

**PINELLAS COUNTY  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES  
March 18, 2022**

The Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council met using the Zoom online meeting platform and in person at 10:00 A.M. on this date with the following members present:

Dr. Eric Carver, St. Petersburg College – Chair  
Commissioner Julie Peluso, Independent Fire District Elected Official – Vice-Chair  
Chief Chad Pittman, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association  
Dr. Anthony Ottaviani, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society (Alternate)  
Gayle Guidash, Pinellas County Health Department  
Nancy Hopkins, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter  
Karen Mullins, Citizen Representative (District 1)  
Larri Gerson, Citizen Representative (District 2)  
Becca Tieder, Citizen Representative (District 5)  
Jorge Mercado, Citizen Representative (District 7)  
Mayor Joseph Manzo, Mayors' Council (Belleair Beach)  
Mayor Woody Brown, Mayors' Council (Largo)  
Mayor Sandra Bradbury, Mayors' Council (Pinellas Park)  
Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics  
Chief Anthony Tedesco, Clearwater Fire Department (Alternate)  
Chief Thomas Kras, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue (Alternate)  
Capt. Michael Leiner, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office  
Chief Terry Tokarz, Largo Fire Rescue

Absent:

Dr. Aron Schlau, Pinellas County Medical Association  
Dr. Paul Anderson, Pinellas County Medical Association (Alternate)  
Jeri Reed, Citizen Representative (District 3)  
Mike Jones, Citizen Representative (District 4)  
Mayor Chris Alahouzos, Mayors' Council (Tarpon Springs)  
Jo Dee Nicosia, National Alliance on Mental Illness  
Whitfield, National Alliance on Mental Illness (Alternate)

Staff Present:

Matthew Tolnay, County Attorney's Office  
Dr. Angus Jameson, Pinellas County Medical Director  
Dr. Donna Dooley, Associate Medical Director  
Dr. Andrew Smith, Associate Medical Director  
Dr. Jonathon Elkes, Associate Medical Director  
James Fogarty, Bureau Director, Safety and Emergency Services  
Craig Hare, Director, EMS & Fire Administration  
Greg Woodrum, EMS & Fire Administration  
Steve Fravel, EMS & Fire Administration  
David Hudak, EMS & Fire Administration  
Derek Schauer, EMS & Fire Administration  
Lynn Abbott, EMS & Fire Administration

**Also Present:**

Commissioner Kevin Kenney, Independent Fire District Elected Official (Alternate)  
Michael Crispino, HCA  
Julie Bacon, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital  
Jeremy Tinter, Sunstar Paramedics  
Charlene Cobb, Sunstar Paramedics  
Chief Scott Sanford, Palm Harbor Fire & Rescue  
Chief Rodney Malpass, Palm Harbor Fire & Rescue  
Chief Doug Zimmerman, EMS Coordinator (Alternate)  
Capt. Mike Leiner, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office  
Lt. Dan Gulick, Pinellas County Hazmat Rescue Team  
Lt. Dustin McKay, Pinellas County Hazmat Rescue Team  
Chief Brett Schlatterer, Pinellas Park Fire Department  
Chief Andrew Hughes, Pinellas Park Fire Department  
Chief Jeffrey Davidson, Pinellas Suncoast Fire Rescue  
Chief Josh Saavedra, Safety Harbor Fire Department

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Dr. Eric Carver called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Roll call was taken, and Greg Woodrum confirmed that a quorum was met. There were 15 voting members in attendance.

**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2021 MEETING - APPROVED**

Upon presentation by Dr. Carver, Karen Mullins moved, seconded by Jorge Mercado and carried unanimously, that the minutes of the December 17, 2021 meeting be approved.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There were no citizens to be heard.

Dr. Carver passed the gavel to Commissioner Peluso, who chaired the meeting during the officer elections.

