

Emergency Services Advisory Council
October 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Rick Baker, Michael Robinson (left at 20:15), JJ Lynott, Tim Legore, Michael Karolenko, David Coe (virtual), Brett Six, Jeff Fleming, Robert Ruch

Members Absent: Michael Guerin, Joe Brown, Blane Wright, Dr. Stephanie Kemp, Jim Mora, Scott Dickson

Public: Susan Mott- 2nd VP, CCVESA, Marianne Warehime, Sallie B. Taylor-Candidate for Delegate

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

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

Board Member Comments:

Chairman Baker met with Mel Long, DFEMS Data Analyst, for several hours today about mutual aid statistics. Statistics for the month have been handed out. Please let Mel or Chairman Baker know if you would like to discuss questions you may have about the information presented.

Chief Robinson commented that there is a regional project called CAD to CAD that has been worked on for the past year that should help with mutual aid data.

Public Comment: None

Director/Chief's Report: (Report attached)

Commissioner's Report: Not present

CCVESA President's Report:

-Jeff Fleming reported that CCVESA is looking into redoing their budget process.
-CCVESA is looking into countywide guidelines for the Junior Firefighter Program as requested by Risk Management.

- CCVESA still has questions about the MOU between the County and the Volunteer Fire Companies. They have already met with Chief Robinson and the County Administrator seeking clarification.
- CCVESA is seeking an increase for LOSAP.

Chief Robinson shared that he met with Joe Dennis about the CCVESA budget. He shares the concern that the 3% planned growth is not enough to cover rising costs. They discussed ways to reorganize the budgets and streamline purchasing.

Medical Director's Report: Not present

Committee Reports:

FROPS - Tim Legore reported that FROPS discussed the extreme weather policy, medic unit crew utilization SOP, and rolling out the new operational policies. They also discussed having an after-action analysis for every working incident that can be shared and learned from.

EMSOPS - David Coe reported that EMSOPS has seven policies that are 90% ready. They will be forwarded to ESAC this week.

Old Business:

- Potential Topics for ESAC/BOC Meeting
 - Chairman Baker confirmed the meeting will be December 4th from 1300-1400.
 - Purchasing ambulances and reserve equipment: Discuss potential issues we will face if we do not replace the aging ambulance fleet. The number of units being ordered is not enough. There are many ambulances in the field with a lot of miles and hours on them.
 - Mike Karolenko commented that we are in a critical phase and need to look at depth. The reserve engine needs to be replaced as well. We often have to wait for a reserve to become available so a unit can go out for service for maintenance or repairs.
 - Tim Legore commented that the county cannot continue to rely on the volunteer fire companies to purchase all heavy

- apparatus, with the rising costs and if they cannot secure a low-interest loan.
 - JJ Lynott stated that the only way we will get caught up is to purchase demo units for both ambulances and fire engines to establish a baseline while the county waits for the delivery of the first ambulances 2 years from now
- Hiring incentives and pay scales.
 - Tim Legore stated that, beyond filling the positions, we need to support people with raises. We need to incentivize people to stay.
 - Mike Karolenko emphasized the needs for pay scales and for a plan that shows where the department is going over the long term.
- Emphasize that we are a dual fire and EMS system.
 - Mike Karolenko commented that it is factually false to say that DFEMS is EMS only.
- Less reliance on insurance/federal funds (EMS billing money) to make payroll.
 - Tim Legore suggested we discuss using the EMS billing money to make necessary enhancements to the system.
- Increase amount budgeted for interest.
 - Tim Legore commented that it is unrealistic to expect the fire companies to pay back two million dollars in ten years. The amount the companies receive to offset interest needs to increase.
- Incentives for volunteers.
 - JJ Lynott brought up incentives for volunteers.
 - Mike Karolenko added that we need to look at incentives across the board, career and volunteer.
- FY27 Budget Topics
 - Using SAFER grant to fund positions.
 - 29 positions requests from the volunteer stations as of now
 - 8 Floaters, 4 Safety Officers and 3 Station Captains requested.
- Maintenance of buildings.
 - Jeff Fleming brought up that the issue of the rising cost of maintaining the fire stations.
 - Chairman Baker suggested the fire companies need to start keeping track of the costs that are not budgeted. Need to show how much the volunteer corporations are spending above what is budgeted.

