

COUNTY OF HENRICO, VIRGINIA  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
July 25, 2017

The Henrico County Board of Supervisors convened a special meeting on Tuesday, July 25, 2017, at 5:30 p.m., in the County Manager's Conference Room, Administration Building, Henrico County Government Center, Parham and Hungary Spring Roads, Henrico, Virginia.

**Members of the Board Present:**

Patricia S. O'Bannon, Chairman, Tuckahoe District  
Frank J. Thornton, Vice Chairman, Fairfield District  
Thomas M. Branin, Three Chopt District  
Harvey L. Hinson, Brookland District  
Tyrone E. Nelson, Varina District

**Other Officials Present:**

John A. Vithoukas, County Manager  
Joseph P. Rapisarda, Jr., County Attorney  
Barry R. Lawrence, CMC, Assistant to the County Manager/Clerk to the Board  
Tanya B. Harding, CMC, Deputy Clerk/Administrative Assistant  
W. Brandon Hinton, Deputy County Manager for Community Services  
Douglas A. Middleton, Deputy County Manager for Public Safety  
Anthony J. Romanello, Deputy County Manager for Administration  
Randall R. Silber, Deputy County Manager for Community Development  
C. Michael Schnurman, Legislative Liaison  
Tamra R. McKinney, Director of Public Relations & Media Services

Mrs. O'Bannon called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

**Emergency Medical Services System and Standards of Response**

Mr. Vithoukas advised that the presentation on this item would be an expanded version of an update annually provided to the Board and would highlight challenges faced by the County's emergency medical services (EMS) system in regard to the volume and types of calls for service it receives. He further advised that staff's intention was not to recommend specific changes or enhancements at this time but rather to discuss how the County's finite EMS resources are allocated and could be used more efficiently.

Mr. Vithoukas recognized Fire Chief Tony McDowell, who noted the following members of the Division of Fire staff would be assisting him with the presentation: Capt. Jason Wood (Special Projects), Lt. Michael Roth (Planning), and Battalion Chief Russell Martin (Special Operations and Homeland Security). Chief McDowell asked the following EMS representatives who were in the audience to stand and introduce themselves: Deputy Chiefs Mike Cox (Community Risk Reduction) and Alec Oughton (Operations); Battalion Chiefs Jackson Baynard (District Command), Jeff Farmer (District Command), Jeff Powell (Administrative Services), and Henry Rosenbaum (Chief Fire Marshal); Drs. Jeff Ferguson and Joe Ornato (Operations Medical

Directors); Kelly Schaaf (Quality Assurance Coordinator); Russian Cukor (Data Analyst); Cari Tretina (Director of Fire Administration); Jason Vick (President of the Henrico Professional Firefighters Association—Local 1568); John Tatum (President of the Henrico County Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads and a member of Tuckahoe Volunteer Rescue Squad); Stuart Madison (Vice President of the Henrico County Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads and a member of the Henrico Volunteer Rescue Squad); and Andrew Slater (Chairman of the Board for the Tuckahoe Volunteer Rescue Squad).

Chief McDowell narrated a slide presentation on this item. He began by reviewing a recent case involving an apartment fire in eastern Henrico where advanced life support was administered to one adult and three children who were not breathing. Chief McDowell stated the objective of the presentation was to discuss the current EMS environment, consider the challenges at hand, and review proposed solutions. He then offered a brief history of the national model and regulations for emergency medical responses to E-911 calls established by the U.S. Department of Transportation in the 1960s and the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act passed in 1986. Chief McDowell explained the distinction between basic and advanced life support; the evolution of the County's community-based volunteer rescue squads and Division of Fire's entrance into the EMS system; and the County's current EMS system model, which includes both the division and volunteer rescue squads. In 2016, volunteer ambulances handled 16 percent of all EMS transports in Henrico. Chief McDowell clarified for Mr. Branin how ambulances operated and staffed by the volunteer rescue squads supplement those operated and staffed by the division. He continued his presentation by reviewing graphs highlighting the ten-year growth rate in Henrico EMS calls and incident responses and also highlighting recent fire medic commitment trends in Henrico. Chief McDowell next reviewed graphs depicting Advanced Life Support (ALS) complement forecasting and EMS resource reliability.

