

**PINELLAS COUNTY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

MEETING MINUTES

September 18, 2020

The Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council met virtually via Zoom at 10:00 A.M. on this date with the following members present:

Commissioner Julie Peluso, Independent Fire District Elected Official – Chair
Jorge Mercado, Citizen Representative (District 7) – Vice-Chair
Chief Tom Jamison, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association – Secretary
Capt. Michael Leiner, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
Karen Mullins, Citizen Representative (District 1)
Larri Gerson, Citizen Representative (District 2)
Rosalie Bousher, National Alliance on Mental Illness
Mayor Wanda Dudley, Mayors' Council (Kenneth City)
Mayor Chris Alahouzos, Mayors' Council (Tarpon Springs)
Chief Anthony Tedesco, Clearwater Fire Department (Alternate)
Chief Ian Womack, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue
Chief Terry Tokarz, EMS Coordinator
John Peterson, Sunstar Paramedics
Dr. Eric Carver, St. Petersburg College
Gayle Guidash, Pinellas County Health Department
Nancy Hopkins, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter

Absent:

Jeri Reed, Citizen Representative (District 3)
Mike Jones, Citizen Representative (District 4)
Becca Tieder, Citizen Representative (District 5)
William Holmes, Citizen Representative (District 6)
Mayor Joseph Manzo, Mayors' Council (Belleair Beach)
Mayor Woody Brown, Mayors' Council (Largo)
Dr. Kenneth Webster, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society
Dr. Aron Schlau, Pinellas County Medical Association
Dr. Paul Anderson, Pinellas County Medical Association
Dr. Kenneth Webster, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society

Staff Present:

Jason Ester, County Attorney's Office
Matthew Tolnay, County Attorney's Office
Dr. Angus Jameson, EMS Medical Director
Craig Hare, EMS & Fire Administration
Greg Woodrum, EMS & Fire Administration
Lynn Abbott, EMS & Fire Administration

Also Present:

Capt. David Kadau, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue (Alternate)
Chief Doug Zimmerman, EMS Coordinator (Alternate)
Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics (Alternate)

Julie Bacon, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital
Glenn Davis, St. Petersburg College

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Commissioner Peluso called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Roll call was taken, and it was determined that there was a quorum. There were 15 voting members in attendance.

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 19 AND JULY 1, 2020 MEETINGS - APPROVED

Upon presentation by Commissioner Peluso, Mayor Alahouzos moved, seconded by Ms. Guidash and carried unanimously, that the minutes of the June 19 and July 1, 2020 meetings be approved.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

APPOINTMENT TO THE ECG EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Craig Hare announced that the FDA has decreed that all systemwide Philips MRx cardiac monitors will sunset by February of 2022, noting new units will need to be deployed by the end of 2021. County Purchasing will lead the competitive bid process, so he is putting together an ECG Evaluation Committee to be comprised of one member from EMS & Fire Administration, Office of the Medical Director, Sunstar, Fire Chiefs, and EMSAC.

Commissioner Peluso asked the group for a volunteer. Mr. Mercado indicated his interest in serving, and Chief Womack asked that the members consider having St. Petersburg serve in a dual role to represent the EMSAC Council and First Responder agencies as a user of the equipment, volunteering Capt. David Kadau for the role; whereupon, Mr. Mercado withdrew his name and nominated Capt. David Kadau for St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue.

Mr. Mercado moved, seconded by Dr. Carver, that Capt. David Kadau, St. Pete Fire & Rescue, be appointed to represent the EMS Advisory Council on the ECG Evaluation Committee. Upon call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Director, EMS & Fire Administration – Craig Hare

- The EMS Hospital Plan has been updated to return to normal patient transfer/transport operations.
- Crews to continue to notify hospitals of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients, allowing for the preparation of safety measures.
- All hospitals are on Open Status, noting no recent bed delays.
- Temporary PPE protocol change within the last month to give crews the optional use of N95 masks instead of full-face respirators, allowing clinicians respite from the heat.
- Pinellas County remains on Pandemic Plan Condition Yellow, and dispatch procedures to continue, sharing that 20 percent of the calls are pandemic related.
- Recognized David Hudak, EMS & Fire Administration, and Season Groves, Emergency Management, for their tireless work ensuring system PPE sustainment.
- The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved the appointments and reappointments of the following:
 - Larri Gerson, Citizen Representative - District 1
 - Mayor Joseph Manzo – Mayors' Council - Belleair Beach
 - Mayor Wanda Dudley – Mayors' County - Kenneth City