- Funding the insurance deductible.
 - Tim Legore commented that the cost of the insurance has been put back on the fire companies and they had no input in that decision.
- EST Program
 - JJ Lynott suggested bringing up the EST program as a positive aspect.
- Chairman Baker will begin drafting these ideas into a document for the meeting on December 4th. All topics will be discussed again at the November ESAC meeting to finalize.

New Business

- Extreme Weather Policy
 - The interim policy has been in place to make sure we were meeting state requirements (mandated by COMAR). Now it has been tweaked and is ready for approval. This policy will be voted on in November.
 - This policy applies to non-emergency incidents.
 - Chairman Baker is sending the policy to ESAC members for review.

Action Items:

1. Chairman Baker will type up tonight's notes and send to ESAC members.
2. Callie Williams will send the seven EMS policies to ESAC member for review.

Mike Karolenko made a motion to adjourn. Robert Ruch seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 20:58.



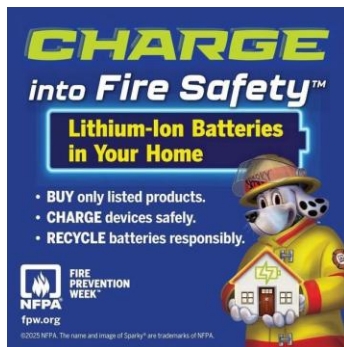
Monthly Report to ESAC

October 15, 2025

Chief Michael W. Robinson

Attached herein is my report for October 2025. I will be in attendance at this evening's meeting to answer any questions or concerns. However, I need to leave by 2000 to go meet with the Reese VFC Board at their meeting. You can review and prepare any questions for me.

Fire Prevention Week 2025: Began on 10/5 and ran through Saturday 10/11/25. We began with a proclamation from the Commissioners and Rick was there to represent ESAC. DFEMS personnel worked with each VFC to make this week a success and our personnel assisted with multiple station events including "Open Houses" and school visitations which will continue through the end of the month. . This year's theme is "Charge into Fire Safety, Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home" and focuses on the growing fire safety issues presented by Lithium-Ion Batteries. Hopefully we have increased awareness of this issue and did some positive marketing for what we do each day of the year.



Hampstead's 125th Anniversary Celebration: Took place on Saturday 10/4 with a parade and well attended "Open House." The streets of Hampstead were lined with hundreds of people and that flowed into the Anniversary event at the station which had some great activities, displays and showcased the outstanding facilities that have been developed. I was fortunate to be able to attend this well-orchestrated event. Congratulations Hampstead!



New Windsor VFC fulfills mortgage loan obligation. This milestone was officially achieved on Friday, 10/3/25 when a check presentation with District 1 Commissioner Joe Vigliotti was made. Along with the President and current treasurer, Commissioner Vigliotti was honored to welcome Mrs. Judy Coe, widow of beloved longtime treasurer Jack Coe. Jack served the New Windsor department faithfully for 52 years and always looked forward to this day. Though he passed in December 2019, his spirit was very much present as his family joined in this moment of celebration. ESAC vice-chair, Chief David Coe also accompanied his mom to join in this milestone. Well done New Windsor! This was achieved in just over 20 years!



M-139 Accident: On Saturday, September 6, M-139 was involved in a significant accident while responding mutual aid into Baltimore County. The incident occurred at Butler Road and Rt. 30 and involved a gasoline tanker and two other vehicles. The medic caught fire and both the FF/EMT and FF/PM required extrication. Both were flown to shock trauma and remain off duty recovering from multiple injuries. Given the nature of the incident, I requested the assistance of Sheriff DeWees and the CCSO internal affairs section is leading the investigation along with AC Brothers, Risk management and the BCOPD. Since this was a mutual aid incident, an emergency response and multiple vehicles involved it is obviously a very complex investigation and legal aftermath. The medic unit was just six months in service and is totaled. We are working with fleet management and will be ordering a replacement using an available “demo” unit that is new and close to our current specifications. That will require approval of the commissioners and that should occur and is on the agenda for tomorrow’s Commissioner’s meeting.

Once the investigation and legal issues are complete, we will be providing a formal after-action review with lessons learned. In the aftermath of this incident, we are working with the ECC and Dr. Stone our EMD medical director to review how we respond to certain EMS as well as fire calls. Given an active investigation there are other dynamics involved, and our goal will be to make systemic improvements that assure management of our risk.