**OFFICER ELECTIONS – CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR, SECRETARY, AND EXECUTIVE & SELECTION COMMITTEES – APPROVED**

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- Appointment of new Chair – Mr. Woodrum stated he had received no nominations for Chairman prior to today's meeting and proceeded to turn the nominations to the floor. Following discussion, Dr. Eric Carver moved, seconded by Jorge Mercado, that Commissioner Julie Peluso be appointed Chair of the EMS Advisory Committee. Upon call for the vote, the motion was approved unanimously.
- Appointment of new Vice-Chair – Following discussion regarding nominations for Vice-Chair, Karen Mullins moved, seconded by Mayor Woody Brown, that Jorge Mercado be appointed Vice-Chair. Upon call for the vote, the motion was approved unanimously.
- Appointment of Secretary – Following discussion regarding nominations for Secretary, Dr. Carver moved, seconded by Ms. Mullins, that Richard Schomp be appointed Secretary. Upon call for the vote, the motion was approved unanimously.
- Refreshing/Confirmation of Executive Committee – Following discussion, Chief Chad Pittman moved, seconded by Mayor Brown, that Dr. Eric Carver and Chief Terry Tokarz be appointed as two additional members of the Executive Committee. Upon call for the vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

- Refreshing/Confirmation of Selection Committee – Following discussion, Mayor Brown, Mr. Mercado, Ms. Mullins, and Ms. Gerson agreed to remain on as members of the Selection Committee, and Gayle Guidash volunteered to serve; whereupon, Mr. Mercado moved, seconded by Mr. Schomp, that Mayor Brown, Mr. Mercado, Ms. Mullins, Ms. Gerson, and Ms. Guidash be appointed and reappointed as members of the Selection Committee. Upon call for the vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

### **SELECTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Mayor Brown related that the Selection Committee met earlier today and reviewed the applicants to fill Districts 4 and 6 citizens' vacancies. The Selection Committee rank-ordered and recommended the appointment of the following candidates: For District 4 - No. 1, Tina Ambrose, and No. 2, William Metcalf; and for District 6 - No. 1, Ty Dougherty and, No. 2, Erin Eddy.

Following discussion, Ms. Mullins moved, seconded by Mr. Mercado, that Tina Ambrose as primary and William Metcalf as secondary be appointed to serve District 4. Upon call for the vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Following discussion, Mr. Mercado moved, seconded by Larri Gerson, that Ty Dougherty as primary and Aaron Eddy as secondary be appointed to serve District 6. Upon call for the vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Peluso returned the gavel to Dr. Carver.

### **DRONE PRESENTATION – HAZMAT TEAM**

Craig Hare introduced two members of the Pinellas County Hazmat Team as Lt. Dustin McKay, and Chief Rodney Malpass; whereupon, Lt. McKay and Chief Malpass referred to a PowerPoint titled *PCHMRT Drone Response Program* and provided an overview regarding the background and purpose of the program, type of drone responses, work performed, drone fleet, response modes, and flight criteria. Discussion ensued. Presentation to be sent to the members.

### **RECOGNITION – CHARLENE COBB, SUNSTAR PARAMEDICS, PUBLIC OUTREACH COORDINATOR**

Craig Hare announced that Charlene Cobb, Sunstar Paramedic and Community Outreach Coordinator, is retiring after 33 years; whereupon, Petra Stanton, All Children's Safe Kids Team, shared that, since 2004, Ms. Cobb has worked on various committees and projects, such as the Child Passenger Safety Committee, Water Safety Committee, and served in various leadership positions.

Ms. Stanton presented Ms. Cobb a Lifetime Achievement Award for her dedicated contributions over her 30 years of service. Mr. Hare presented Ms. Cobb a certificate in recognition of 30 years of exemplary service to Sunstar Paramedics on behalf of Pinellas County EMS. Ms. Cobb expressed thanks for the award and certificate, noting that she has enjoyed working with everyone and is grateful for the privilege to have served Pinellas County.

### **RECOGNITION – SUNSTAR PARAMEDICS – ACCREDITATION – CAMTS, ACE, and CAAS**

Craig Hare recognized Sunstar for accreditation in three areas: Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS) for overall service provision, the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS) for its critical care transport program, and the Accredited Center of Excellence (ACE) by the National/International Academies of Emergency Dispatch, sharing that there are very few services worldwide with all three major accreditations.

