

**PINELLAS COUNTY  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**MEETING MINUTES  
December 15, 2023**

The Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council met in person at the John Morroni EMS & Fire Administration Building, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Conference Room 130/132, Largo, Florida, at 10:00 A.M. on this date with the following members present:

Jorge Mercado, Citizen Representative (District 7) – Chair  
Mayor Sandra Bradbury, Mayors' Council (Pinellas Park) – Vice-Chair  
Gayle Guidash, Pinellas County Health Department – Secretary  
Christopher Markham, Citizen Representative (District 1)  
Doreen Caudell, Citizen Representative (District 2)  
Tina Ambrose, Citizen Representative (District 4)  
Becca Tieder, Citizen Representative (District 5)  
Ty Dougherty, Citizen Representative (District 6)  
Siomara Bridges-Mata, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Pinellas  
Mayor Dave Gattis, Mayors' Council (Belleair Beach)  
Mayor Woody Brown, Mayors' Council (Largo)  
Mayor Dan Saracki, Mayors' Council (Oldsmar)  
Chief Anthony Tedesco, City of Clearwater Fire Chief (Alternate)  
Chief Lindsey Kensinger, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue  
Chief Chad Pittman, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association  
Nancy Hopkins, Emergency Nurses' Association West Coast Florida Chapter  
Chief Doug Zimmerman, EMS Coordinator (Alternate)  
Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics  
Capt. Michael Leiner, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office  
Dr. Matthew Liao-Troth, St. Petersburg College  
Dr. Anthony Ottaviani, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society  
Commissioner Kevin Kenney, Independent Fire District Elected Official  
Dr. Zachary Zimko, PEMHS, Mental Health Professional

**Absent:**

Jeri Reed, Citizen Representative (District 3)

**Staff Present:**

Cody Ward, County Attorney's Office  
Patrick Allman, County Attorney's Office  
Dr. Angus Jameson, Medical Director  
James Fogarty, Bureau Director, Safety & Emergency Services  
Craig Hare, Director, EMS & Fire Administration  
Ken Grimes, EMS & Fire Administration  
Mark Eggers, EMS & Fire Administration  
Lynn Abbott, EMS & Fire Administration  
Ashley Giovannetti, Communications

**Also Present:**

Chaplain Bill James, Clearwater Fire & Rescue and All First Responders Matter  
Chief Scott Sanford, Palm Harbor Fire Rescue  
Chief Jeffrey Davidson, Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue  
Jazmin Soloman, Sunstar Paramedics  
Nancy Bacon, All Children’s Hospital  
Lt. Ryan Mitchell, Pinellas Park Fire Rescue  
PM/FF William Stark, Largo Fire Rescue

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chairman Jorge Mercado called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Roll call was taken, and Lynn Abbott confirmed that a quorum was met. There were 17 voting members in attendance.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**INVOCATION**

Invocation by Chaplain Bill James, Clearwater Fire & Rescue and All First Responders Matter.

**MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 MEETING - APPROVED**

Upon presentation by Chairman Mercado, a motion was made by Mayor Dave Gattis, seconded by Gayle Guidash and unanimously approved, that the minutes of the September 29, 2023 EMS Advisory Council meeting be approved.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There were no citizens to be heard.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Craig Hare welcomed new EMS Advisory Council representatives Christopher Markham and Doreen Caudell, Citizen Representatives for Districts 1 and 2, respectively; Dr. Matthew Liao-Troth, St. Petersburg College; Chief Lindsey Kensinger, St. Petersburg Fire Rescue; Patrick Allman, County Attorney’s Office; and Siomara Bridges-Mata, NAMI-Pinellas Executive Director.

**LARGO EXTRICATION TEAM / TECHNICAL RESCUE TEAM DEMONSTRATION**

Craig Hare introduced Largo Fire Rescue PM/FF William Stark and Pinellas Park Fire Rescue Lt. Ryan Mitchell; whereupon, referring to a PowerPoint, PM/FF Stark provided background information regarding the Largo Fire Rescue Extrication Team and discussed the purpose of safe vehicle extrication, current team members, goals of the team, and recent and upcoming competitions in Long Island, Miami, and Portugal. Following the presentation, he played a Fox 13 News video interview of the team.

At this time, members went outside to view a live action demonstration of the Largo Fire Rescue Extrication Team’s safe patient extrication from a vehicle.

Following the demonstration, members returned to the conference room. Lt. Ryan Mitchell presented information on Technical Rescue Team operations, intensive training, emergent scenarios, crisis resource management, and the benefits of community collaboration in preparation for mass casualty events, adding that TE42 is available outside for member viewing. Craig Hare reported on the Technical Rescue Medical Specialist Course, relating that Lt. Mitchell was key to the project’s success; whereupon, Mr. Hare discussed the budgetary implications that

approximately 15,000 vehicle crashes cost the County annually and the importance of contingency capabilities, noting that machinery encumbrances can be costly but are necessary to ensure the community's safety.