Bond related funding of apparatus: On Tuesday, September 30 the Comptroller and the County Administrator provided an informational session on the newly revised process for utilizing tax free bonds for loans toward the procurement of company apparatus. Given the cost of apparatus and the limitation of this system, a good overview of the how and why of this issue was presented as well as the process itself. A good exchange between the presidents/treasurers in attendance was held. Any further expansion of this program is limited by the regulations regarding these bonds. Further discussion with the commissioners was suggested to explore further initiatives which is solely under the discretion of the commissioners. This was well attended.

NERIS: training was held over three days in September, and we had 100% attendance from each VFC. The vendor ESO provided a “subject matter expert” to walk through the software as well as its many modules and capabilities. There was great interaction in each of the sessions. There still remains some questions/issues regarding the input of LOSAP data and the ease of the operations for this information. Melissa Long our data analyst is our NERIS coordinator, and she will follow up with the unresolved issues. The basic operating features seem too functional, and our in-house training and troubleshooting will continue prior to our full implementation by 1/1/26. Chairman Baker and others are actively involved in the implementation and system capabilities. We will make it work, and our legacy data and its preservation is paramount to this.

STAFFING: We are nearing our authorized strength of 224 field personnel and recently hired four FADOs to complete our staffing and then we had several resignations. We are currently at 216 and have ongoing testing to fill our vacancies. We have also had several internal reclassifications to both FF/Paramedic and FADO. M89 has been in service partially as a medic unit and with several paramedic hires completing their precepting and some movement of paramedics due to lieutenant promotions we should reach our full staffing by the end of this month. We are tentatively going to hire several FF/PMs in early November. We continue with at least 7 personnel on long term injury, FMLA and other forms of leave. Although we have floaters back in place the impact of this number causes ongoing vacancies in addition to our 8 unfilled positions. We are working with HR to implement “acting” capabilities for all positions which will provide some relief.

ALS Units: In the near future Mt Airy (2nd unit) will be upgraded to ALS. Union Bridge is now staffed and in service as an ALS unit. The department will reach full staffing and therefore will adjust the existing down staffing policy to reduce holdovers. The order for down staffing units to BLS will be 1st 1 unit from Mt Airy, 2nd Union Bridge, 3rd Gamber. This policy has been updated and sent out. This should not occur too frequently as our high vacation time is now over, but the hunting and holiday season is approaching.

Lieutenant promotions: The process began on 8/27 with the written exam and effective on Thursday, October 9 @ 0700 with C shift our three ALS chase cars were reassigned as EMS supervisor units each staffed with a lieutenant. We held an orientation last week with the 12 new officers and they will be continuing with some additional training sessions that will focus on

their roles. First and foremost, they will provide EMS supervision and quality assurance. Their secondary roles will be station management, and we are realigning the station accountability as we will have 6 lieutenants (3 EMS cars and 3 station lieutenants.) Typically, the new lieutenants will manage the career personnel at their station assignments: 4,5,14 as well as in some cases a second adjacent station and on the Rt. 30 corridor, EMS 101 will manage stations 2,4, and 7. On incident scenes where they are first arriving they may assume incident command but will transition upon the arrival of a chief officer (volunteer or career.) They may also serve as the primary safety officer at working incidents where they are not assigned to an EMS function. A General Order was sent that realigns the station responsibilities along with a map to show these areas. Please congratulate the following new lieutenant paramedics:

1. Lt. Anthony Cavanaugh- EMS 101 B
2. Lt. Julio Deras-EMS 103 C
3. Lt. Eddie Godwin-EMS 101 D
4. Lt. Hunter Kime-EMS 102 C
5. Lt. William Kuntz-EMS 102 D
6. Lt. Jason Moore (pending medical clearance)
7. Lt. Joshua Myers-EMS 101 A
8. Lt. Christopher Petry-EMS 102 A
9. Lt. Corrine Piccardi-EMS 101C
10. Lt. Madeline Plaut- EMS 103 D
11. Lt. Briana Stull-EMS 103 B
12. Lt. James Ulrich-EMS 103 A

We would also like to acknowledge those paramedics who served diligently as the original chase car paramedics since their inception in 2023. These personnel have been reassigned to medic units and include:

PM Vanessa Kidd EMS 101 transferred to M-49 A
PM Jason Jackman EMS 102 transferred to M-89 D
PM Daniel Jones EMS 103 transferred to M-89 D

