

Emergency Services Advisory Council
June 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Michael Robinson, Rick Baker, JJ Lynott, Tim Legore, Michael Karolenko, Robert Ruch, Brett Six, Dan Plunkert, Jeff Fleming, David Coe, Blane Wright

Members Absent: Michael Guerin, Joe Brown, Scott Dickson, Dr. Stephanie Kemp

Guests: Jim Mora – President, Pleasant Valley VFC

Public: Susan Mott – 2nd VP, CCVESA

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

Brett Six made a motion to approve the May meeting minutes. Robert Ruch seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

Board Member Comments:

Chairman Baker presented a letter of appreciation to Dan Plunkert, outgoing central region ESAC representative. Dan was a charter member of ESAC and served on the council for five years. In addition, he was an integral part of the transition to combination system and creation of DFEMS.

Dan shared his experience starting with the future staffing initiative in 2003, future EMS initiative in 2012, creation of the advisory council in 2017, and the meetings to establish the MOU in 2022.

Director/Chief's Report: Report attached.

- Chief Robinson thanked Dan Plunkert for his service on ESAC.
- Chief Robinson extended his congratulations to incoming Maryland State Firefighters Association (MSFA) President Charles Simpson.
- Chief Robinson acknowledged Assistant Chief Eric Zaney for his appointment to the State EMS Advisory Council (SEMSAC) as the Metro Fire Chiefs Representative.
- Chief Robinson gave an update on staffing: 212 of 220 positions are filled. The FY26 budget will bring us up to 224 authorized positions in the field.

- Chief Robinson and staff are starting the promotional process for the 12 EMS Lieutenants and hope to have them in place by Sept. 1.
- In the next budget year, Chief Robinson hopes to request 8 Floaters (bringing the positions in the field to 232 which was previously agreed to in the beginning) and 2 Training Lieutenants.
- Data Analyst, Mel Long, is working on the ESO/NERIS transition. Stations are being transitioned one at a time.
- Chief Robinson shared that the MOU letter from CCVESA is being discussed at the County's administrative level and he expects a response within a few weeks.
- Chief Robinson and Chief Supko will continue to meet with individual fire companies.
- If companies have questions about 508 money or other reimbursements, they should be directed to CCVESA's Treasurer.
- Chief Robinson has created a nonbinding, non-authority, Chief's leadership council made up of senior leaders. Their first meeting will be in July.
- For questions about interim policies, including the heat policy, contact Deputy Chief Supko.
- The DFEMS bike team, run by Capt. Guy Garheart, will be debuting July 4.
- Chief Robinson hopes to have an incident command simulation system up and running by the end of summer.
- Chief Robinson acknowledged the two successful whole blood transfusions in the field since beginning the program.

Commissioner's Report: Not present

CCVESA President's Report: Nothing to report

Medical Director's Report: Not present but sent written report.

- The whole blood program is live and crews have administered two units to two patients so far.
- ALS Skills sessions have been completed. If any members have not completed their annual protocol review, please do so by July 1.
- We held a hands-on training at Mount Airy focused on the pre-hospital management of subversion injuries and a review of the protocol updates on this topic. It was very well attended by both career and volunteer members.
- Monthly continuing education last night focused on Cardiac Arrest Efficiency

and was well attended.

-Carroll County held the first Neonatal Advanced Life Support (NALS) course in the country today.

-Dive Medicine Training will occur at Gamber this Saturday.

-We will be holding a Basic Disaster Life Support Course next month. Additional details will be forthcoming.

Committee Reports:

EMSOPS - David Coe reported that EMSOPS did not meet last month. There is a Medical Countermeasures class coming up and they are looking for people to sign up. David Coe was re-elected as EMSOPS chair.

FROPS - Tim Legore reported that FROPS continues to discuss policies.