The Board recessed for dinner at 5:55 p.m. and reconvened at 6:02 p.m.

The presentation was resumed with Captain Wood focusing on one of the factors that is driving the County's EMS challenges, skilled-care facilities. He reviewed several slides depicting a significant 10-year increase in the County's EMS responses to these facilities for non-emergency transports. In 2016, the division responded to 4,993 calls to skilled-care facilities, which involved substantial time commitments for the County's ALS medic units. He showed the Board a list of the skilled-care facilities to which the County frequently responds and provided examples of transport calls where ALS medic units have been dispatched for routine, non-emergency transports. Chief McDowell and Mr. Vithoukias responded to questions and concerns raised by Mr. Branin and other members of the Board pertaining to the County's longstanding policy of not charging for EMS transports. They explained why this policy continues to be prudent, especially in light of federal and state restrictions that leave localities little discretion in developing financial recovery options. Mr. Vithoukias pointed out the County's EMS system is focused on quality of care.

Lieutenant Roth continued the presentation by reviewing another factor that is driving the County's EMS challenges, social services. He offered slides illustrating the most common types of E-911 calls relating to social services and a four-year trend of increases in these types of calls. Battalion Chief Martin showed the Board a list of the consumer residential addresses to which the County frequently responds and provided two recent examples where Lakeside Volunteer Rescue Squad and the Division of Fire responded to an intoxicated citizen who did not have medical complaints. He and Lieutenant Roth responded to questions from Mr. Nelson concerning the County's procedures and protocols for handling these types of calls.

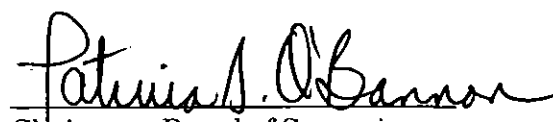
Chief McDowell returned to the podium and addressed the need for right-sized response within Henrico's EMS system. He described and gave examples of how inefficiencies in the screening of medical calls have resulted in restricting emergency medical dispatch (EMD) and assigning advanced resources to basic incidents and non-emergencies. Chief McDowell provided examples of time commitments by ALS medics on basic life support (BLS) transports.

Chief McDowell spent the balance of the presentation reviewing how the Division of Fire is working towards a solution in improving EMS efficiencies in responding to skilled-care facilities and social services calls. The aim is to triage medical calls more effectively to ensure appropriate resources are dispatched. Response model enhancements may include a skilled care facilities redirection policy, community assistance resources and education (CARE) services, and BLS ambulances. Chief McDowell explained response matrices for a new EMD system with alternative resources as compared with the current system. In addition to identifying CARE outreach and response resources, Chief McDowell described a CARE BLS transport model and shared the findings of an EMS peak-time study. He also compared the salaries and training costs of civilian EMTs versus ALS firefighters and provided graphs depicting the effect of BLS ambulances on increased reliability within the EMS system. Chief McDowell and Mr. Vithoukas responded to questions from Mr. Branin regarding the costs and housing of BLS vehicles versus ALS vehicles. Chief McDowell concluded his presentation by suggesting the County needs to improve unit commitment times; offer better service to its citizens through connections with appropriate resources; and move towards a data-driven, sustainable EMS system.

Chief McDowell fielded additional questions from Board members following his presentation. In response to a question from Mr. Thornton relating to best practices in other localities, Chief McDowell informed the Board that members of the division staff are travelling to Colorado Springs in August to observe firsthand how that locality has implemented non-emergency ambulances within its EMS system. In response to a question from Mrs. O'Bannon, Chief McDowell emphasized the importance of educating skilled-care facilities on less costly and more efficient options for non-emergency transport and calls for service. He suggested the County has a responsibility to divert these calls where appropriate so it can focus its resources on emergencies.

Mr. Vithoukas advised the Board that the division will bring more information forward to the Board in the future as permanent solutions are developed. In the interest of time and with the Board's concurrence, he did not review the agenda for the 7:00 p.m. meeting. He reminded the Board to meet downstairs to have photographs taken with the County's summer interns.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

  
Chairman, Board of Supervisors  
Henrico County, Virginia