

Walworth County Fire/EMS Study Committee
April 20, 2017 Meeting Minutes
Walworth County Government Center, County Board Room 114
100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin

The meeting was called to order by Moderator/County Administrator David Bretl at 2:00 p.m.

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum of members was present: Dave Nelson, Denise Pieroni, Bruce Vander Veen, James Weiss, and Dale Wilson. Lowell Hagen and John Peters were excused

Alternates present included Fred Schalow. Non-voting members Drs. Steve Andrews and James MacNeal were in attendance.

James Weiss made a motion, seconded by Dale Wilson, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

Denise Pieroni made a motion, seconded by Dave Nelson, to approve the March 23, 2017 meeting minutes after changing a sentence under the Background section to clarify meeting attendees. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Comment Period – There was none.

Election of Committee Chair and Vice Chair

County Administrator/Moderator David Bretl asked for nominations for chair of the Committee.

Denise Pieroni made a motion, seconded by Dave Nelson, to nominate Dale Wilson for Chair. Bretl asked three times for nominations; **there being none, nominations were closed and a 5-0 vote cast to elect Dale Wilson as Chair.**

Chair Wilson asked for nominations for Vice Chair. **Bruce Vander Veen made a motion, seconded by Denise Pieroni, to nominate John Peters for Vice Chair.** Chair Wilson asked three times more for nominations; there being none, nominations were closed. **On motion by James Weiss, seconded by Denise Pieroni, the subcommittee cast a unanimous ballot for John Peters.**

Discussion and possible action regarding surveying Fire/EMS departments and local government

Bretl said the Survey Subcommittee met twice to develop the surveys for Fire/EMS departments and local government. The draft surveys were included in the packet, and the subcommittee has recommendations for administering the surveys. He encouraged this committee provide input on changes, revisions and/or deletions. Chair Wilson added that the subcommittee wants to ensure that the surveys are conducted in-person, and that members of this committee will conduct the surveys, but not in their own jurisdictions. He said local governments would be given ample notice regarding the surveys so they could present the surveys to their boards.

Governing Body/Administration Survey

Chair Wilson asked for general comments from the Committee, and as most of the commentary focus was on the survey for the local governments, consensus was to review that survey first. James Weiss said he is in favor of the surveys; however, he feels the amount of information requested in the first survey will seem overwhelming to departments and local government. He suggested sending out a broad scope survey initially, and conducting additional surveys as needed after direction is provided by respondents from the initial interviews. Weiss added that the questions on response time should be directed solely to the departments. Denise Pieroni recommended leaving the response times in the Governing Body survey to get a sense of what their perception is regarding service delivery. Bruce Vander Veen suggested adding

a question regarding whether governments feel they are getting satisfactory service compared to what has been expended to enhance operations. Dave Nelson agreed the initial surveys should be more broad-based. Fred Schalow suggested asking about departments' training and other needs. Another survey could be conducted to request information on inventory, budget and personnel. Vander Veen recommended including questions as to whether departments would be willing to consider consolidation and/or resource sharing. Weiss suggested including a question concerning any unique challenges individual departments are experiencing.

Chair Wilson and the committee reviewed the survey question-by-question.

1. Leave as is.
2. What is your conception of your current response times?
3. Have you received any complaints or compliments on service response?
4. Have you noticed trends in response times for Fire service?
5. Have you noticed trends in response times for EMS service?
6. What do you see as your top challenges to continue providing Fire services?
7. What do you see as your top challenges to continue providing EMS services?
8. Would mergers and/or consolidation be an option for you?
9. Would you consider a shared staffing model?
10. Would you consider sharing resources?
11. Are there any other items of note?
12. What does your department do well?
13. Do you bill for services?
14. Are you in favor of a countywide EMS system, or a hospital based system?
15. What are you looking at in the future for funding these services?
16. Are there any other issues you would like the committee to consider in the study?

Fire/EMS Personnel Survey

Chair Wilson reviewed the questions for the departments with the Committee. Following are the recommended revisions/inclusions from the Governing Body Survey.

