



Clarke County Fire & EMS Commission
101 Chalmers Court, Suite B
Berryville, Virginia 22611
(540) 955-5132

MINUTES

October 10th, 2019 6:30pm

Clarke County Government Center – Meeting Room AB

Attendees: Matt Hoff, Chairman
 David Weiss
 Tony Roper
 Bryan Conrad
 Doug Lawrence
 Andrew Nicholson

Absent: Jay Grim
 Diane Harrison

Staff: Pam Hess
 Brian Lichty
 Melanie Radford

Chairman Hoff called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

1. Mr. Lichty asked the Chairman to add a quick informational section from PHI Aircare on the agenda after number 3. Mr. Conrad made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was passed with all in favor.
2. Public Comment - None
3. Mr. Nicholson made a motion to approve the September 19th, 2019 minutes, as amended with a spelling correction on page 3, fifth bullet point, Mr. Lawrence “concurrred”. The motion was passed with all in favor.
4. Ms. Kelly Keener from PHI Aircare provided information regarding the air medical memberships, PHI Cares, which offers first responders a discounted rate. The cost is \$30.00 for an individual policy and \$35.00 per household coverage for one year if flown from an incident scene or hospital to hospital. The rate is reduced from the normal rate of \$50.00. Commercial insurance is billed first, PHI will then accept their payment in full with no balance billing to the patient to include deductible, copays or coinsurances.
5. Committee Reports
 - Standards - Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group.
 Discussion - Mr. Weiss questioned if there were any stand out reasons as to why in the past 2 months the 80% goal was not met. Mr. Lichty explained that normally during the summer

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months, the system takes harder hits due to vacations, it's due to the lack of people and he evaluates the averages to verify there have been no big spikes. Mr. Weiss asked in what way is the data being collected used to change or propose changes in what we are doing, how readily are we using the information and how directly are we tying it to different approaches. Mr. Lichty used the Safer grant as an example, where are the best places and times to place the new employees to get the best use of resources, this data is used to help identify the needs; the dispatch changes were highly influenced with the box number changes, how to get there more effectively. Mt. Weather has been a hard factor, when they are out of service they're simply not available, but when they are in service for some things but not others, it makes it even more complicated. Ms. Hess has done an excellent job along with the Chiefs on developing over 500 new response plans that help to address these issues.

- Technology - Mr. Roper informed the group the meeting was held this week with the vast majority of the conversation concerning the work with the ongoing radio project and moving out of Phase 1 and into Phase 2, making some pretty critical decisions regarding the final placement of the equipment and being able to line that up with the engineering studies. They are entertaining thoughts on some new technology and will be revisiting them next meeting. Mr. Lichty indicated they plan to have 6 more MDTs placed, 2 at each station, before the calendar year ends. There is an internet connection issue that IT is working on and hoping to have it resolved within the next 30 days.
- Budget/Preparation - FY21 Recommendations - Mr. Lichty reminded everyone to start thinking about the new budget, preparations will begin next month and run through January 2020. Each individual department will need to fill out their budget worksheets, the 4 forms that the Commission and Mr. Judge use to help in making their recommendations. Mr. Weiss confirmed that Mr. Lichty will still submit one overall budget request to the BOS for Fire & EMS.

6. Unfinished Business

- Incentive program review - Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group. One company did not meet the required criteria of the program. Mr. Lichty will submit the others for payment.
- Strategic Plan Review - Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group.
Discussion - Mr. Conrad remarked that it sounds as though the Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program is a good intermediate step to get everyone use to the idea.

7. Report from the Director of Fire and EMS - Mr. Lichty reviewed with the group.

Discussion – Mr. Weiss advised that the Finance Committee for the BOS had to appropriate an additional \$67,000 from the general fund, so that is new money, to make the 2020 budget balance because they had not appropriated the total amount for the new employees in that year, were only going to hire 1 and a half. He expressed that they are glad that the County got the grant but still meant that had to put more in. They had originally budgeted for \$100,000 and made up the difference of the \$67,000 and some change.

