

**Thurston County Medic One  
Emergency Medical Services Council – Regular Meeting  
Virtual – Zoom Meeting  
August 18, 2021**

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**PRESENT:** Cindy Hambly, Frank Kirkbride, John Ricks, Margaret McPhee, Brian VanCamp, Harry Miller, Stan Moon, Paul Perz, Angela Jefferson, Renata Rollins, Sheila Fay, Gary Edwards

**ABSENT:** Wayne Fournier

**EXCUSED:** Larry Fontanilla, Lenny Greenstein

**GUESTS:** Chris Clem, Shawn Crimmins, Brian Hurley, Daniel Bivens, Steve Brooks

**STAFF:** Kurt Hardin, Sandra Bush, Ben Miller-Todd, Joy Miller, Daphne Reaves, Anna Lee Drewry

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL** – Chair Moon called the regular meeting of the Emergency Medical Services Council (EMSC) to order at 3:30 PM.

**I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – MSC** – New Business, Item D. Governor’s vaccine mandate was added to the agenda. Old Business, Item B. Medic One 2022/2023 Budget Submission expected outcome was changed from Information to Amended Recommendation. (Ricks/Edwards) move to approve the agenda as amended, and this carried.

**II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – None

**III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. EMS COUNCIL – July 21, 2021 (Edwards/McPhee) move to approve the minutes and this carried.
- B. OPERATIONS COMMITTEE – August 5, 2021 (informational only)

**IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. **OPERATIONS COMMITTEE:** VanCamp reported: 1) TAC is working hard to sustain the training cadre for various reasons. 2) TRU reported on the continued issue with transports. Hardin reported the choke point at PSPH has eased up a bit – at this time the choke point appears to be more in the field. 3) Ambulance Ordinance calls for a semi-annual review by the Ops Committee. There were no recommended changes. 4) PSPH updated the clinical agreement with EMS agencies. The clinical agreement provides practical training for EMS personnel. 5) Staff is preparing for the fall EMT class. Orientation is August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and Drewry reported 21 students have enrolled. 6) LE response to field activity and the impact on EMS was discussed. 7) The Ops committee has elected to continue with virtual meetings at least thru October and the committee will base further decisions on EMSC’s decision.
- B. **WEST REGION:** Perz reported: The next meeting is September 1<sup>st</sup>. This will be an in-person meeting at station 34 in Lacey. Immediately following the meeting there will be a farewell party for Anne Benoist.
- C. **STAFF REPORT:** Staff report is available on the website. [Thurston County | Medic One | Committee Meeting Information \(thurstoncountywa.gov\)](https://thurstoncountywa.gov/committees/medic-one).

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. August 3 Medic One Ballot Measure – Hardin reported: The Auditor certified election results yesterday and the Medic One ballot measure passed at just under 64%. Hardin’s initial analysis is that every Fire District and/or Department across the county passed the Medic One ballot measure by at least 50% or more. Official results will not be available for a couple of weeks. Moon acknowledged Cindy Hambly for her effort on the pro committee.
- B. Medic One 2022/2023 Budget Submission - The budget was submitted to the County on August 6<sup>th</sup>. The following changes were made to the budget: 1) The EMSC recommended putting into the budget the outlined equipment for 2023 if funding was available. After re-running the numbers, staff did find the funding to be available, so the equipment replacement was put into the budget. 2) It was found that the BLS increase in 2023 could also take place in 2022, and since BLS funding had not been addressed or

changed since 2017, and based on medical inflation, \$250,000 was added to the 2022 budget. The amended recommendation is to add the \$250,000 to the 2022 BLS support.

There is an EMSC rule in place that requires budget related issues to be discussed and then action would be taken at the following month's meeting. (Kirkbride/McPhee) move to suspend the policy concerning budget considerations, and this carried. This suspension of the policy is for the budget items discussed at this meeting of August 18, 2021.

(Kirkbride/Jefferson) move to amend the 2022 budget by adding \$250,000 to the BLS account and maintain \$250,000 in the 2023 budget, and this carried. Edwards abstained.

- C. Ambulance Delay Update – Hardin presented information on transport delay issues, related to ambulance availability and hospital capacity. The transport delays occur during peak EMS911 call times and are compounded by reduced staffing associated with workforce shortages. Solutions to this include, ambulance companies hiring to fill vacancies, fire agencies staffing additional aid cars, and Medic One activating the High Probability Unit (HPU) process.

