

Emergency Services Advisory Council

January 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Rick Baker, Michael Robinson, Michael Guerin, JJ Lynott, Tim Legore, Michael Karolenko, Joe Brown, Blane Wright, Dr. Stephanie Kemp, Jim Mora, David Coe, Brett Six, Jeff Fleming, Scott Dickson (virtual), Robert Ruch (virtual)

Members Absent: None

Public: Susan Mott- 2nd VP, CCVESA

Chairman Baker opened the meeting at 19:00 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Blane Wright made a motion to approve the November meeting minutes. Jim Mora seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

Board Member Comments:

Chairman Baker noted the following regarding ESAC membership:

- Three ESAC members have terms expiring this year: Mike Karolenko, Joe Brown and Rick Baker.
- A new Chairman must be elected in June and that candidate will need to have at least one year on ESAC.

Michael Karolenko encouraged nominations for the second annual DFEMS Awards Ceremony to be submitted by scanning the QR code or emailing dfemsnominations@carrollcountymd.gov. The ceremony will be in early April at The Flood Zone in Union Bridge.

Public Comment: None

Director/Chief's Report: (Report attached)

Commissioner's Report:

- Commissioner Guerin shared the following changes in leadership: Commissioner Vigliotti was elected as President and Commissioner Guerin as Vice President of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).
- The Shamrock Race Horse Training Facility in Winfield is no longer happening. There were a number of issues, including fire suppression and fire/EMS support for the planned 800-horse facility.
- The BOCC voted on four separate building deferrals in the Freedom area. Fire/EMS response times were a key factor as well as making sure roads are wide enough for access to all areas. The Board is working to review, update and possibly change some ordinances in the next six months.

The group discussed the deferrals. Members are in support of the deferrals as there have been issues regarding new development for years. Commissioner Guerin noted that he appreciates ESAC's concerns about the matter.

CCVESA President's Report:

- LOSAP changes were voted on and will be presented to the BOCC.
- The Junior Committee is working on a county-wide junior physical policy.
- CCVESA applied for a cancer screening grant for volunteer members
- Each fire company met with Chief Robinson this month to go over their individual FY27 budgets.

Medical Director's Report:

- Advanced Life Support (ALS) skills sessions are underway. There is one more session this Friday. A makeup session will be planned for March if there is a need.
- There is a virtual Continuing Education session about Adult Protective Services on Feb. 17th.
- There are some simulated education opportunities available with the hospital.
- Two new policies are coming out soon: New QA policy and Ventilator Management policy.
- Clinicians are receiving good feedback on trauma, STEMI and strokes.
- Dr. Kemp discussed several high acuity calls that illustrate how survivability has vastly improved over the past few years. This can be attributed to the medications we are able to give, new skills, medical oversight, additional continuing education and resources, quarterly meeting with the hospital, law enforcement collaboration as well as hiring people who want to be a part of a progressive organization. Well done by all volunteer and career members of the department.

Committee Reports:

FROPS - Tim Legore reported on topics discussed at the last FROPS meeting:

- Medic units calling responding on the portable radio
- Nighttime calls
- Officer standards
- Medic unit crew utilization policy
- After-action reviews
- 9-1-1 Center
- Rural water supply
- Pleasant Valley second medic unit request
- Signal 13 policy and other SOPs
- Command support page tone

EMSOPS – David Coe shared that the next EMSOPS meeting is Feb. 19th.

Old Business:

- Pleasant Valley (PV) Second Medic Unit Discussion
 - Jim Mora, PV President: PV is looking to place a second medic unit in service when volunteer staffing is available. The second unit has been out of service for an extended period, so the volunteers have not had a chance to staff the unit.
 - Mike Karolenko: There have been no all-volunteer calls out of PV since transitioning to DFEMS EMS billing. While he respects the intent to serve the community, the data does not support the request.
 - Chief Robinson: The unit will require a large sum of money, estimated at over \$100K in equipment to be functional. The unbudgeted expense is the same rationale for denying Gamber's request to run a second medic unit.
 - PV has stated that if the request is denied they will sell both ambulances and go out of the ambulance business. The county would then have to rely on one of the three reserves ambulance. PV requested an answer by Feb. 1st.
 - JJ Lynott suggested the second medic unit be run as a Basic Life Support (BLS) unit to reduce the equipment cost.