- Mayor Woody Brown – Mayors’ Council - Largo
- Mayor Chris Alahouzos – Mayors’ Council - Tarpon Springs
- Dr. Eric Carver – St. Petersburg College President
- Dr. Aron Schlau – Pinellas County Medical Association
- Dr. Paul Anderson – Pinellas County Medical Association Alternate
- Capt. David Kadau – City of St. Petersburg Fire Chief Alternate
- Capt. Eric Dinan, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue, is nearing retirement and transferring to Shore Acres’ Fire Station 12, and Capt. Kadau is coming on board as Rescue Captain.
- The Medical Control Board (MCB) met yesterday and approved a proposed bylaws amendment to stipulate the appointment of a physician in lieu of an emergency medicine physician, noting the value of having a broad spectrum of doctors serving on the MCB.
- Chief William “Trip” Barrs, Treasure Island, has been tasked to lead a Five-Engine Strike Team deployment to Escambia County to assist with Hurricane Sally rescue operations. The team consists of assets from Palm Harbor, East Lake, St. Petersburg, Lealman, and a combination of firefighters from Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Treasure Island.
- Craig Hare and Dr. Jameson presented Glenn Davis, recently retired as the EMS Program Director for St. Petersburg College, with a Certification of Appreciation recognizing his distinguished career, dedicated service, and contributions to the system. Mr. Davis fondly recalled various experiences and employers during his 31 years in the EMS system and expressed thanks to the members for their support throughout the years, and the members congratulated Mr. Davis on his retirement.
- David Hare has been selected to serve as the Deputy Director of the Emergency Administrative Services Division and Deputy Director of Safety and Emergency Services. Mr. Hare had previously assisted with 911 operations as Special Assistant to the County Administrator and has extensive administrative experience.
- Sunstar has been approved by the American Heart Association (AHA) to become a certified AHA Training Center, noting excellent work by Sunstar’s Jeremy Tinter and EMS & Fire Administration’s Jazmin Soloman.
- Pinellas County EMS has won the AHA’s Mission Lifeline EMS Gold Plus award, with special thanks to all hospitals and Jeremy Tinter for their work.
- All budgets have been submitted.
- No millage increases.
- Fire millage decreases in Clearwater, Dunedin, Gandy, Largo, Safety Harbor, and South Pasadena. Sustainable reserves for those areas.
- Budget adjustments for 3 percent caps and system improvements for Clearwater, Gulfport, Palm Harbor, Pinellas Suncoast, Tarpon Springs, and Treasure Island.
- System Enhancements: Largo's Squad 38 has been approved at 50 percent funding for year one, and 100 percent funding for subsequent years. St. Petersburg’s Medic 7 will go into service October 1 as a peak unit serving the Northeast area. St. Pete is hiring civilian paramedics to staff Medic 1, Medic 3, and Medic 7.
- Technical Rescue Contract: One-year extension has been approved. Plans to evaluate all training programs.
- Special Operations: Working on a comprehensive replacement of Hazmat and Tech Rescue vehicles and equipment, including self-contained breathing apparatuses, air monitoring meters, and radios.
- PSTrax: The EMS grant-funded inventory management system has been deployed to all agencies. Vehicle and equipment check component is complete. Working to convert all agencies to electronic narcotics tracking before the year’s end. Chief Tedesco is leading the committee and working with software vendor to align narcotics policy, with a final review scheduled for October and an agency-by-agency audit set for November and December.

- Fire Station Penny for Pinellas Funding: Working on final approach on agreements to replace Lealman's Station 19 and Palm Harbor's Station 68.
- Working with the City of Largo to relocate Station 39 to Ulmerton Road and Wilcox Street.
- Working on the final edits of the Pinellas Suncoast Fire Station Placement report for review and approval by the Fire Chiefs and the BCC. The study found that three stations are needed for proper geographic coverage of the Pinellas Suncoast area. Discussed tentative timeframes and long-term planning goals.
- Beginning design phase of the Redington Beaches EMS Station project.
- Water Rescue Improvements: Working on new employee training and sustainment efforts for the Rapid Diver Program. Treasure Island's Marine 24 and St. Pete Beach's Marine 23 are in service. Palm Harbor's Rescue 65 was put in service last week as a full-on transport-capable rescue unit. Funding assist agreement with Palm Harbor for Marine 68.
- Pinellas Park is breaking ground for construction of Station 36, to be located at 80th Avenue North and US19.
- Philips MRx Devices: EKG support to end February 2022. Looking to begin competitive bid process with County Purchasing before end of the calendar year.
- Rehab Unit Replacement Project: Discussed plans for the upcoming purchase of a large customizable rehabilitation unit to be used for incident response crew support recovery. EMS grant request for the unit to be presented to the BCC on September 22. Invite to be sent out for an open house to be held on September 25.
- Ambulance Contract: Extension has been approved, effective October 1, includes a full-time critical care nurse to conduct quality assurance/clinical reviews of the Critical Care Team and a Special Operations Supervisor to assist with Emergency Management preparedness, special events, and interface with Hazmat and Technical Rescue Teams.

