers and firefighters involved in that incident for their professionalism and outstanding response.

Mr. Israel requested that the First Responder report be modified to not only show a 4½ minute average response time but also to show outliers in an effort to identify areas that need improvement or to model areas that are doing very well. Mr. Israel indicated that the report would be more beneficial if it included more information.

Mr. Hare said that he would work with the Chiefs as well as the Radio & Technology staff to provide a more robust report.

### **OPEN FORUM**

Mr. Hare provided an image of the newly approved ambulance markings that would be phased into the ambulance fleet over the coming year. These markings will provide added safety and freshen the look of the fleet.

Mr. Hare briefed on edits to Section 4.5 and 4.6 of the EMS Rules & Regulations. These edits were made at the request of fire chiefs and authorize provisional certification of EMTs and paramedics to be up to twelve months as opposed to six months in the previously approved version.

Mr. Hare asked for formal support of these revisions and for authorization for the Chair to sign a letter of recommendation on behalf of the EMS Advisory Council that would accompany the EMS Rules & Regulations when they go before the EMS Authority for approval.

Dr. Weiland expressed his concern that twelve months was a long time to go without a progress review and though he understands why the twelve month period was being recommended he asked if there was other language or measures in place to ensure at least a six month review.

Dr. Jameson addressed Dr. Weiland's concern by explaining the current process in place for provisional EMTs and paramedics. Dr. Jameson said that all new EMTs and paramedics spend a week with him in the beginning for training and classroom instruction. They then go back to their agency where they spend time in the field with an actual mentor paramedic. There is currently a minimum requirement of three months in this mentoring phase and some agencies request a longer period which Dr. Jameson said he supported.

Hearing no more discussion, Mayor Palladeno called for a motion. Mr. Israel made a motion to approve the EMS Rules & Regulations as presented and to authorize the Chair to sign a letter of recommendation on behalf of the EMS Advisory Council. Mr. Postma seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hare recognized the volunteer work of Mr. Shane Hudak who had completed an internship with the EMS & Fire Administration over the past year and a half. Mr. Hare commended Mr. Hudak for his strong support and work ethic. He had worked on everything from data review to asset accountability and had completed over 300 hours of service.

Mr. Hare called Mr. Hudak to the front of the room and presented him with the Youth Gold Award for Partners in Public Service given by the Pinellas County Unified Personnel System.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on September 17, 2015 at 10 A.M. at the EMS & Fire Administration, Conference Room 130, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL 33774.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Palladeno 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 EMS & Fire Administration.