### **UPDATE – COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH**

Jim Fogarty presented a brief update of the Computer-Aided Dispatch replacement project and provided information regarding Hexagon as the successful vendor, timeframe of completion, procurement process, costs, CAD governance committee, funding sources, and CAD configuration, operations, and components. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Fogarty indicated that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) is in the review process and has not voted on the item yet, with approval tentatively scheduled for April or May. Discussion ensued.

### **UPDATE – ALS FIRST RESPONDER SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS**

Referring to page 8 of the agenda packet, Craig Hare presented an update to the ALS First Responder System Enhancements and discussed system cost increases, work on a six-year multi-year forecast, reserves/funding, and various Provider Agency enhancement requests, noting that the final plans will be presented at the June meeting. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Hare introduced Pinellas Suncoast Fire Chief Jeffrey Davidson, and Chief Davidson presented a brief work history and shared that he is looking forward to working with everyone.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONDER AND BLS AMBULANCES TO 9-1-1**

Craig Hare shared that Sunstar has accomplished the task of hiring, training, and deploying the newly hired Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs), noting that the ambulance drivers will assist Sunstar with its EMT headcount and help with the BLS system. He discussed the EMR to EMT learn-to-earn employment opportunity, training standards, recruiting, and operations.

Referring to page 9 of the agenda packet, Craig Hare presented an overview of the revisions to EMS Rules and Regulations, noting the addition of “Emergency Medical Responder” under the definition of “Certified Professional”; expansion under “2.3 – Ambulance Service” to define BLS-Interfacility Ambulances” and the medical equipment and supplies used in those ambulances; and the training standard under “4.19 Emergency Medical Responder (EMR).”

### **PROPOSED EMS RULES & REGULATIONS FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONDER – APPROVED**

Following discussion, Mr. Mercado moved, seconded by Dr. Anthony Ottaviani, that the updates to EMS Rules and Regulations be approved. Upon call for the vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

### **EMS DIRECTOR REPORT**

Craig Hare provided new and updated information on the following topics:

- COVID: Expressed thanks to the hospitals, Fire Rescue, and Sunstar for their hard work during the last Covid wave, noting record numbers of patient transports during January. Still on Pandemic Plan Condition Yellow, expecting to transition to Condition Green. Monitoring situation closely to consider at some point turning the pandemic plan off.
- Staffing: Announced that Sunstar’s Patrick Chapman has retired yesterday and recognized his 36 years of dedicated service. Congratulated Jazmin Soloman on her new position as Sunstar’s new Director of Clinical Services. On final approach to hire Matt Caravona as the new EMS Training Coordinator. Hired Mark Eggers to the position of EMS Academy Coordinator.
- EMS Tower Replacement Project: The two radio towers behind the communications center will be demobilized next week. Deconstruction work starts Thursday, March 24. The new tower is up and functional in the side parking lot.

- Medical Director Contract: County Purchasing went to bid on the contract. Gayle Guidash is EMSAC's representative on the Medical Director Contract Evaluation Committee and includes membership from the Medical Control Board, Fire Chiefs, EMS Chiefs, and ambulance service. Dr. Stephen Haire will be the MCB's representative on the Medical Director Contract Evaluation Committee, noting that a meeting is scheduled to meet March 28.
- Announced that Pinellas County EMS is once again being recognized by the American Heart Association for the Mission: Lifeline Award, thanking Jeremy Tinter for his assistance.
- Capital Projects update for Pinellas Park, Pinellas Suncoast, Lealman, and Palm Harbor.

## **HOSPITALS UPDATE**

Craig Hare introduced Nancy Hopkins, Mease Dunedin Director of Patient Care Services; Julie Bacon, All Children's Chief Flight Nurse; and Michael Crispino, HCA Director of EMS Relations; whereupon, Ms. Hopkins, Ms. Bacon, and Mr. Crispino provided updated information regarding their hospital's staffing challenges, operations, and rebranding efforts/accreditation/program expansion.