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Mr. Lichty mentioned that some questions arose at the Technology meeting in reference to the AFG grant that Blue Ridge was awarded for radio replacement. Mr. Lichty put together some information to help clarify and squash some of the rumors going around regarding this. He read the following:

Technology Meeting note

About this grant –

A couple of things I want to make sure are clarified-

1. In February 2018 (then) Chief Burns put in a system wide grant for radios that grant was denied, diligence was done to make sure that information was obtained from all three departments.
2. In October of 2018 the AFG grant was opened and that is when Blue Ridge put in for the grant they were just awarded. Before applying for the Grant Chief Burns did ask if anyone was submitting a Grant on behalf of the County? The reply was no. We are pleased that Blue Ridge was able to get this grant.
3. In September of 2018 Chief Burns identified 4 major items that his company would be focusing on over the next three years – Turnout Gear, Building repair, SCBAs and Radios
4. I have spoken to Chief White and some assumptions were made, therefore they did not reach out to the other departments a second time when applying for the grant independently. Additionally, I will be working with Blue Ridge and the other Chiefs to make sure that the radios are configured in a way that everyone can agree to so further radios can be done the same. Also we will be working on a MOU to provide a maintenance program for these radios as well, so that previous concerns with radio maintenance are addressed.
5. This grant also raised concerns over how radios (by the departments or the County) are added to the system. I am working with the Sheriff to address these concerns.

Grants are a good thing!!! All I ask is that you notify me when applying for a grant. This helps us in many ways;

- We make sure that departments are not competing against each other for the same grant
- Keeps county administration (BOS) informed about the efforts of the departments to obtain alternative means of funding
- It allows funding opportunities for identified system needs.
 - System needs – In the very near future I will be working with the Chiefs to identify a list of 3-5 top system needs. These system needs will then be brought before this body (Commission) for recommendations towards funding. It is the goal that departments applying for grants that align with the funded system goals are eligible for funding assistance.
 - A section will be added to the monthly newsletter to give status of these grants.

Please keep in mind that it is one of my Jobs to address concerns with Fire – Rescue to include those concerns from outside the departments. Addressing these concerns may not be done immediately for good reason (resources, time, etc)

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Mr. Weiss commented, from the BOS perspective, they applaud the approach and are proud of Blue Ridge for being awarded the grant and proud of all the stations for going after grants; It is important that the Director is informed as to who and what they are trying to get to keep everyone in the loop to include the BOS. The BOS is fully supportive of pursuing grants.

In reference to the update on the Fire-Rescue Use Agreement and discussions to a significant change in the way the Fee For Service (FFS) is structured; Mr. Weiss mentioned that the formula that the BOS set up for FFS and worked with everyone on, the BOS is happy to look at new things and glad to discuss it, but the entire budgeting process right now is based on the plan that is in place and that money is being allocated all back into the system per the written and stated policies to that affect. Any drastic change that would change the revenue source for the County will be problematic. The budget is based on revenue income, trying not to spend money that we don't have coming in.

No other questions or comments.

8. New Business

- Communications/Succession Document-Draft - Discussion - Mr. Hoff asked to add a section on how to approach the Commission to be heard/added to the agenda. On the County hierarchy diagram, Mr. Weiss and Mr. Hoff both requested to remove all except the designated blue sections, still include the OMD bubble and to move the Association block down even with the final lines, at least for now. Mr. Lichty affirmed he will make these adjustments. No other comments.
- Enders EMS Education fund request - Mr. Conrad opined that something like this should have been discussed and had a program in place prior to requesting funds to be reimbursed. He stated that he does feel this is a good thing to have, for example Boyce has a scholarship program already in place; but in the future, a process needs to be followed so everyone knows what they can and cannot do. Mr. Lawrence commented that probably only 1 volunteer a year could potentially take advantage of a program like this. Mr. Roper made a motion to approve the proposed amount of \$1,000 from the already established recruitment and retention training budget for the volunteer's education reimbursement. The motion passed with all in favor. Mr. Roper also recommended to Mr. Lichty that during the upcoming budget process to add in additional funds on that line item for next fiscal year.

9. Summary of required action

- Make adjustments to the communication/succession document draft
- Process the incentive payouts
- Send recommendation for the EMS tuition reimbursement to the Finance Committee
- Mr. Lawrence asked Mr. Lichty if he would go to Mary Hardesty House and review their evacuation plan with them
- Mr. Hoff announced/reminded the group that Boyce was having their open house this Sunday, October 13th, 2019 from 1-4pm in recognition of their 60 years in volunteer service

10. Mr. Roper made a motion to adjourn. The motion was passed with all in favor at 7:40pm.

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All meeting documents will be distributed at meeting. Next meeting is on November 14th, 2019 at 6:30pm in the Clarke County Government Center – Meeting Room AB

Minutes Transcribed by Melanie Radford

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