

**PINELLAS COUNTY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
ADVISORY COUNCIL
September 17, 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 Robert Weiss, Clearwater Fire Department – Vice Chair
Capt. Eric Dinan, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue
Chief Joe Accetta, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association
Assistant Chief Deputy Sean Jowell, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
Amber Boulding, Pinellas County Health Department
Mayor Maria Lowe, Mayors' Council (St. Pete Beach) – Secretary
William Israel, Citizen Representative
Beth Rawlins, Citizen Representative
Ray Neri, Citizen Representative
Joy Lewis, Citizen Representative
William Holmes, Citizen Representative
Anne Scofield, 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. Eric Carver, St. Petersburg College
Anissa Raiford, Pinellas County Medical Association

Absent:

Mayor Chris Arbutine, Mayors' Council (Belleair Bluffs)
Mayor Doug Bevis, Mayors' Council (Oldsmar)
Dr. Scott Kuebler, Citizen Representative
Dr. Kenneth Webster, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society
Kathleen Litton, Independent Fire District Elected Official
David Root, Independent Fire District Elected Official

Staff Present:

Craig Hare, EMS & Fire Administration Director
Dr. Donna Dooley, Associate EMS Medical Director
Carl Brody, County Attorney's Office
Greg Woodrum, EMS & Fire Administration

Also Present:

Chief Joseph T. Connors, Clearwater Fire Department
Chief Jeffrey Parks, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association
Chief Stefancic, Largo Fire Rescue
John Peterson, Sunstar Paramedics
Chief Guy Keirn, Pinellas Park Fire Department
Kim Lacina, Sunstar Paramedics
Carol Bissinger, Bayfront Medical Center
Chief Tony Tedesco, Clearwater Fire Department
Chief Jim Kilpatrick, St. Pete Beach Fire Department
Chief Rob Angell, Pinellas Park Fire Department
Michael Carroll, Citizen

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 19 voting members in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the June 18, 2015 meeting were presented for approval. Mayor Lowe made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Israel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EMS CALL DEMONSTRATION

Chief Markford facilitated a live demonstration of an EMS response to a cardiac arrest patient with the assistance of Regional 9-1-1, Sunstar and Largo Fire Rescue.

Following the demonstration, Mayor Lowe asked if a history of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was taken into consideration when treating a cardiac arrest patient as this condition can cause cardiac like symptoms due to anxiety.

Chief Markford replied that a full patient history is documented during the initial assessment which captures symptoms, allergies, medical history even up to the last meal eaten and that clinicians are trained to evaluate the responses given and their implications both spoken and unspoken.

Mayor Palladeno asked if the demonstration was representative of the actual response time from receipt of the 9-1-1 call to arrival on scene. Chief Markford replied that it was.

Mayor Palladeno praised all the clinicians in the EMS system. Having ridden along with units in the field, Mayor Palladeno stated that he has observed clinicians working in very confined spaces and doing so with the utmost of professionalism and skill. He thanked all clinicians for the hard work that they do on a daily basis.

Chief Markford gave an overview of the training received by clinicians in the system and explained the reasons why many times there are multiple units responding to a single incident. The explanation dealt with the complexity of stabilizing the patient as well as scene safety concerns.

Ms. Cullen reinforced that in addition to the hard work clinicians do in treating and transporting patients to the hospital they also do an awesome job of transferring the patient to hospital care.

CITIZEN PRESENTATION

Mayor Palladeno allowed a citizen of Pinellas County named Mr. Michael Carroll to provide a brief presentation to the EMS Advisory Council on his concerns with EMS billing.

Mr. Postma shared his knowledge as the President-elect of the American Ambulance Association concerning the national costs of providing EMS as compared to rates paid to providers by Medicare/Medicaid.

REPORTS

EMS & Fire Administration Director: Mr. Hare introduced Chief Josh Stefancic who is the current Chair of the Pinellas Advanced Life Support Providers Association (PALS).

Mr. Hare briefed that within EMS & Fire there have been challenges in addressing the cumulative stress of providers brought on by critical incident exposure. Mr. Hare said that there have been six EMS & Fire suicides in the system and that a PALS subcommittee headed by Chief Jeremy Sidlauskas has been setup to develop ways to address this issue. Mr. Hare stated that there would be EMS Grant funds available to support this cause.

Mayor Lowe added that leaders must work to create a workplace culture that is supportive of employees that are experiencing mental stresses and that strives to encourage them to seek help and stand by them as they do so using a Mind, Body, Soul approach to the whole person.

There was continued discussion concerning the development and improvement of a strong Wellness Program.

EMS Medical Director: Dr. Dooley briefed that the Office of the Medical Director is building on an existing fellowship with Tampa General Hospital which would allow their fellows to come and do a ride-along with our crews. They would also be available to help with training, quality assurance, research, and writing professional articles.

Dr. Dooley reported that there was a recent incident dealing with the diversion of narcotics and that the incident was investigated quickly and thoroughly. Due to narcotic control improvements such as CyberLocks and CyberKeys, investigators were able to trace the chain of custody quickly and an individual was arrested.

Dr. Dooley closed by praising the clinicians in the system and saying that they are doing an excellent job.

Sunstar: Mr. Postma briefed that approximately 25 ambulance units had been restriped under the new branding project and that by October 1st there would be 13 new vehicles added to the fleet.

