

MINUTES

DECATUR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

COMMISSIONERS' BOARD ROOM

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2014

PRESENT: CHAIRMAN FRANK LOEFFLER, VICE CHAIRMAN DENNIS BRINSON, COMMISSIONER RUSSELL SMITH AND COMMISSIONER JAN GODWIN, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR GARY BREEDLOVE, COUNTY CLERK BEVERLY KING, SEMINOLE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ROGER LANE, DARIUS CULVERSON AND CHAIRMAN CHUCK ORRICK.

Chairman Loeffler called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. After the call to order, Chairman Loeffler recognized the EMS Assessment Team.

Ernie Doss described the purpose of the assessment: assess feasibility of establishing and operating a regional (2-county) EMS.

Mr. Doss stated the clinical outcomes appeared to be satisfactory. Having many long-term medics on staff suggests dedication to service. All parties with whom they met with were fully cooperative and candid.

Characterize EMS directors and County Administrators:

EMS Directors:

- Most medics have been educated in the discipline, but not in management.
- Common practice in EMS has been to promote from within.
- Until recently, no one offered an EMS management or leadership program specifically for the discipline.
- The result has been that many directors have managed EMS for patient care, not for fiscal viability.
- The respective directors appear to be well-qualified as medics. They are dedicated and committed. Neither has managed EMS in a comprehensive way for operational and fiscal viability.

Dave Wills characterized County Administrators:

- Both have been on the job for relatively short period.
- Both came from other disciplines and had to learn about local government.
- Both faced a multitude of pressing issues.
- As time passed, EMS came into focus.
- With instructions from county commissioners, they have initiated the review process.

The assessment team's further comments are not intended to denigrate anyone's service or to suggest they are not fully committed to their work. The findings are intended to point the way forward, to show the path which can lead a sustainable outcome for EMS wherein patient care is optimal and fiscal viability is achievable.

EMS management issues:

- Leadership, should be enhanced in order to provide the optimal level of management needed
- EMS had a singular focus: running the ambulance call; responding in a timely manner and providing good patient care.
- No overarching focus on managing issues related to operational and fiscal viability.

Administration; deficiencies that materially affect operations and outcomes.

- Each EMS lacks or fails to consistently adhere to comprehensive policies and procedures which results in inconsistency in personnel matters and operational outcomes.
- Neither county engages in a comprehensive, systematic analysis of operations which results in lack of evidence-based decision-making.

EMS Personnel structure; Seminole County does not have a command structure; Decatur County does, but should be improved which results in:

- Uncertainty about who is in charge.
- Silo-effect on staff; can become isolated from management process.
- Employees may not be held fully or equitably accountable.

Inadequate maintenance of facilities/equipment which results in:

- Disruption of service caused or affected by equipment failures.
- Failure to keep up current clinic standards.

Communications and relations between EMS, other community partners, county management and county commissioners which cuts both ways:

- Lack of understanding
- Misunderstanding
- Lack of appreciation of each other's roles and responsibilities
- Mistrust and / or lack of confidence on each side.

Superimposed result: low more in both EMS operations. Two way street between management and personnel.

Mr. Doss presented three options and requested that the Board of Commissioners direct them to the option they choose by an official act. Mr. Doss stated if the Boards are not prepared to take an action today, we ask that you do so at your next commissioners' meeting and convey the result to us. Mr. Doss stated they will proceed accordingly.

Mr. Doss presented the options as follows:

1. The Assessment Team provides an enumerated list of identified issues; counties act to address and correct them. We would not provide a comprehensive report because it would be premature in the context of so many issues requiring corrective measures.
2. The Assessment Team provides a written report listing the identified issues, along with a model for a regional (2-county) system; but we would specifically recommend against any effort to establish such system until all identified issues are resolved. Decatur County's EMS Director is retiring on June 6th and we recommend that if you choose option 1 or 2, is that you consider appointing an Interim Director to address the identified issues.
3. Counties consider alternative service delivery model. Single-county model or 2- county model.

A brief discussion followed. Both Boards agreed to discuss this matter at their next commissioners' meeting and decide what option to proceed with.

With no further discussions, Chairman Loeffler closed the meeting.

Approved: 
Vice-Chairman

Attest: 
County Clerk