## **MEDICAL DIRECTOR REPORT**

Dr. Jameson presented new and updated clinical information on the following topics:

- Staffing: Introduced members of his Online Medical Control team: Drs. Donna Dooley, Andrew Smith, and Johnathon Elkes. Noted that new paramedics lack clinical exposure due to Covid, and system is strengthening its onboarding and orientation processes.
- COVID: Pinellas County EMS remains on Pandemic Plan Condition Yellow, with hopes to move to green in the next week or two, monitoring the situation and remaining in preparedness mode. Discussed continued impacts to hospitals and staffing, and recruitment challenges for Emergency Medicine residency programs, noting that staffing issues affect all levels of medicine.
- Operations: Presented an update on record-setting call volume, supply chain issues, and continuing struggles with pain medication shortages, noting the addition of IV Tylenol and Toradol protocols to the toolbox.
- BLS to 9-1-1: Supported the County in the BLS to 9-1-1 rollout and provided a brief overview of the conservative protocols regarding the triage of patients to be transported in a BLS truck instead of an ALS truck.
- Partnership with Pinellas Human Services on ED MAT Pathway Development: Partnership between Human Services, Bayfront, and EMS to refer opioid use disorder or overdose patients to treatment, noting Drs. Jameson's and Smith's experience with Tampa General Hospital's successful similar program.
- Pinellas County Human Services Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP): Program that allows paramedics to refer opioid use disorder patients, with their consent, to local treatment centers. Provided statistical information regarding referrals and success rate. Continuing to work on community outreach.
- Leave Behind Narcan: Program would allow paramedics, who are treating an opioid use disorder or overdose patient, to leave a nasal Narcan spray with the patient or a family member for emergency rescue.
- Fusion Group: Cross-disciplinary group consisting of law enforcement, social services, healthcare, and EMS that meets to share data and discuss responses to particular problem areas to figure out boots-on-the-ground solutions for intervention. Congratulated Heather Henderson, a data analyst working with the group, on earning her Ph.D.
- National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP): Pinellas County EMS successfully presented three posters at the annual conference in December, thanking Jeremy Tinter and system paramedics for their successful presentations.
- Dr. Jameson shared that he has officially been named the Florida State EMS Medical Director, noting that the position is part-time and likely a reflection of the great work that so many people

have done in Pinellas County.

### **FIRE CHIEFS' REPORT**

Referring to page 8 of the agenda packet, Chief Chad Pittman related that the Fire Chiefs recommend, one, that all of the requests that meet the current funding solutions be prioritized, and, two, that the resolutions be reviewed, updated, and addressed before next year's budget process begins. Craig Hare indicated that enhancements are implemented mid-year and those that are not accomplished are carried forward to the next year. Discussion ensued regarding call volume, geographic service areas, and response times.

### **SUNSTAR REPORT**

Richard Schomp expressed thanks to the Fire Chiefs, Medical Director, and Pinellas County Public Safety for the collaborative effort of introducing Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs) and BLS to 9-1-1 into the system, adding that the changes have improved service to hospitals, Fire Rescue, and our community. He discussed Sunstar's sponsorship of and commitment to the EMR to EMT learn-to-earn program.

Mr. Schomp presented an overview of Youth Leadership Pinellas and discussed Sunstar's support for and leadership of the program, noting that its purpose is to teach high school students about Pinellas County's EMS system. He thanked his hospital partners for the great communication through the last several months.

### **AFFILIATES & STAKEHOLDERS**

No report was given.

### **OPEN FORUM**

- Petra Stanton expressed appreciation to Pinellas County for their support and provision of lifejackets for the Water Safety program, noting a recent giveaway in Treasure Island of 130 life jackets in cooperation with St. Pete Fire Rescue and Treasure Island Fire Rescue.
- Mayor Joseph Manzo indicated that this EMSAC meeting will be his last as his term of office ends on Monday, and he is grateful for the opportunity to have served with everyone on this council. Dr. Carver thanked Mayor Manzo for his service.

### **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for June 17, 2022, format to be determined.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mercado, seconded by Dr. Ottaviani carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 A.M.

*Audio and any correspondence received for this meeting is on file at the  
Pinellas County EMS & Fire Administration.*