A contract is in place with fire agencies to place transport units in the field, using the HPU process. The HPU is staffed 0900 – 2100 daily, depending on staffing availability. Medic One prefers the fire departments/districts staff the HPUs and remain out of EMS operations. However, since the fire departments/districts are short staffed, Medic One is hiring EMTs as extra help to assist with staffing the transport units. The cost to staff an HPU is approximately \$24,000 per month, which includes personnel, fuel, medical supplies, etc. This is an unbudgeted expenditure, therefore Medic One is suspending citizen CPR classes until further notice, which will contribute approximately \$12,000 to the HPU cost. Olympic Ambulance has offered to reimburse Medic One 50% of the cost to staff an HPU, up to \$12,000. If additional HPUs are required then EMT classes and OTEP may be cancelled, to help fund the additional cost. Staff may be asking the EMSC at the September meeting for approval to reallocate additional resources. Prior to the September meeting, Moon asked to convene the budget committee to look at fund sources.

Chris Clem said this has been a very challenging year for Olympic Ambulance, regarding recruitment and retention. Olympic Ambulance in Kitsap County will send down surge units to help in Thurston County. The surge units will be used primarily for interfacility transports so the local units can stay freed up for 911 response. This should be activated September 1<sup>st</sup>. Additionally, Olympic Ambulance has discussed staffing a surge unit with management staff, since most of their management staff still have their EMT certification. They have also doubled down on their recruiting efforts, i.e. sign-in bonuses, recruitment bonuses, etc.

Kirkbride raised the idea of Medic One charging for BLS transports since the transport agencies and private ambulance companies charge. Hardin said this is a very short time frame, and Medic One does not have the time or resources available to set up charging capabilities. If this become a long-term situation, then Medic One will explore a billing model.

- D. LE/EMS Response – Miller-Todd said this ties back to HB1310 which went into effect July 25<sup>th</sup>. Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney's office (PAO), as well as city attorney's, are discussing how this will affect law enforcement specifically, and after they have determined how law enforcement needs to change their response, they will look at EMS response. Staff worked with the PAO and the MPD to create a protocol that allows for EMS providers to walk away from an unsafe scene. Perz asked if there is a legal expectation to respond to every emergency call. Miller-Todd said all calls will be responded to, however if the providers arrive on scene and it is deemed as unsafe, then the providers can walk away.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Long-term Care Facility EMS 911 Response – Hardin said there have been challenges again where residents at a long-term care facility have a fall, for example, and 911 is called, when the long-term care facility staff should be making an assessment for the medical necessity of a 911 call. This issue is primarily in the Lacey and Tumwater area.
- B. WREMS membership application (Frank Kirkbride) – (McPhee/Perz) move to approve the renewal of a 2-year appointment for Frank Kirkbride, as a WREMS alternate to Paul Perz for the EMSC, and this carried.
- C. 2021 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. Budget vs Actual – Miller provided a 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2021 budget vs actual report. Overall, the budget is 41% expended. A partial cause for this is ALS contract billings that have not been processed.
- D. Governor's Vaccine Mandate – The Governor has recently issued a proclamation mandating vaccination of healthcare workers, amongst others, and DOH has confirmed that healthcare workers include EMS personnel. Hardin said approx., 75% of EMS personnel in Thurston County are vaccinated. Effective October 18<sup>th</sup>, if someone is not vaccinated, they will lose their ability to practice as an EMT or Paramedic in Thurston County. This could have a significant impact on our EMS personnel and EMS capabilities. Brooks said they are working at the local and state level on an inquiry to the Governor's office for possible alternatives or mitigations. (Kirkbride/Fay) move to approve a letter drafted by staff, representing the EMSC, that will be signed by the Chair and Vice-Chair, to the Washington State DOH, to identify the emergency delivery issues as a result of this mandate, and ask them to explore alternatives to only vaccination, and this carried with Edwards abstaining. Hardin asked for clarification on the following: 1) Who should the letter be addressed to. The council agrees to address the letter to the Governor and copy DOH and the BoCC. 2) Would the council like the letter to say they strongly encourage and support vaccination and the council said yes. 3) Would the council like to specify options or just ask for other alternatives, and the council said to ask for other alternatives. 4) Hardin said Medic One has the actual number of providers who have or have not been vaccinated so does the council want to include these numbers in the letter, and the council said yes. Kirkbride agrees to amend his motion to include Hardin's clarifications. Kirkbride suggested to the EMSC WREMS representatives that this issue be brought up at their September 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Perz said he will bring it up.

**VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – None**

**VIII. GOOD OF THE ORDER** – Moon reported a change in leadership at FD6. Chief Mark Nelson will be retiring the end of September. East Olympia Fire District will contract with SETFA so Chief Mark King is the new Chief as of this past Monday.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned at 5:05.