- Tim Legore suggested that if a crew is available, volunteers could staff the medic unit while career staff move to the engine.
- Chairman Baker shared that his district is questioning why PV is able to get a reserve when they have this second unit available.
- Tim Legore questioned who is speaking for PV in regard to this ultimatum. He suggested President Mora go back and discuss this internally to confirm the position.
- Chief Robinson will have Assistant Chief of EMS, Eric Zaney, interface with Randy Stair, PV EMS Captain, to determine exactly what would be needed.
 - David Coe made a motion to table this discussion until additional information is received from Pleasant Valley. JJ Lynott seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Update on Meeting with BOCC
 - The meeting between ESAC and the BOCC is February 12th from 1:00 to 2:30 PM in the County Office Building, Reagan Room.
 - Mandatory Holdover (MHO) information and other statistics will be updated in the previously shared PowerPoint presentation. The overall message of the brief will remain the same.
 - Chief Brothers has been asked to provide updated ambulance mileage information.
 - This will be an open meeting and all ESAC members are invited.
 - Please email Callie Williams to confirm whether you are attending.

New Business

- Signal 13 Policy
 - Since this is a safety policy, it can be put in place now while being reviewed. It will be updated if changes are needed.
 - Motion by David Coe to put the policy in place while under review. Mike Karolenko seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Annual Report
 - Chief Robinson: The Annual Report for CY25 is being drafted. It will include a section dedicated to the volunteer fire companies. He requested each company and CCVESA submit information, highlights

and photos to be included. DFEMS is the entire system, not just the career side.

Action Items

1. Jim Mora will get more information from PV about the 2nd medic unit request for the next ESAC meeting
2. Chief Robinson will send an email to the Presidents/Chiefs about the annual report.

JJ Lynott made a motion to adjourn. Brett Six seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 21:50.



January 2026
Chief Michael Robinson
Monthly Report to ESAC

Attached herein is my report for January 2026. I will be in attendance at the meeting and would ask everyone to review this report prior to the meeting. I will focus on the highlights of the report and answer any questions. I extend to each of you're a Happy 2026 and look forward to working with each of you to advance the mission of DFEMS.

STAFFING: We were nearing our authorized strength of 224 field personnel, and we hired 2 paramedics and one FF/Paramedic who began on 1/15/26. They are currently in their two-week orientation and will be assigned on internship until they are validated for release. We currently have 117/224 positions filled. Bryan Van Fossen, our long-time Fire Protection Specialist retired on 12/19/25 following 30+ years with the county. He began with public safety and was transferred over to DFEMS two years ago. We wish Bryan the best in his retirement, and he continues as an active member and Vice-President at Westminster. We have hired a replacement, Christopher Evans, who has extensive training and experience and retired from the federal fire service as well as the State of Maryland where he served in various fire marshal positions. He started on Thursday 1/15 and is working with Inspections and Permits in the DPW to get oriented to his functions. We still have 7 vacancies and continue to test/process to fill those.

ALS Units: All 16 units are now staffed at the ALS level with some exceptions when staffing does not allow. When that occurs an EMS supervisor or the nearest ALS medic will upgrade the BLS unit based on location. Our remaining positions are either paramedics or FF/Paramedics so we should soon have floaters that will limit that occurrence.

Flu Season: Is now upon us and we have seen patient surges at both CHC and surrounding facilities. We are closely monitoring the situation. Carroll Hospital is now requiring masks to be worn at their facility as are other hospitals. The state health department has also issued some precautions and Dr. Kemp/Chief Zaney are watching closely and monitoring. Stations should be taking precautions similar to the pre-COVID scenario with frequent cleaning, disinfecting wipes and masks for those who may be at risk. We also recently sent out information on available flu vaccines through DFEMS. COVID is also an issue as well and the same precautions/isolation procedures should apply. If you have questions on that or have personnel requiring flu vaccines, please contact your assigned EMS Supervisor/Lieutenant for direction.

EMS Fleet:

We recently placed the new M-139 in service. This is a Ford F-550/Horton ambulance, and we were able to replace the wrecked unit within 3 months of the accident. We also recently placed

the new M-128 in service and that unit is a 2025 Ford F-550/Road Rescue. Both units will be an asset and lessen the strain on our overall fleet. Thanks to both Gamber and Sykesville for their assistance in getting things moved around and facilitating these new units.

The situation overall is still not good, and we will be developing a plan to address this. In the interim we will work closely with you and your vendors and our maintenance shop to address issues as they occur. We are also addressing this in the FY-27 budget and will request at least five additional replacement medic units which could all be demos v. custom designed. Those units if available would give us significantly shorter delivery time. It may take two years and 10 units to put us where we need to be. Chairman Baker will address this further at the 2/12 meeting with the commissioners

FY-27 Budget:

We are in the preliminary stages of the Fy 27 budget and placed our requests for additional staffing. Our priorities are as follows:

1. Additional 8 (eight) floater positions from original FY-23 staffing plan
 2. Four (4) shift safety/training lieutenants-new positions
 3. Laborer either full or part-time to be assigned to the Quartermaster/warehouse
 4. Paramedic position (grant funded) for mobile integrative health (MIH) program
- 14 total positions

The training/safety Lieutenants positions would be assigned to each of the 24/72 shifts and would focus on the training and compliance needs of each shift as well as the volunteers. They would have an immediate safety officer response profile and perform other duties such as accident/injury investigations, station and PPE inspections and provide driver training and OSHA compliance. All other departments in the region currently have such a position. Chief Supko and I met last week with the new position committee and provided a 2-hour presentation to address our priorities as stated earlier. This will also be on the agenda with the commissioners.