### **EMS DIRECTOR REPORT**

Craig Hare presented the EMS Director's Report and briefed members on the following items:

- **EMS System Updates**
  - Approximately 1,000 paramedics have completed their Advanced Cardiac Life Support, a big training push for the year.
  - Lifepak15 cardiac monitors have been placed on all Fire Rescue and Sunstar units.
- **ImageTrend** – The ImageTrend Elite EMS and Fire reporting system will be fully deployed by Christmas. Sunstar and 16 agencies are live on ImageTrend, and the last 2 agencies will transition next week; and by the new year, the system will have solid data flow and a completely overhauled records system.
- **Health Information Hub (HIH)** – Received commitments from all of our hospitals to integrate our data with their data, and the project is underway.
- **Ambulance Request for Proposal (RFP)** – All departmental work is done and has been shifted to County Purchasing to put the contract out to bid after the holidays.
- **Active Assailant Preparedness** - The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) and Police/Fire Chiefs have a new goal to create one unified countywide Active Assailant Preparedness Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to streamline incident command, victim extraction, family reunification policy, and the integration of Fire, EMS, and police training.
- **EMS & Fire Working Group** - Continuing to refine speeding up EMS response and patient triage/transport with 25-30 initiatives. Upcoming plans to discuss research and review of the RAMP triage process.
- **Medical Control Board** - The December 14, 2023 meeting was canceled due to no quorum.
- **EMS Training**
  - Plans to (1) schedule a Handtevy bag refresher class for Fire Rescue and Sunstar, (2) deploy fresh bags to Fire Rescue and Sunstar, and (3) add a drug guide and software to laptops to perform drug calculations.
  - 2024 - Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) theme is focused on trauma, and Active Assailant hands-on triage training.
- **EMS Operations**
  - Plans to convene the EMS Management Committee to update EMS Rules and Regulations for presentation to this Board in the spring.
  - Plans to renew 5-year interlocal agreements for ALS First Responders and Fire Protection Services.
  - Looking forward to phased implementation of the new Hexagon CAD dispatch system in mid-2024, noting that one system will combine to support PCSO, Fire and Police Departments, Sunstar, 9-1-1, and hospitals.

### **MEDICAL DIRECTOR REPORT**

Dr. Angus Jameson presented the Medical Director's Report and briefed the members on the following topics:

- **Protocols**

- Had to delay protocol updates with this year's heavy-lift implementation of the ePCR and monitor projects. Expect exciting things for 2024.
- Continuing to work with the Medical Control Board regarding increased utilization of the Freestanding Emergency Departments (FSEDs).
- Substance Use Disorder
  - Continued focus on Opioid Use Disorder with *Leave Behind Narcan*, a COSSUP referral program, where paramedics are referring patients to get people into treatment.
  - Continuing our partnership with Pinellas County Human Services with the Pinellas Matters program, where we are helping to build out pathways to care from local ERs to make sure resuscitated patients with Opioid Use Disorder are given another chance at life with treatment.
  - Dr. Ken Dumas and some of the OMD team are scheduled to present data regarding the successes of these programs at the NAEMSP national meeting next month in Texas.
- Office of the Medical Director
  - Next year's EMS Fellowship has been matched to Dr. Jeffrey Darko, who comes from Howard University College of Medicine and New York University School of Public Health. He is currently completing his residency in Emergency Medicine in Poughkeepsie and is scheduled to start on July 1, 2024.
- Clinical Operations – Trauma care will be one of the main clinical focuses for 2024. We will be refining our approach to trauma patients as a whole specifically related to Active Assailant victims, noting there is a “chain of survival” for these events like there is for cardiac arrest. While we have put the links in place over the last several years, this year's focus will be to strengthen each link in that chain of survival. Law enforcement's primary responsibility in these events is to stop the killing, and our primary responsibility is to stop the dying, setting the goal of zero preventable deaths.

### **FIRE CHIEFS' REPORT**

Chief Chad Pittman thanked the members for the opportunity to showcase Largo Fire Rescue's Extrication Team and the Pinellas County Technical Rescue team. He noted there was no additional information to report at this time.

### **SUNSTAR REPORT**

Richard Schomp highlighted that the \$2.6 million LifePak 15 rollout project is a success, and the ImageTrend ePCR implementation has been a heavy lift, and with tremendous staff support, the process is going very well. He provided statistical information regarding 2022 and 2023 transports and unit hours on the road, noting a 3.5 percent increase year over year. The system is continuing to grow at a rapid pace.

### **AFFILIATES & STAKEHOLDERS**

Siomara Bridges-Mata introduced herself and reported that NAMI Pinellas attended the Executive Director Leadership Exchange in Washington, D.C. earlier this month. The group was advocating on Capitol Hill for the continued funding and support for the 9-8-8 Crisis Lifeline. She presented information regarding the Peers in Recovery mentorship program, noting that the program supports individuals who are recovering from mental illness or substance use disorder and gives them the training and continuing education credits to become a certified Recovery Peer Specialist.

## **OPEN FORUM**

- Commissioner Kevin Kenney provided information regarding the Pinellas County Charter Review Commission and shared that the group is looking to discuss the consolidation of public services, noting he wanted to bring awareness to members. Jim Fogarty related that Pinellas County has a policy of transparency and noted discussion by the Charter Review Committee of the consolidation of public resources at its meeting on November 7.
- Becca Tieder shared information about the work of the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay to help current and retired First Responders cope with various trauma and issues by providing crisis counseling and referrals.

## **2024 EMS Advisory Council Meeting Schedule**

2024 EMS Advisory Council Meeting dates are March 22, June 21, September 20, and December 20, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. All meetings are held in person at the John Morrone EMS & Fire Administration Building, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Conference Room 130/132, Largo, Florida 33774.

## **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2024, format to be in person, and annual elections will be held at the March meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Kevin Kenney, seconded by Mayor Dan Saracki and carried unanimously, Chairman Mercado adjourned the meeting at 11:11 a.m.

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