

**PINELLAS COUNTY  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**MEETING MINUTES  
March 27, 2026**

The Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council met in person at the John Morrone 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:

Commissioner Kevin Kenney, Independent Fire District Elected Official – Chair  
Mayor Sandra Bradbury, Mayors’ Council (Pinellas Park) – Vice-Chair  
Erin Bates, Pinellas County Health Department (Alternate)  
Christopher Markham, Citizen Representative (District 1)  
Anthony Degina, Citizen Representative (District 2)  
Christina Snoots, Citizen Representative (District 3)  
Tina Ambrose, Citizen Representative (District 4)  
Becca Tieder, Citizen Representative (District 5)  
Ty Dougherty, Citizen Representative (District 6)  
Jorge Mercado, Citizen Representative (District 7)  
Chief Tony Tedesco, City of Clearwater Fire Chief (Primary)  
Chief Chad Pittman, City of Clearwater Fire Chief (Alternate)  
Nancy Hopkins, Emergency Nurses’ Association West Coast Florida Chapter  
Chief Doug Zimmerman, EMS Coordinator (Primary)  
Mayor Dave Gattis, Mayors’ Council (Belleair Beach)  
Mayor Woody Brown, Mayors’ Council (Largo)  
Mayor Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayors’ Council (Madeira Beach)  
Camille Hebbing, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Pinellas (Alternate)  
Chief William Schobel, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs’ Association (Primary)  
Capt. Jason Schmittendorf, Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office  
Dr. Deanna Stentiford, St. Petersburg College (Alternate)  
Chief Lindsay Judah, St. Petersburg Fire & Rescue (Primary)  
Richard Schomp, Sunstar Paramedics (Primary)

**Absent:**

Dr. Zachary Zimko, PEMHS, Mental Health Professional  
Dr. Anthony Ottaviani, Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society

**Staff Present:**

David Hare, Interim Bureau Director, Safety & Emergency Services  
Craig Hare, Director, EMS & Fire Administration  
Brett Schlatterer, EMS & Fire Administration  
Dr. Angus Jameson, Medical Director  
Patrick Allman, County Attorney’s Office  
Sean Davenport, EMS & Fire Administration  
Thomas Hund, EMS & Fire Administration  
Dawn Shontz, EMS & Fire Administration  
Marianne Merola, EMS & Fire Administration

**Also Present:**

Chaplain Bill James, Clearwater Fire & Rescue, All First Responders Matter  
Chief Michael Handoga, Dunedin Fire Rescue  
Chief Mark Zipeto, Dunedin Fire Rescue  
Chief Rick Graham, Lealman Fire Rescue  
Chief Jim Millican, Lealman Fire Rescue  
Chief Allen Smay, Lealman Fire Rescue

Chief Clint Belk, Madeira Beach Fire Department  
Chief Andrew Hughes, Pinellas Park Fire Department  
Commissioner Jacob Knighton, Pinellas Suncoast Fire Rescue  
Chief Ken Grimes, Pinellas Suncoast Fire Rescue  
Chief Chris Wilfong, Pinellas Suncoast Fire Rescue  
Chief Brady Hummer, Safety Harbor Fire Department  
Chief Greg Newland, Safety Harbor Fire Department  
Jazmin Soloman, Sunstar Paramedics

### **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Commissioner Kevin Kenney called the meeting to order at 10:04 A.M. Roll call was taken, and Marianne Merola confirmed that a quorum was met. There were 22 voting members in attendance.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **INVOCATION**

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

### **MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 19, 2025 MEETING – APPROVED**

Upon presentation by the Chair, a motion was made by Mayor Dave Gattis, seconded by Jorge Mercado and unanimously approved, that the minutes of the December 19, 2025, EMS Advisory Council meeting be approved.

### **OFFICER ELECTIONS**

After the meeting, the County Attorney determined that officer term limits would be overdue. This will necessitate a new election at the next meeting.

Attorney Patrick Allman provided a brief overview of the election process.

- Appointment of Chair – Upon call for nominations, Commissioner Kevin Kenney volunteered for another term as Chair and moved, seconded by Jorge Mercado, that he, Commissioner Kevin Kenney, be reappointed Chair of the EMS Advisory Council, for a one-year term ending March 2027. Upon call for the vote, the motion was approved unanimously.
- Appointment of Vice-Chair – Upon call for nominations, Mayor Sandra Bradbury volunteered for another term as Vice-Chair and moved, seconded by Jorge Mercado, that she, Mayor Sandra Bradbury, be reappointed Vice-Chair of the EMS Advisory Council, for a one-year term ending March 2027. Upon call for the vote, the motion was unanimously approved.
- Appointment of Secretary – Upon call for nominations, Richard Schomp volunteered for another term as Secretary and moved, seconded by Mayor Woody Brown, that he, Richard Schomp, be reappointed Secretary of the EMS Advisory Council, for a one-year term ending March 2027. Upon call for the vote, the motion was approved unanimously.
- Executive Committee – Item deferred to May 15, 2026 EMS Advisory Council meeting.
- Selection Committee – Item deferred to May 15, 2026 EMS Advisory Council meeting.