So, I had also asked each of the corporation (chiefs) for personnel requests based on their own staffing assessments. Accordingly, I have requested in the FY-27 budget additional positions as follows:

- Hampstead- 4 lieutenants
- Westminster-4 FADOs (Tower 3)
- Taneytown- 8 FF/EMTs for a second EMS unit
- Pleasant Valley- 4 lieutenants
- Union Bridge- 4 FADOs (Tanker)
- Gamber- Day shift lieutenant
- Winfield- 4 lieutenants

These positions are being handled separate from the budget requests and could be addressed if the commissioners would allow us to move with a SAFER grant. So, these positions are not

requested in the FY 27 budget. In any case it was good to identify what the station chiefs determine as their specific needs

29 positions total + 13 positions (my requests) = 43 new career positions or \$5 million which will not be funded but could be attained if we were to receive a SAFER grant.

These positions will be addressed directly at the ESAC/BOCC meeting on 2/12 I commend those companies who are forward thinking and recognize their staffing needs. I believe we need to be realistic in assessing what our next direction should be while also recognizing those companies who continue to do the best they can to achieve volunteer staffing. I believe these additions (13 total in the FY 27 budget) if approved will put our system in a safer and more efficient situation. There is still plenty of need and we all need to work together to achieve consistent staffing goals! This will take multiple budget cycles to attain.

My other goal with the FY 27 budget is to request a countywide study by a consultant. That study would evaluate our current system and its capabilities to include both fire and EMS coverage, station locations, apparatus needs/type and staffing. We would use three criteria in the study and that would include ISO standards of coverage, NFPA -1201,1710 for coverage and CFAI (fire accreditation) standards of cover. I believe we all have our opinions but a third-party unbiased organization using national standards could provide a comprehensive overview of our strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for future Fire/EMS coverage and potential costs. This would also provide an analysis of apparatus and fleet needs both for procurement and maintenance as well as station locations and maintenance requirements to provide sustainability. We will see if we are able to have this included and will move forward from there.

DC Joe Dennis is leading the volunteer budget effort for FY-27, and he is working with each of you. I am in support of Joe's concepts on the budget, and we have had several discussions on this. I will meet with Joe and the respective companies over several dates to review each budget to gain a greater understanding of each company's needs. Joe and I met last week with each individual company to go over budgets and line items. Obviously with inflation and increasing energy, insurance and goods and services costs there will be the need for increases for the FY 27 budget. However, we must be cognizant of the state budget deficit (\$.1.4 billion) and the impact on the county revenues and budgets.

Insurance is another ongoing concern in terms of cost and coverage. The 10K deductibles based on accident history are not sustainable and I am working with risk management and our insurer VFIS to see what options there are. We will also looked at that issue in our budget discussions. Our challenge with the budget will be the growing state budget deficit and the unpredictability of state funding and revenues into the county. While I will advocate for recommended increases we must remember that we are one of 12 county departments as well as the Board of Education, the Sheriff and the State's Attorney.

PSTC improvements/ Phase II: We are also submitting in our budget at the request of the training committee a replacement container/module for our burn facilities which have become worn giving the age. This current configuration of a burn facility was intended to be temporary pending phase II of the PSTC. Currently we have a priority project into the state for \$1.3 million to provide a remediation project for the PFAS and water delivery to the PSTC site. The new water line construction has begun, and progress is being made.

The state legislative delegation met with the commissioners and administration to discuss the prioritization of that project which if approved would move our phase II of the PSTC forward. Currently you can see that our warehouse project is progressing and will hopefully be complete by early next year. This will move our quartermaster/supply operation entirely to this rehabbed space and will significantly increase our storage capacity. More to follow.

Cancer screening grant: I submitted on Wednesday 1/15 through the state health department, a grant for \$85,500 for cancer screening for 228 uniformed career personnel. There is \$480,000 available for a one-time cancer screening. I was told by 2nd VP Mott, that you have also submitted a separate grant to cover volunteer personnel. The grant process was then suspended by the state health department and is now reopened. We have again applied for this grant which closed on 1/15 and CCVESA is also applying again. This would be done separately by a third-party cancer screening company. Our goal would be to provide testing for all who receive physicals through a cancer screening company and to attempt to do this on an annual basis at no cost to personnel. Cancer screening is now mandated annually for all career personnel under the state law known as the “Jim Malone Act”. There is no difference in vulnerability between career and volunteer so I will always be including funding for everyone to be tested annually for cancer consistent to the national recommendations. Tomorrow I will be meeting with procurement to discuss this for the FY-27 budget and beyond. This will be for all personnel who receive physicals on an annual basis and such testing would be added to that.