Old Business:

- Low Interest Loans
 - Joe Dennis, a volunteer retired from Sandy Spring Bank, met with two banks to discuss loan options. Joe is awaiting a response from two banks on potential options.
 - Joe Dennis also met with Manchester Fire Dept. and a finance company regarding loan options for purchasing apparatus.
 - The amount loaned out by the county cannot be more than 5% of the total capital projects that are covered by bonds. The group would like to know what that dollar amount is.
 - David Coe asked if/when that 5% figure is re-evaluated.
 - Chairman Baker expressed the need to put together a timeline of apparatus approved for purchase and when they will be ready for delivery. He is concerned about the future impact this limitation will have on service delivery.
 - Chief Robinson emphasized that this isn't an "us vs. them" issue. We are providing a service to the community. He suggested asking the Comptroller to attend an ESAC meeting to discuss.
 - Chairman Baker will draft an email to the County Administrator expressing ESAC's concerns about limitations to the low interest loans and asking for clarification.
- Carbon Monoxide Policy 4.10– No additional comments

- Mike Karolenko made a motion to approve the Carbon Monoxide policy 4.10. Brett Six seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Wildland Search Policy – No additional comments
 - Mike Karolenko suggested that if there are no additional comments, we vote on the policy now rather than wait another 30 days.
 - Mike Karolenko made a motion to approve the Wildland Search policy. Robert Ruch seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Hampstead Fire Dept's request to purchase an ATV
 - The request is supported by JJ Lynott's area (eastern region) and by FROPS.
 - Mike Karolenko made a motion to recommend approving the request. JJ Lynott seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
 - Chairman Baker suggested changing the apparatus procurement policy to allow 30 days for reps to share the information and get feedback.
 - JJ Lynott suggested changing the policy so that requests go to FROPS before ESAC.
 - Chairman Baker asked Callie to send Apparatus Replacement Policy 1.14 to ESAC members to review and continue the discussion next month.
- New Initiative
 - JJ Lynott suggested we revisit how to strengthen career/volunteer relations, how to incentivize and sustain volunteers, and how we can support each other. With the new Lieutenants in the EMS cars coming on board, it would be a good idea to do this now and get ahead of any issues. He would like to put a group together.
 - Mike Karolenko spoke in support of this idea. He would like to see us come together as a common entity to solve problems.
 - Chief Robinson commented that there is a disconnect between CCVESA leadership and operational volunteers such as FROPS.
 - Chairman Baker suggested JJ Lynott and Mike Karolenko work together to come up with something that we can discuss next month.
- Chief Supko's Fire Rescue Operational Policy Subcommittee

- The operational policies and notes put together by the subcommittee were sent out to ESAC members. If there are no changes, they will be voted on at the July meeting.
- The following policies are included in the booklet:
 - **4.1 Incident Management**
 - 4.1.1 Incident Management System
 - 4.1.2 Communications
 - 4.1.3 Radio Reports
 - 4.1.4 Evacuation and Withdraw
 - 4.1.5 Mayday
 - 4.1.6 RIT & 2 In/ 2 Out Functions
 - 4.1.7 Personnel Accountability
 - 4.1.8 Minimal Staffing
 - 4.1.9 Requesting Additional Resources
 - 4.1.10 Building Type & Use
 - **4.2 Structural Fire Fighting**
 - 4.2.1 Structural Fire Fighting
 - 4.2.2 Hydrant Running Assignments
 - 4.2.3 Non Hydrant Running Assignments
 - 4.2.4 Basement Fires
 - 4.2.5 Standpipe and Sprinkler Support

New Business:

- Mike Karolenko nominated Rick Baker to continue as Chair of ESAC. Brett Six made a motion to close the nominations. David Coe seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Brett Six nominated David Coe to continue as Vice Chair of ESAC. Dan Plunkert made a motion to close the nominations. JJ Lynott seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Brett Six shared a response that Taneytown received regarding their solicitation letter. The citizen was questioning why they should donate if their tax dollars are already supporting county fire and EMS. Brett Six suggested that all 14 fire companies get together along with the County's PIO to provide a unified response that educates the public.

- Tim Legore stated that CCVESA and DFEMS need to work together to educate the public.
- Statistics were sent out. Please let Mel Long or Rick Baker know if there are any issues with the numbers.