Attorney Allman briefly reviewed the Executive and Selection Committee items but agreed to skip these items due to time constraints. Members expressed interest in replacing Chief Terry Tokarz with Chief Mike Carpenter on the Selection and EMS Management Committees. The group also acknowledged that the Chief's position on the EMS Management Committee is separate and that there is currently no seat assigned

there for this body. It was noted that these changes may require a formal vote.

### **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There were no citizens who wished to speak.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

There were no new introductions.

### **ALS FIRST RESPONDER ENHANCMENTS PRESENTATIONS**

Craig Hare referred to and reviewed a spreadsheet titled *Data Driven Focus Group - Enhancement Requests for FY26-27*; whereupon, he introduced the following agencies, and their FY26-27 enhancement requests were presented.

- Clearwater Fire Rescue, Chief Tedesco
- Dunedin Fire Rescue, Chief Mark Zipeto
- East Lake, Chief Kenny Lane
- Largo, Mayor Woody Brown
- Lealman, Chiefs Allen Smay and Jim Millican
- Madeira Beach, Chief Clint Belk
- Oldsmar, Craig Hare
- Palm Harbor, Chief Doug Zimmerman
- Pinellas Park, Chief Andrew Hughes
- Pinellas Suncoast, Chiefs Ken Grimes and Chris Wilfong
- Safety Harbor, Chief Andrew Hawkins
- Seminole, Chief William Schobel
- St. Petersburg, Chief Lindsay Judah
- Tarpon Springs, Craig Hare
- Countywide, Craig Hare reviewed the proposed Countywide enhancement items, including Hands-On Training, First Due (Learning Management System), Planning Workshops, and Marine Unit staffing during holiday periods.

### **Budget and Cost Estimates**

All costs presented were identified as preliminary and considered *rough drafts* from DDFG Enhancement Requests.

### **Equipment**

- A question was raised regarding the potential replacement of water trucks.

### **Funding and Budget Reduction Inquiry**

- Christopher Markham asked where additional property tax cut funds could be freed up.
- Craig Hare responded that potential reductions could include a 3% cut and possibly an additional 5% reduction.

### **EMS Director Report**

Craig Hare and the Council discussed the overall service levels of the Fire Rescue agencies. The Council highlighted several important considerations, including the experience level of the workforce, the need for supervisors to train new and less experienced field staff, the desire to reduce drivetime associated with logistics duties, the status and use of marine units, and the ongoing focus on improving response times.

Commissioner Kenney asked when their materials would be due to the County Commissioners. Craig Hare

responded that the budget process presentation is scheduled for early to mid-June. Commissioner Kenney proposed preparing estimated budget impact for each item and suggested possibly holding a special meeting. The next EMSAC meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 15.

### **Medical Director Report**

Dr. Jameson reviewed several quality assurance and training priorities, emphasizing the importance of strengthening clinical performance and professional development, as follows:

- The quality of care provided on scene is equally as important as response time.
- There is a need to enhance new paramedic training and overall paramedic preparation.
- Continued development of paramedics remains a priority.
- An enhancement to the system is being requested to support advanced airway management and ventricular intubation training.
- Additional focus areas include hemorrhage control and pre-hospital care improvements.
- DEA has new rules for EMS Registration for Controlled Substances which are under review by the County.
- Discussion noted upcoming collaboration with JHACH to provide an EMS rotation for their Pediatric Emergency Medicine Fellows. During the rotation, fellows will spend time on Sunstar units, with the Office of the Medical Director, and at 9-1-1 Dispatch. We are pleased to officially serve as a clinical training site for the fellowship and to support the continued education of their trainees.
- The long-term goal is to build an academic EMS system.
- Overall, improvements in training, supervision, and quality assurance were emphasized as critical to system advancement.

### **Fire Chiefs' Report – Chief William Schobel, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association**

Chief William Schobel shared that he has no news to report at this time.

### **Sunstar Report – Richard Schomp, Chief Operating Officer, Sunstar Paramedics**

Richard Schomp relayed that Sunstar is working hard to bring clinical and competent people into the system.

### **Affiliates & Stakeholders**

No report was given at this time.

### **Open Forum**

Camille Hebling, Deputy Director of NAMI Pinellas, shared information about the MHA Walk scheduled for May 16 at England Brothers Park in Pinellas Park. See link: <https://www.namiwalks.org/pinellas>.

**2026 EMSAC Meeting Schedule:** 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – May 15, June 12, September 18, and December 18.

**Next Scheduled Meeting:** May 15, 2026, 10:00 a.m. Conference Room 130/132 at the John Morroni EMS & Fire Administration Center, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL 33774.

**Adjournment:** Jorge Mercado moved, seconded by Chief Lindsay Judah, Commissioner Kenney adjourned the meeting at 12:23 p.m.

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