Operations: Our new fireground (SOP Section 4) policies are in effect and are working well. My observation of the changes is that they are working, and we are more efficient, organized and certainly safer on fire/rescue incident scenes. We have standardized our running assignments, communications and incident organization. Over the holidays we have experienced multiple working fires, and the responses have been great and each fireground has been well organized with great accountability. Our career and volunteer command officers have really stepped up with staffing and command presence. We are making great progress overall! Our next area of concern involves communications and some realignment of our talk groups and policies and together I believe we can improve that area through some specific changes.

Cancer Awareness Month: Is throughout the month of January and our Safety & Health division will be sending out materials later this week. As a victim of fire related occupational cancer, I can't stress enough how important awareness, testing and prevention is in this area. Our information will provide resources as well as best practices for addressing this significant

concern for all of us. Also, a bill was recently signed into law by President Trump that will now make certain forms of cancer (19 total) as occupational cancers for all emergency services personnel. This will provide LODD/PSOB death benefits for those who die as the result of these 19 types of cancer. This will be retroactive to 2020 as well as for all those involved in 911 response to the WTC, Pentagon and Shanksville. The MSFA should have some additional information on this.

NERIS: As of 1/1/2026 our NERIS reporting is now active and NFIRS is no longer available. In the 5 days since implementation, we have had a few glitches and are monitoring each. In addition to our three-day training sessions. We held a follow up informational session with our ESO vendor on Friday, 11/7 and some of you were present. Richard Koons along with Melissa are working daily to assure that everything is in place. We will be maintaining 14 FDIDs or the new NERIS identifiers and we will centralize our data while allow each of you the ability to utilize the associated modules. We are also continuing to work with Richard on assuring the preservation of legacy LOSAP data and have worked out a solution. Understand that there will be glitches with the system as is the case with any new technology. Together we will figure this out and move forward with hopefully a better data and reporting system. We are in contact with our vendor, and I held a recent meeting with their management to review their contractual commitments and specifically the preservation and delivery of archived legacy data. Anyone with specific issues that can not be handled by your station representative may contact Melissa Long our NERIS lead at mlong@carrollcountymd.gov Please try to resolve at the station level and if there is an issue then contact Melissa and she checks her mail multiple times each day. We have also removed DFEMS EMS supervisors, BC101 and the command chiefs (FD1, OPS100, EMS 100, Safety 100) and created a station 100 for separate reporting. So EMS cars will no longer be in your stations data as they will report within station 100.

Commendations Board has met and will be meeting again next week to review submissions for awards related to 2025 incidents, special recognitions and to make recommendations for the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Awards. Please review the SOP and consider submitting for the various categories of awards. The Chamber awards include a countywide Fire and EMS person of the year and other rewards. We have had a lot of significant incidents, and many people have provided significant levels of service. Don't let them go unrecognized! Please contact President Todd Tracey or DC Price for further information or to make a submission. The awards event will be scheduled for some time in the Spring of 26. Don't miss the opportunity to recognize some great people who have gone above/beyond!

Maryland General Assembly/Legislative Session-2026 Began on 1/14/26 in Annapolis. This will be a challenging year for the state given the billion+ deficit. I am in attendance during the session for the Friday fire service legislative meetings along with your MSFA President and other fire service reps. Hopefully the fire service will make some progress and preserve state funding in areas such as 508, loan funding and other relevant initiatives. Each company should sign up for the weekly MSFA legislative bulletin to keep abreast of progress in these areas. With

Charlie Simpson as the current MSFA President we will certainly have some direct insight into the session.

Major Snow Storm: Everyone should be aware of the potential for a significant winter storm to impact Carroll County. Current weather predictions indicate the possibility (6"-19") of snow beginning on Saturday evening 1/24/26 and extending through Monday, 1/26/26. The storm forecast will change over the next several days and we will provide you with the latest forecast as it develops. Planning is a key element to our continuity of operations, and we will address the probabilities consistent to this storm. In an effort to provide a unified approach to operational readiness and deployment we are scheduling a meeting for Friday, 1/23/26 at 1600 for DFEMS command/staff officers which includes each company chief or their designee at the chief officer rank (deputy or assistant). We would like 100% participation so that we are all on the same script and can jointly address potential contingencies before they occur. Sometime tomorrow, Chief Supko will be sending out some "operational readiness" information to assist you in your preparations. You have obviously handled these storms over the years, so this is nothing new to you. Our goal is to have continuity of operations and coordination among everyone. We will also be staffing the EOC beginning Saturday as needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson

Michael W. Robinson MA, CFO, NRP
Director

MWR/mr

C: Williams, Callie
Command Staff