



RURAL EMS COMMITTEE

STATE BOARD OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL, FIRE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

RURAL EMS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 17, 2018

Committee Meeting Date and Location: Tuesday, April 17, 2018, at the ODPS Shipley Building, Conference Room 1102, 1970 W. Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43223.

Committee Members Present: Mary Ahlers, Karen Beavers, Eric Burns, Thomas Charlton, Joel Dickinson, Vincent Gildone, Deanna Harris, Daniel Heuchert, Doug LaRue, and Diane Simon

Committee Members Absent: Michael Wood

DPS and EMS Staff Members Present: Robert Wagoner, John Miller, and Robin Burmeister

Guests Present: Tristan Coomer

Welcome and Introduction

The meeting began at 3:04 pm. Chair Karen Beavers welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

Approval of Minutes

ACTION: A motion was made by Thomas Charlton, seconded by Mary Ahlers, and the Minutes of the August 15, 2017, meeting were unanimously approved.

ACTION ITEM: Robin Burmeister will send a copy to be posted to the website.

Open Forum

May 8 EMS Informational Luncheon hosted by Lima Memorial. Doug LaRue explained the program. All committee members are welcome/encouraged to attend. Director House will be in attendance. A flyer was passed out.

Karen Beavers gave an overview of her December notes. She relayed that discussion took place at the February 2018 retreat about how to recruit and retain EMS personnel, teaching Firefighter and EMS in high schools, as well as generating funding with ideas such as charging for certifications.

Old Business

Doug LaRue discussed the Apollo Charter and its stalled progress with a high school recruitment program. Apollo has had two Program Directors resign in the past 1.5 years, so it is re-organizing and starting over with a public safety management role (to be filled in the near future). Both Tom Charlton and Vince Gildone offered to send some of their team to Apollo to help the new manager get up to speed.

The committee discussed the goal that students can graduate high school with an EMT basic and be able to start paramedic school in the fall. There are concerns that schools will allow any student into an EMS program instead of having students test and pre-qualify for the program. The Department of Education needs to clarify pre-testing. The committee recognized that it need not recreate the wheel as there are some successful school programs already in place, which should aid in recruitment possibilities. (See New Business for additional discussion notes.)

ACTION ITEM: John Miller will put together a list of high school programs in the state that offers EMS programs to share with the committee.

New Business

Strategic Plan (handout attached): Rob Wagoner reported that we need to be “forward looking” – it will likely take 3-5 years for projects to move forward so we can identify measurable achievements: things that have improved care, safety of EMS providers, and support for EMS in rural communities since they have unique challenges unlike urban areas. The State started working on this in August 2017. The upper part of schematic is focused on “What have you done today to contribute to a safer Ohio?” Staff cannot achieve all that needs to be done. The State relies on communities to help work through the challenges.

In 11/17, a work group was developed to help move the efficiency of the Board along. At its retreat in February 2018, it discussed these things and had a day-long review to assign goals to committees where they best fit. You won’t see legislation, database issues, etc., as separate bullet points. These kinds of things pervade in every area that committees are assigned to.

5-pillar Model (handout attached): Recruitment and retention are critical needs. Overlapping between committees will be necessary to be successful. Some committees may come to the Rural Committee to seek input for items they’ve been tasked with.

More Meetings: The committee needs to take ownership, using a broad spectrum of ideas. We may need to meet more often, have longer meetings, etc. Rob Wagoner explained that

the 'Sunshine laws' apply since the Rural EMS Committee is a committee of the Board (i.e., have to publicly announce meetings by posting them on the EMS website; have to be open meetings). The committee has a lot of freedom in how it will do recruitment and retention. It is not expected to be done in six months. As the project evolves, adjustments will have to be made. Concerns about only meeting two hours every two months is not likely enough time for the committee to come up with ideas and how to implement them.

School Discussions/EMS Classes: Tom reported that high schools have a junior year EMT course (limited to students aged 17 and over) and a Fire 1 course; in their senior year, the balance of EMT training as well as Fire 2 courses take place.

One current issue for new, young recruits is that insurance companies are not allowing certificate holders to drive until age 21 or 26.