Action Items:

1. Chairman Baker will draft an email to the County Administrator expressing ESAC's concerns about limitations to the low interest loans and asking for clarification.
2. Callie will send Apparatus Replacement Policy 1.14 to ESAC members to review and discuss next month.
3. Callie will put apparatus requests into a spreadsheet to track expected dates of completion.
4. JJ Lynott and Mike Karolenko will work together on a new initiative to strengthen career/volunteer relations and incentivize volunteers.

Brett Six made a motion to adjourn. Mike Karolenko seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 20:45.



Report to ESAC

June 23, 2025

Chief Michael W. Robinson, Director

I have the below report for ESAC for you to read and update yourselves with current issues and areas relevant to DFEMS. I will answer any questions or concerns that you may have.

MD Fire/Rescue Memorial: The annual memorial service was held in Annapolis on June 1. My condolences to the Winfield Community VFC who were in attendance with an outstanding showing as Keith Phillips of Winfield, who was an occupational cancer LODD was installed on the memorial "Wall of Honor." Four other LODDs were recognized including Lt. Chris Higgins from my home VFC of Earleigh Heights who was a career LODD in Montgomery County. Our DFEMS honor guard participated as part of the MD "joint honor guard." I was also in attendance for the ceremony. I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the Memorial Chair Dennis Beard-CCVESA past president who dedicates hundreds of hours each year administering the Memorial, its upkeep and the related programming.

MSFA: Congratulations! To the new MSFA President Charlie Simpson who was installed this past Tuesday and become the president of the state association. Charlie has a 50+ history in Fire & EMS serving in many positions. He will certainly be an advocate for the volunteer system and throughout the state. I was honored to be in attendance and presented him with a recognition award from the County Commissioners. Also, congratulations to CCVESA Liaison Richard Koons who will serve as an assistant secretary for MSFA, Sam Mann who is an assistant chaplain and PP Mark Bilger who will chair the MSFA Exec Committee. Certainly, a lot of Carroll influence at the state level. Also, congratulations to Westminster who received several awards from the parade including Chief 3 as the best appearing Chief's vehicle. DFEMS also had a successful recruitment booth in the exhibits area. Also, Doug Alexander of Mt. Airy was recognized with the prestigious Gladhill-Thompson Award.

Congratulations: To Chief Eric Zaney who has been appointed by the Governor to serve on the state SEMSAC committee under the state EMS board. Chief Zaney will be representing the Metro Chiefs organization on the group.

Staffing (VFCs): Our staffing as of today is 212 of 220 budgeted positions with a net vacancy of 8 positions. We had 10 personnel released for staffing at the end of May and 5 are FF/PMs, 1-PM and 4 FADOs. There are several paramedics who continue to be precepted prior to their release. Assignments were sent out with a recent transfer list. Our goal is obviously to fill all vacancies and finally gain some consistency with staffing. We currently have 7 personnel who will started on Thursday 6/5 and 4 are PMs or FF/PMs and 3 are FADOs or FF/EMTs. They were released on 6/19 for staffing with some being held for ALS precepting. We recently tested some additional personnel, and they are processing with a July start date. This finalizes staffing for all station positions and 12 floaters for 3/shift. We currently have at least 6 personnel out on long-term leave (FMLA) or on modified duty which also impacts our staffing. We have also

received two recent resignations and had one separation. These positions are also being processed for replacement.

Our goal is that in the next two weeks we will return Gamber (M-139) and Union Bridge (M-89) to ALS staffing. This is occurring partially based on the shift working. Mt. Airy's second ALS will follow. This will give us a total of 16 EMS (ALS) transport units with three stations having two units (1, 3, 12.)

Our recruitment will continue based on our budget initiatives for FY-26 which will include upgrade of 12 ALS car paramedics to Lieutenant/paramedics. Our request for two training/safety lieutenants and 12 requested additional floaters to offset leave, sick and injury staffing were not recommended in the operating budget. We did receive four (4) floater positions in the budget which will increase our floaters to 4/shift. This would bring our total staffing to 236 in FY 26 as approved.

Regarding our recruitment we have a list of applicants who are in various stages of application. We are advertising for the FADO position again and we are currently recruiting paramedics and FF/Paramedics as well and have vacancies for several FF/EMTs.