1. Leave as is.
2. What is your perception of current response times? (question 9 on draft Fire survey)
3. Have you received any complaints or compliments on response times?
4. Have you noticed different trends in response times for Fire and EMS?
5. Would you be willing to support different alternatives for different levels of care/service?
6. What are your major challenges to continue to provide Fire services?
7. What are your major challenges to continue to provide EMS services?
8. Would you be willing to consider mergers/consolidations as options for improved service?
9. Would you be willing to consider a shared staffing model?
10. Would you be willing to consider sharing resources with other departments?
11. What does your department do well?
12. Do you bill for Fire service? If yes, please explain.
13. Do you bill for EMS service? If yes, please explain.
14. Are you in favor of countywide EMS service provision or a hospital based system?
15. Are there any other issues you would like the committee to consider in the study?

The Committee then reviewed the survey questions from the draft in the agenda packet.

1. Leave as is.
2. Leave as is.
3. Leave as is.
4. Leave as is.
5. Leave table as is
6. Leave as is.
7. Leave as is. Add a question on how many times within the last two months you have requested Advanced Life Support (ALS) and they weren't available?
8. Leave question, but delete "arrive at the scene" and add "be en route"
9. Leave question, but delete "out the door" and add "en route"
10. Eliminate.
11. Eliminate.
12. Leave, but ask "provide average or median"
13. Eliminate.
14. Leave, but ask "provide average or median"
15. Eliminate
16. Eliminate
17. Eliminate
18. Leave as is
19. Leave as is
20. Leave, add words "technology" and "radio communications"
21. Staffing: How is your department staffed? Give example (for example, all-call, battalion system, other method, standby)
22. Leave in, and add example above in 21
23. Leave as is
24. Leave, but add, "Does your agency use a private service to provide coverage?"
25. Leave table
26. Omit
27. Leave in, separate out by Fire and EMS and add lines for contracted services to each
28. Has your agency noted a decline in EMS applicants? Do you have ongoing efforts to recruit and retain staff? Are there any barriers to recruitment/retention?
29. Has your agency noticed a decline in Fire applicants? Do you have ongoing efforts to recruit and retain staff? Are there any barriers to recruitment/retention?
30. Leave as is
31. Specify 2016 actual and budget
32. Leave, add 2016 actual and budget
33. Leave as is
34. Leave as is
35. Are there any other issues you would like the committee to consider in the study?

Public Comment

Shaun Marquis, EMS physician at Mercy Health, stated the broader survey questions are a better idea. He suggested adding questions on outside staffing and sustainability, barriers to recruitment and retention, and whether there are identifiable reasons why staff is declining.

Larry Knuth, Vice President of Operations at Paratech, supports the study. He hopes when interviews are conducted that questions on availability of ALS include who responds to calls when their staff cannot. There are a number of ways to improve provision of private service, and the benefits of shared services needs to be examined.

Wolfgang Nitsch, Fontana Fire Department/EMS Chief suggested asking local government what funding mechanisms they would be willing to employ to sustain services.

Kevin Meyes, Medix, asked that more specific questions regarding mutual aid, i.e., how many departments are not only using them for 911 and ALS, but also for second and third calls.

Dr. MacNeal suggested adding a question to departments as to how many times they use private transport because their agencies are not fully staffed under acceptable guidelines.

Denise Pieroni made a motion, seconded by Dave Nelson, to direct staff to revise the draft survey documents and to bring them back for approval at the May Committee meeting. Motion carried 5-0. [Note: the motion and approval above herein includes suggestions submitted at Public Comment that were incorporated into the surveys.]

Pieroni recommended surveying service providers and customers, and asked to have that placed on a future meeting agenda.

Discussion regarding next steps that the Committee should take in the Fire/EMS study

Bretl said John Peters suggested inviting someone from Waukesha County to come to a future committee meeting to discuss their survey process and results. He also suggested inviting a member of State Senator Steve Nass' office to discuss the survey on Fire/EMS services being conducted by the legislature. Both items will be put on a future meeting agenda. Committee consensus was to follow the procedures for conducting the surveys as outlined in Mr. Bretl's April 19, 2017 email memo to the committee. Discussion ensued on the in-person interviews and who should pose the questions. More discussion/action will be held at the next meeting.

Confirmation of next meeting date and time: The next meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment

On motion by Bruce Vander Veen, seconded by Denise Pieroni, Chair Wilson adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.