It was reported that the State has 58 fire charters. Nearly half (about 16) have high school programs. Some have dispatching programs. However, pass rates are not good. Students need a pass rate of 65% on the 1st attempt/80% after 3 attempts. The incoming database will allow us to see scores for high school classes separate from adult classes. We will also be able to review school data in June/July as well as the new curriculum and we know who is struggling or not and make changes accordingly. We need to 'sell' to charters that graduates will be available to recruit.

The committee discussed developing/assigning mentorships, lack of equipment at schools, and the need to get people on board to assist. John Miller reported that students who pretest have a higher pass rate. One major criteria is the need for students to be able to read at the same pace in a class. Schools could offer a 'reading improvement' class (remedial). Vocational schools need to work on reading and readiness program. Vince shared that stethoscopes and BP cuffs are provided to each student by their charter.

Some squads have explorer posts in groups. It is a process to set a program up but it does offer a recruitment avenue. Need to develop an info sheet. Karen asked committee members to share program information to the committee so various parameters can be reviewed. Child labor law needs to be adhered to--programs are often stunted by child labor laws.

Tristan volunteered to send his fire cadet information to the committee. The Fire Association's program starts at age 14. It has a built-in scholarship program. Students get out of school when a run is called to the station. It is self-insured and is a city entity.

A program in Athens has monthly drills. Students spend one day at 911 dispatch center.

Discussion occurred regarding getting students involved while they're young. It develops loyalty. Charters need to visit schools and invite students to learn about EMS and fire development programs. Ask communities to volunteer meeting rooms to meet students. Short YouTube or Skype connection from Director House could be shared with recruits. A link to a recording could be included with a new cert card.

Also, charters could consider connecting with other states for ideas. “Touch a truck” program. Posters. Coloring books. Fire Chief or EMS Chief for a day competition. The need to recruit and retain is a national issue, not a state issue. We need an action plan and not just keep it in a discussion stage.

The committee then discussed possible benefits for recruits—e.g., free license plates, disability benefits, tax incentives, etc. The need to take care of people was stressed. Emphasis to encourage loyalty. Make sure people are properly trained. Allow employees flexibility to do other things. Make it so individuals don’t need to take a lot of time away from their family. The committee needs to design/script “How good do you have to be to be good?” Entire department should be researching. Empower. Bureaus have too much ‘red tape.’ As leaders, the committee needs to make things happen

Additional discussion took place about the need for a trained person to be in the truck running calls. If one department doesn’t offer anything, the trained person is likely to move to a department that takes care of its own, especially if an employee is restricted from working elsewhere. Offer con-ed. Incorporate a ‘fun’ component. Empower employees to bring ideas to departments to promote loyalty and involvement.

Karen brought up grants and that the committee could look at research programs on pain management in an attempt to start controlling/eliminating/alternate use of opioids. These programs bring up questions such as “Should Oxycodone be put on trucks?” We may need to focus on oral pain relief due to morphine and IV fluid shortages that are causing departments to have to look for alternatives. Nitrous is effective but it has huge start-up costs.

Tom stated that the federal government regulates the amount and type of drugs that are allowed for use. Drug shortages may disproportionately affect committee work.

Tom also reminded the committee that departments need to file a new DEA Form 222 every two months or their drug allotment automatically goes to the next qualified department. Smaller departments that may not use all their drugs before the expiration date and the State could advise departments to sell their overage to bigger departments in urban areas rather than discard them. The Pharmacy Board has approved the repurchase of drugs.

Finally, Tom reported that members of the Pharmacy Board have allegedly been investigating departments by randomly entering departments and doing spot inspections. Departments may need to get people involved legislatively to stop this. The Ohio Fire Chiefs Association has been monitoring this activity.

It was the general agreement of the committee that the above issues need to be discussed at every meeting.

Additional Open Forum

Rob reports that the EMS Division learned of a rural flex grant that is specific to rural EMS needs. It is submitting a letter of intent. Funds of \$45-200k per state. If Ohio gets a

funding grant, the funds can be used to purchase training aids and supplies, for continuing education, etc.

Discussion ensued about having earlier committee meetings. However, a time change causes conflicts with other meetings some of the committee members are part of.

Lastly, the Medical Director conference may be in November—the date is yet firm. It will be in held in the ODOT auditorium. More information will be provided.

Adjourn

It was the general consensus of the committee to adjourn at 4:49 p.m.

Next meeting: June 19, 2018, from 3-5 p.m. (Outlook Calendar meeting notices have been sent for all 2018 meetings.)