Future staffing growth is obviously tied to the budget, and we will determine our needs jointly through VFC requests, ESAC recommendations and based on our ongoing data analysis which will be enhanced with the advent of our new ESO reporting system which is in the implementation phase and will go live by 12/25 or sooner if we are comfortable with the implementation progress. Melissa has begun to bring stations "on board" for the testing phase of the new NERIS system.

Everyone will be an integral component of this, and we must all concur on the "What, How and Why" with regards to NERIS reporting which will drive our staffing needs. Our work group under the coordination of our data analyst continues to move forward on this project and an implementation schedule is ongoing. There was a great presentation on NERIS at the convention and provided the national perspective. Melissa is at the NFA for additional training this week and we are getting many of the concerns with NERIS answered.

We will be meeting with the OSFM NERIS coordinator in the next several months to further integrate our transition with the state reporting which will transition with NERIS.

Ultimately the decision to increase future staffing is initiated through the budget process. It is then the decision of the commissioners to determine as the elected leadership component of the county government as to whether this is consistent to their objectives. Our role is to make recommendations, and we will always do this based on data and demonstrated service needs.

Budget: The operating budget for FY-26 has been approved on May 20 and will be published on the county web site. The budget analyst should also be in touch with the CCVESA treasurer for the volunteer station budgets. The FY 26 budget will be in effect as of July 1, 2025. All purchasing under FY25 ended on 6/12 so we are unable to spend anymore until the new budget next week. Those companies who were approved for the supplemental funding for corporate staffing should have been reimbursed. If not, then contact the CCVESA treasurer as those funds are managed through an established process specified in the legislation.

We were successful in securing a third medic unit which was originally removed from the proposed operating budget. There was no movement on the request for a replacement reserve

engine and this will be increasingly problematic. We will continue to validate this need. We will also receive two additional Tahoes to have reserve units in our fleet. Other operational expenditures were increased at 3%. We have secured additional funding for some of our programs to include special operations, ICS simulations and some EMS equipment upgrades.

All employees will receive a 5% raise under the new budget. Also, after a year long project with HR and DFEMS there are some position reclassifications and upgrades as the result of comprehensive job analysis and a restructuring of the county's pay scales. Some but not all positions were reclassified. Also, within DFEMS we will be allowing "acting" pay for personnel to act in higher classifications.

The upgrades of the ALS cars will result in 12 current FF/PMs being promoted. This is an involved process, and testing will be both a written exam and then a multi-tiered assessment center using evaluators from other jurisdictions. We anticipate that these promotions will be in place by 9/1/25 and the positions will be fire lieutenant and not EMS positions. The official titles will be lieutenant paramedic, and they will hold the same position as station lieutenants within the chain of command. On fire boxes they will serve as the initial safety officers and if first in or the only officer on the scene then they will function as the initial incident commanders. There will be some revision of running assignments and relevant SOPs.

The CCVESA budget also included an increase but limited in requested enhancements. There were no increases to LOSAP but there was a suggestion for an updated actuarial study. An administrative change was also approved at a recent Commissioners meeting for LOSAP.

508 funding: The funding for this program has been received and was provided to CCVESA for distribution to each VFC. I would assume that each company has received their allotment at this time. Despite state challenges this remained the same consistent to the funding formula.

County funding of apparatus loans: On 5/8/25 representatives from Winfield and New Windsor along with myself and the Comptroller, presented loan requests to the commissioners. A \$1 million loan was approved for New Windsor for a new engine (2000gpm with 1000 gal. tank) and Winfield for \$700,000 for a new tanker (3500 gallon/elliptical) The county can only provide loans up to 5% of the total funding of public projects which are covered by a bond issue as VFC loans constitute a loan to a private organization. That specific amount has been satisfied to its maximum extent for the Fy-26 fiscal year by the recent approval of loan funding to New Windsor and Winfield. The application on the comptroller's site has been removed at this time as no additional funding is available.