Mr. Postma said that Sunstar would be transitioning from Chevrolet power back to Ford power and would also be switching from diesel back to gasoline fuel due to changes in the industry where manufacturers will no longer be providing diesel engines due to emission standards. As a result, the entire ambulance fleet will become gasoline fueled Ford vehicles.

Mr. Postma briefed that Sunstar had purchased 75 brand new hydraulic stretchers and that they were adjustable to allow for added comfort for larger patients.

Mr. Postma said that the Critical Care Transport unit was also being refurbished and remounted and would be receiving all new equipment throughout.

Mr. Postma reported that under the new ambulance agreement Sunstar would be providing ambulance coverage for all high school football games in Pinellas County including junior varsity at no cost to the county.

Mr. Postma assured the EMS Advisory Council that Sunstar response to these sporting events remains excellent and that these added standbys will serve to enhance the current response.

Mayor Lowe expressed concern that the auto industry chose to switch from diesel to gasoline for EMS & Fire because there is a substantial flash point difference between those two fuels as well as an added risk of fire because of oxygen being carried onboard.

Mr. Postma responded that in 2012 diesel EPA standards were published and Ford could no longer meet those standards so they stopped providing the diesel engines. In 2016, the standards will be updated again and Mr. Postma expects them to be even stricter so Chevrolet has already indicated that they will not be able to meet the new standards and has stopped providing the diesel engines.

Mayor Palladeno suggested that because this is a Federal issue, perhaps Mayor Lowe could draft a letter to Sen. Nelson and Sen. Rubio expressing concern over the impact that current and proposed EPA standards are having on the EMS & Fire industry. The letter should be forwarded to staff and would go first to the Board of County Commissioners for review and approval.

First Responders: Chief Accetta briefed on incident statistics by EMD determinant, dispatch statistics by department and emergency medical response times by minute.

Mayor Palladeno asked if some of the nine, ten or eleven minute responses could be due to mutual aid calls.

Capt. Dinan responded that St. Petersburg Fire Rescue covers three of the four major bridges leading into the county and his experience is that response times to those bridges can be extended as well as mutual aid responses to Manatee County and the City of Tampa due to distance and traffic conditions.

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME) OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Hare briefed the EMS Advisory Council that the current Continuing Medical Education (CME) Agreement with St. Petersburg College will expire on September 30, 2015. As of October 1, 2015, the program will be brought in-house under the oversight of the EMS & Fire Administration. Mr. Hare gave a presentation on the plan to realign the structure of the program and said that he would like to seek support and endorsement from the EMS Advisory Council to move forward.

Mayor Palladeno stated that he also had the opportunity to speak with County Administrator Mark Woodard and Assistant County Administrator John Bennett on this issue and learned that the Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association also supports this realignment. There will be no budgetary impact and it will keep emergency vehicles online with less time of being offline to conduct training.

Mayor Palladeno asked if there was consensus for the EMS Advisory Council to provide a letter of support to the EMS Authority to approve the CME realignment plan as presented by Mr. Hare.

Chief Weiss stated that he would like to see some flexibility in the rollout of the plan so that as the plan is adopted there could be room for some changes as necessary.

Chief Accetta agreed and suggested that the EMS Advisory Council approve the plan in concept.

Mr. Hare said that the next step would be to negotiate an interlocal agreement with the cities and that the County Attorney's Office is drafting that agreement now.

After discussion, Mayor Palladeno called for a motion. Mayor Lowe made a motion to approve a letter of support for the realignment of the CME Program in concept. Ms. Cullen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

RECOGNITION OF MR. BILL ISRAEL

Mayor Palladeno presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Mr. Bill Israel for his service to the EMS Advisory Council.

APPOINTMENT OF SELECTION COMMITTEE

Mr. Brody briefed the EMS Advisory Council on the procedure for appointing citizen representatives. A vacancy announcement will be publicly noticed. Applicants will fill out an online application. The Communications Department will forward those applications to Mr. Woodrum who will then convene a Selection Committee to review the applications and make a recommendation for a nominee to the full EMS Advisory Council at a future meeting.

Mayor Palladeno appointed the following members to serve on the Selection Committee.

- Ms. Raiford
- Mr. Neri
- Ch. Parks
- Dr. Carver
- Mr. Holmes

OPEN FORUM

Chief Weiss briefed that the EMS Management Committee met on September 9, 2015 and discussed ways that the EMS Advisory Council could take on more of an advisory role and become more involved early in the budgetary process so that they can make recommendations on EMS program improvements.

Chief Weiss also asked for feedback from the members on what they feel would be important information to include in the creation of an annual report. Members will forward their feedback to Mr. Woodrum to present to the EMS Management Committee at their next meeting.

Mr. Postma said that he would like to see the EMS Advisory Council support a countywide EMS Safety Campaign. Mayor Palladeno agreed and requested that this be added to the next meeting agenda for a more in depth discussion.

Mr. Neri suggested that the EMS Advisory Council create a public education program to show the efficiency of the EMS system and highlight the value of service to citizens.

Mayor Lowe introduced Chief Jim Kilpatrick as the newly appointed Fire Chief of St. Pete Beach.

Mayor Palladeno requested the numbers on how many times a fire engine is tied up on scene for up to an hour or more. There was a brief discussion and Mr. Hare explained there are current protocols in place which allow first responders to transport.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on December 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 12:25 P.M.

An audio recording of this meeting as well as any correspondence received is on file at the Pinellas County EMS & Fire Administration.