EMS Fleet:

The county currently owns eight (8) medic units with a 6th (Road Rescue) slated for delivery in November. Our goal is to have 16 first line and 4 reserve units. We went out for bids for 3 additional medic units and Road Rescue has been awarded the order which will be for Ford F-550 gasoline chassis with Road Rescue door forward ambulance bodies. We are looking at a 24–28-month delivery time. Given the state of our remaining VFC owned units we believe we will soon be in a “crisis” with some of your units having more than 200,000 miles and an overaged reserve fleet of only 3 units. On October 20, I will travel along with our spec committee to Road Rescue in Florida for the final inspection of the new M-128 which if we accept the unit, it should be in service by early November.

We are working with fleet and on our end Chief Brothers will be coming to each station to determine the short- and long-term status of our remaining ambulances. The situation is not good, and we will be developing a plan to address. In the interim we will work closely with you and your vendors and our maintenance shop to address issues as they occur. We will also address this in the FY-27 budget and will request at least five additional replacement medic units. We are also looking at the possibility of similar demo units with a shorter delivery time.

FY-27 Budget:

We are in the preliminary stages of the Fy 27 budget and placed our requests for four training/safety Lieutenants. These 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. We have also requested the remaining eight (8) floaters that were originally budgeted. In addition, we are asking for a laborer position to assist the QM and a paramedic to begin a Mobile Integrative Health (Community paramedic program.) Any additional positions are to be determined.

So fundamentally, if any station would like additional career staffing, I had asked for a correspondence stating what position and a justification by October 1. I have received a number of requests from the volunteer chiefs and 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

29 positions total + 14 positions (my requests) = 43 new career positions or \$4.5 million

In an effort to support these requests I hope to be meeting with the commissioners to consider the use of SAFER funding to achieve this additional staffing goal. 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 if approved will put our system in a safer and more efficient situation. There is still plenty of need and we all must work together to achieve consistent staffing goals! The creation of additional positions is only our recommendation. Any approval of this is solely the decision of the commissioners and understand we are only one agency in a complex county government.

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, weakness 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.

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 will be working along with Sue Mott and Deb Standiford (county grants coordinator) to apply for a cancer screening grant that would be used jointly by career and volunteer personnel. Specifically, this would provide for additional testing as a component of our annual 1582 physical exams. This is a state initiative which will enter its second year. As a cancer patient myself, I can't overemphasize the value of doing early screening. Most cancers are occupationally related to what we do as firefighters. However, many of these cancers are readily treatable if not curable if discovered earlier. This grant would allow comprehensive testing for a certain number of firefighters in our system and possibly for others who are no longer engaged. More to follow as we proceed with this initiative.

Congratulations, to the training committee on the successful recruitment of the EST program which is moving forward with 20 students and delivering EMT for the fall semester. Chief Brothers will work closely with the group to assure support of the program along with MFRI resources. I recently had an opportunity to meet the group and spend some time with the students. They are an outstanding group and certainly our future and we should be doing all that we can to support their training and retention.

Federal Impact/Government Shutdown: We are closely monitoring the federal budget shutdown and its impact on our operations. We are impacted in two primary area, EMS billing and FEMA grant funding. In the case of EMS billing the CMS (Medicare/Medicaid) bureaucracy is shut down. The immediate impact is that our regular revenues from these programs is all on hold. This means a loss of \$250,000 or greater in anticipated monthly revenues that we would normally receive. This will continue and even if reconciliation of the budget is reached it could take months to restore this funding. Additionally, the uncertainty of the Affordable Care Act with private insurers could have an even greater impact. We are in daily contact with Digitech our billing provider who has a governmental liaison in DC and they are keeping us abreast of the impacts and changes. Since our operating budget funding comes from this we are monitoring closely, and the Department of management and budget are in our “loop” on this issue.

The second impact is with FEMA funding and grants. Much of our special operations is funded via FEMA grants and those have been shut down for the time being. We are not sure if the funding will even continue. This is all passed through via EM and Valerie provides us with ongoing updates and impacts. MFRI also receives training grants through FEMA and the NFA and USFA (NERIS administration) also remain shut down.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson

Michael W. Robinson MA, CFO, NRP
Director

MWR/mr

C: File

ESAC distribution list