There is also no funding available from the state loan fund which is complicated by their recent lowering of the state's credit rating. If you follow the news, there was an audit done on the state loan funds which are under MDEM and they are unable to account for about 62 company loans so I would not anticipate much funding availability from the state VCAF loan funds

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/2025/05/15/audit-maryland-department-emergency-management/>

So, this is obviously going to be a significant issue given the amount of loans that were anticipated or in the process of requests. The county is bound by existing laws so please understand the limitations of this. One possibility could be private funding through a municipal loan organization that specializes in such funding. Joe Dennis with his significant financial

background is looking at some options and he will update on this issue. I recognize both the needs and the challenges, and the county is limited under the laws which limit the amount of loans that can be made. I am working with the comptroller, and they will have some new processes on their web site once determined. This may significantly impact the apparatus replacement cycles.

Meetings with all corporations/VFCs? I have completed meetings with about 10 of the 14 companies and the discussions focused on moving together, as we progress in the future. I have many of these already scheduled or will schedule at a mutually agreeable time at each company. I am still awaiting meetings with stations 1, 2, 3, 7, 11 and several of these are scheduled. I will attend along with DC Supko, and we would like to have an open, civil and honest conversation with each company to get some feedback and determine where we are going. I am doing the same with each shift/station for our career employees to create a dialogue and to discuss their issues and concerns. A lot of good feedback and we are making changes as needed. Most of the discussions have been about in station duties, maintenance and additional funding. I will be sure to notify each chief when we will be holding meetings with career personnel, and these are open and not exclusive meetings with many in station volunteers attending so far.

The work will begin the week of July 21 on our warehouse building on the PSTC campus. The bids are complete and the work should have a completion by early fall. This will provide needed space for our growing stores of uniforms, EMS equipment and PPE. The Quartermaster and their operation will relocate here as they are currently working from several locations on the campus.

MOU: I have received some correspondence from CCVESA leadership, concerning a review of the current MOU and discussion and movement to make some substantive changes. A response to CCVESA will be coming from the county administration relative to the specific issues. We currently have no operational issues to my knowledge at any of the 13 stations from which we operate.

CLC-Chief's Leadership Council: I am currently putting together a new focus group which will meet every other month. The goal of this group is to have the organizational leadership: CCVESA, ESAC, FROPS and Career FF/PM association to meet with myself and my command staff. This will not replace the defined work of any of the organizations. The group will look at a submitted agenda and discuss areas of mutual concern so we can approach issues and resolve with a single focus. The operational rule of this group will be that we will have "only" the leader of the organization and no alternates. All parties must be present, or we will not meet. Our first meeting is in July. This will be a working group with transparency, equity and no hidden agendas only systemic issues and mutually agreeable resolutions. This will hopefully create greater trust and unity with a single unified front. The minutes of each meeting will be published and distributed. All of the respective members have been notified and provided with a set of operating guidelines. I look forward to some productive discussion and movement with this concept.

DC Supko: Recently had a "Personal emergency" that you may have seen in the Carroll County Times. (See photo)



The “draft” operational SOPs are being reviewed by the subcommittee and are also submitted to ESAC for their process and then we are looking for approval as early as August unless there are significant modifications to be made.

An interim “Heat Policy” which is an SOP under the safety section of our SOPs was released today and is now in effect. (See attached) This is in response to a new state law and OSHA’s revision to their weather extremes policy. We are under a mandate to have this in place, so it is going out in “interim” status to meet this direction. The policy will include several levels of weather status and will include a radio notification when activated. The main areas within the policy involve a work/rest cycle on active incidents based on prevailing weather conditions. Weather instruments are carried on DFEMS shift commanders, staff vehicles and ALS chase cars so we will use “on site” conditions to guide our use of this policy.

Special Operations: There is some enhancement of our funding for our specialty teams in the new budget and Chief Supko will be meeting with the respective team leaders to determine expenditures and available funding. Chiefs Supko and Coe are meeting regularly, and we now have HM techs on each shift, and you will see those on duty techs noted in the daily staffing from the shift commanders.

An ICS simulation system is funded in the FY 26 budget, and we will be using the Sim u share system that is in place in several surrounding jurisdictions. This will be a “work in progress” with the ultimate goal being implementation of annual command competency assessments for all Carroll County officers within the “chain of command.” This along with progress on our officer standards revision will be moving forward to standardize our supervision countywide through our integrated chain of command.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson

MWR/mr