

Meeting of the Talbot County Emergency Services Advisory Board (TCESAB)
4 January 2023

Attendees:

Steve Mroczek - Chairperson

Members:

Shirley Bucci
Terry Satchell
Matt Watkins

Tim Cannon
Scott Mergenthaler

Brian LeCates
Ruth Sullivan

Steve Mroczek opened the meeting at 6:03PM 4 January 2023 at Talbot Center

The minutes of the 7 September 2022 meeting were approved as prepared.

Brian LeCates, Director of Talbot County Department of Emergency Services(TCDES) began the meeting with an update on the Department.

As reported earlier, efforts are underway to relocate the Department's facilities currently located at 700 Port St. The County has acquired a two story building located on Marys Court in Easton. Marys Court is off of Mistletoe Drive. It is currently occupied by the Avon Dixon Insurance agency. The Sheriff's Department would occupy the first floor and TCDES the second. All of the TCDES offices and the 911 center located in the Port St building will move to this new location. Brian reported that both current Tenants plan on vacating earlier than expected allowing both Departments to begin renovation ahead of schedule.

The FY24 budget process is beginning. Brian said he planed an internal kick off meeting the second week of January.

As a result of two incidents in Caroline County, TCDES has been supporting them with Critical Incident Management support.

The Emergency Management Division has just completed the first CERT class since the beginning of COVID. Going forward the current plan is conduct two per year. The County's Hazard Mitigation has been approved by all of the municipalities in the County and the County Council. It has now be submitted to FEMA. An update has begun on the County's Emergency Operations Plan.

The EMS Division has completed security upgrades at all stations. Progress on the North County Station remains stalled by soil testing. New samples have been gathered by digging deeper with a backhoe. Among the potential work arounds being considered is a waiver.

The EMS Supplemental Payment Program was created by the State last year to provide supplement payments for services to Medicaid Patients when the agency providing the service is running a deficit. Currently Medicaid pays \$100 per call. Average cost per call in

Talbot County is approximately \$845. Brian said he expected this project could net the county \$400k.

Several long time employees have taken advantage of the new retirement program and are retiring. As a result, the Department is recruiting both full and part time Paramedics.

Lastly both new ambulances acquired by by earlier budgets have now been placed in service. The acquisition process took approximately 18 months.

The Communications Division is in the process of hiring three new staff members. If they all complete training the division will be fully staffed. He also noted several promotions in the department which has provided supervision on all shifts.

The Division is still preparing to cut live the next generation 911 System. Testing is underway. The "cut live" date is February 7th.

The Division has a contract in place with Mission Critical Partners to develop an RFP for a new CAD System. They have held meetings with EMS, Fire and Law Enforcement identify requirements for the system. Once that is done they will help evaluate the proposals. The goal of this effort is get funding for the selected CAD System procurement into the FY24 Budget.

Scott Mergenthaler presented an update on the Sheriff's Department.

The Department entered the Fiscal Year with three vacancies. They had identified three candidates, one who is a lateral and two other officers who will need to complete the Academy. They are looking at other potential lateral candidates.

Scott discussed adding three full time School Resource Officers (SRO) supporting the County's Elementary Schools. Currently they share a single SRO, who splits their time among the schools. This addition will allow each to have a dedicated officer except Tilghman and St Michaels who will share one.

In response to questions, Scott told the Board that all SROs in Talbot County are armed.

Scott and Brian both discussed salary studies under way in preparation for FY 24 budget requests. There followed a general discussion of the difficulties recruiting and retaining staff and the general short term focus of many young recruits.

Steve Mroczek reported on the developing budget submission from Talbot County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (TCVFRA) and the data being developed to support it. Early submissions show the high number of volunteer hours being used for fund raising vs training or responses. Increased County funding could reduce the need for labor intensive fund raising.

Debbie Timms was absent. No update from Shore Health

Richard Smith was absent. No update from the State Legislature.

Old Business - None

New Business

The group discussed the meeting schedule for the next year. There was consensus that to have any impact on the deliberations of the Council we needed a February meeting and to provide them with recommendations. Copy attached and separately forwarded to members.

Our next Business meeting will be February 1st at 6PM. It will be held at Talbot Center.

2023 Meeting Schedule

February 1, 2023

March 1, 2023

April 5, 2023

May 3, 2023

June 7, 2023

September 6, 2023

November 1, 2023 (retreat meeting – off site – location/time TBD)

January 4, 2024

All meetings, except the November meeting, will occur at 6 PM in the EOC at Talbot Center