EMS Medical Director – Dr. Jameson

- Presented a situational overview, noting recent trends in the number of cases, a slight rise in percent positivity, and possible impacts due to recent holidays, schools reopening, and flu season, noting that we are likely to continue to experience peaks and valleys throughout the fall.
- Discussed higher mortality rates due to Pinellas County's elderly population, concerns regarding the growing number of long haulers who are experiencing persistent long-term complications, and the importance of exercising prudence in following mask wearing and social distancing recommendations.
- Recognized the outstanding work of all EMS professionals during the pandemic, noting the many impressive efforts undertaken by First Responders and Sunstar crews.
- Thanked the Board for its willingness to come together in special meetings to support the system with quick-change protocol updates.
- Immunoglobulin G (IgG) Antibody Testing is now underway for all EMS system personnel, relating that the results may provide information about the prevalence of workforce exposure.
- Orientation for new EMTs and Medics: Focusing significant resources and additional support for new paramedics and EMTs coming into the system.
- Staffing:
 - Dr. Donna Dooley, MD2, continues to provide excellent oversight of Quality Assurance activities and education and training programs.
 - Dr. Andrew Smith, MD3, continues to make excellent progress with Hazmat, SWAT, and Tech Rescue Teams.
 - Dr. Alicia Nassar, EMS Fellow, is off to a fantastic start assisting with multiple research activities.

- Research:
 - Heather Henderson has joined the team as a part-time research associate.
 - Discussed multiple studies underway in various stages, sharing that USF residents and medical students are now participating in research and other academic activities.
- STEMI: Pinellas County has been awarded the American Heart Association's Mission Lifeline Gold Plus award. Applauded the collaborative teamwork of our EMS clinicians and hospital partners in achieving the honors. Recognized Jeremy Tinter for leading the efforts and his extraordinary work managing the data.
- Stroke: Reported significant advances in stroke care, noting the possibility that the AHA will start awarding similar honors for stroke care next year.

First Responders – Chief Tom Jamison

- Thanked the EMS system for functioning well, pushing forward, and improving care in spite of the many difficult challenges presented by COVID-19.
- Recognized David Hudak, EMS & Fire Administration, and County staff for keeping clinicians safe by providing the necessary tools to do their jobs, noting their successful work sustaining PPE supply despite facing huge sourcing struggles.
- Kudos to the system as a whole and EMS First Responders for their continuous work checking on vulnerable populations in the assisted living facilities (ALFs) and nursing homes.
- Cautioned everyone to keep spreading the word on safety, noting that pandemics tend to come in waves and easing of sanctions may result in an uptick in numbers.

Sunstar – John Peterson

- Praised the EMS system for its outstanding response and tremendous display of teamwork.
- Reported a significant decline in Sunstar's internal COVID and quarantine numbers since June, noting that one employee in quarantine out of almost 600 clinicians shows that hard work on PPE preparation and training is paying off.
- Discussed recent ups and downs in call volume, noting that the use of data to make predictions has been more challenging during COVID. Recognized his team for its outstanding adaptability, ability to overcome adversity, and continuing to provide a high level of care.
- Congratulated Damian Gonzalez on his promotion to Chief Operating Officer of the South Dakota operation.
- Announced Joshua Brumwell's promotion to Operations Manager, noting that he will report to Richard Schomp.

Affiliates and Stakeholders

Gayle Guidash, DOH-Pinellas, presented the following information:

- Echoed Dr. Jameson's sentiment that the pandemic is far from over.
- Reported that the Long-Term Care Facility Taskforce has recently reinstated visitation in some of the local nursing homes and ALFs and decommissioned Super Skilled Nursing Facilities (Super SNFs).
- Advised that everyone get their flu shot early, noting hopes that continuing protective measures will help prevent virus transmission.
- Discussed the BCC's consideration of reversing the mask mandate.
- Thanked the EMS system for all of its hard work in staying the course.

Rosalie Bousher, NAMI Pinellas County, provided the following update:

- All peer and family member face-to-face support groups have been moved to a virtual experience.
- Provided information regarding the Peers in Recovery Mentorship Program and discussed the number of participants, enrollment eligibility, course objectives, and credentialing process.
- Discussed activities to take place during Mental Health Awareness Week, scheduled for the first week in October.
- Announced that NAMI Pinellas County is holding its first virtual walk on November 21 and invited members to participate. See the following link for additional information: <https://nami-pinellas.org/walk2020/>

OLD BUSINESS

No discussion of Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hare shared the following information:

- Five-Engine Strike Team Update: Presented an update from Chief Barrs, noting that the Strike Team was assigned to cover five fire stations in Escambia County and has responded to several calls, including a three-alarm nursing home fire and cardiac arrest; whereupon, he shared photographs sent in by Chief Barrs.
- EMS Radio Tower Replacement Project: Provided an overview of the project and displayed photographs depicting the construction area, noting that the new EMS Radio Tower, to be located near the grounds of the Botanical Gardens, will be built to Category 5 standards.
- Staffing: Announced that Debbie Vass, Sunstar's Director of Quality Initiatives, is celebrating 34 years of service to Pinellas County, sharing her various leadership positions; whereupon, the members congratulated Ms. Vass.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2020, format to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made and seconded, Commissioner Peluso adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Audio and any correspondence received for this meeting is on file at the Pinellas County EMS & Fire Administration.