



Council of Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squads, Inc.

May 19, 2021

In-person Meeting At: VB EMS HQ (some members joined remotely)

Approved Minutes:

Members in attendance: Jay Kerr and Tom Reading (R01), Joyce Mullins and Kay Laws (R02), Michael McCracken (R04), Andrew Rabideau (R05), Debbie Volzke and Nancy Gregory (R06), Paul Kalmus (R09), Bonita Teaford (R13), John Neumayer (R14), Kyle Musicant (R16), Joan Davis (R17), Billy Hackaylo and David Wheeler (MRT), Ed Brazle and Pete Gonzalez (EMS), Kristen Howard and Gina Benefeill (Foundation).

Meeting commenced at 18:10 with President David Wheeler presiding. Guests were welcomed and 'round the table' introductions made.

Approval of Minutes by motion, with no comments or corrections.

President's Report – David Wheeler stated what was on the agenda and asked if there were any changes needed. None were. David talked about his transition into the President position and a meeting he had with Chief Brazle.

Treasurer's Report - Bonita Teaford provided the following balances, report, and requests:

- Checking \$ 7412.15
- Savings \$13,214.14
- Deposit \$4,705.00
- Paid McNeal and Company for gap insurance \$17,179.00
- Squad's invoices for dues and gap insurance for 2021 has been sent. If you squad has not received there invoice please update your appropriate e-mail address.
- Mike McCracken asked where the deposit came from and Bonita answered that it was a combination of dues and donations.

Department of EMS Report, Q&A – Chief Ed Brazle provided the following update:

- COVID calls are still occurring and so we still have a need for high risk PPE despite all of the general mask relaxation.
- Vaccinations were amazing with 125,000 given in four months. Efforts around the city are still being supported by some volunteers. Recognition is coming (vaccinator challenge coin).

- Ambulance staffing levels continue to be a challenge, even though the majority of employers have allowed volunteers to return. The result is that those on duty are really busy with 60% crew utilization, it's the highest ever!
- Thank you to the Foundation for "bringing the fun back" with the EMS Week Beach Party.
- The new Dept of EMS Media and Communications Coordinator, Ricky LaBlue, is up and running. You should be seeing email from him already.
- The CVB budget has been approved and the Dept of EMS is fully funded for bringing on the seven remaining career medics by August, which is linked to Burton Station and the northwest part of the city.
- Billing for services has been "tabled" until and unless the City Council asks to bring the topic up.
- The grants from the city for ambulance replacement has been sent to the squads. Some left over funds from the \$2 mil is also going to the squads for equipment that goes on ambulances.
- The topic of the small Strategy Session with squad leaders on June 12th is contingencies (what ifs)?
- Mike McCracken asked Chief Brazle about Zone Car staffing, specifically whether it was better to have zone cars on the street than to take a Fire Engine out of service to use it's medic? The Chief said he would take the question back to Chief Green. Mike then said that he saw on Facebook one or more potential recruits hadn't heard back from EMS for in-processing. Chief Brazle said some may have fallen through the cracks during the all hands vaccination effort, but he would like names and details to do a proper investigation into what might have gone wrong.
- **Medical Operations/Training/Fleet/Supply Committee** – Nothing to Report, haven't met in a while.

Rescue Foundation Report(s)

- Gina Benefiel took the floor and explained what they did to celebrate career and volunteer EMS personnel for EMS Week (recognition ads, beach party with gifts). They are already beginning to plan for 2022 to be coordinated again with Dept of EMS, Rescue Council and squads.
- Squads are encouraged to reach out to the Foundation to use available professional photographer/videographer for their own recruiting and retention purposes
- The next foundation Grant application period will open on July 1st through October. The grants can be for equipment or non-equipment (e.g., admin items and IT). There is a requirement to report what was acquired with the last grants, so expect to receive an email asking for a photo and information. They'd like any photos, even from the assembly line, but their favorite photos are of volunteers using the equipment.
- Expect to see information soon about classes being offered from Non-Profit Academy, which would be a great opportunity to training the next generation of squad leaders.

- The branding effort has been ongoing for over a year, listening to all parts of the system. Part of the effort has been educating people about why it is necessary for the community to understand how the system works here in VB and how special it is. They sent out a list of frequently asked questions to assuage fears about change. The S&B Agency hired to develop names, slogans, and logo for the system is close to delivering. This will come with toolkits squads can use to get out their own brand within a brand. Foundation staff would like to come to squads and help them explain this to members in the fall.
- Gina presented Jenn Long's RnR report and data, saying that we are above recruit numbers this same time in 2019 (pre-COVID). People are showing a renewed interest in EMS.
- She said that 10% of new recruits are listing a current members who referred them, showing the clear benefit of the new Referral Program. That Foundation funded program gives a \$50 gift card to recruiters and their names are entered into a drawing for \$500 to be given once every six months.
- Joyce Mullins asked "what's in it for the Foundation, aren't they part of Rescue 14?" Gina said it did start with VBVRS years ago, but today the Mission Statement of the Foundation says it will ensure an independent and vital volunteer rescue system, and the Foundation's Vision is for advocacy and strong community connections, offering programs and services to each of the rescue squads, including marketing and public relations campaigns, and education of the community and city government. This is not to mention that the foundation gives grants to every squad, not just VBVRS, and has spent millions of dollars on advertising for the volunteers that come to all of the squads.
- David Wheeler asked about the requirement for the Annual Report. Gina said yes, the Foundations Board of Directors appreciated the report so much, giving these business people a better perspective of the squads. They've now insisted on it. Basically, squads shouldn't ask for grants in the future if they couldn't take the time to explain who they are to the grant providers.
- Mike McCracken said we should thank the Foundation for all they do, and we must educate our members so that they all are aware.
- **Sustainability Committee** – Chief McBride wasn't present but Gina said Ellen attended a RnR Training Retreat and built a plan which is being shared through the Sustainability Committee.
- Mike McCracken said that Chief McBride also deserves kudos for the COVID Warrior gifts being a great success and for the Sustainability Committee being a great collaboration platform.

Rescue Council Coordinator Reports

- **Recruiting Coordinator** – Jay Kerr said he is meeting with the Foundation staff to align efforts.
- **Multi-Squad Fund Drive Coordinator** – No report, but the Consolidated Campaign is underway, and Plaza has also sent out their fund-raising mail.
- **Jr. Rescue Squad Liaison** – Will resume when school starts in the fall.
- **EMS Week Coordinator** – John Neumayer said that he didn't need to find a separate Rescue Council budget, he just offered ideas about recognition ads and

gifts to Gina and Jenn at the Foundation and they said they were going to do all of those things with their funds. Mike McCracken said he thought the Council should do something more independently in the future.

Unfinished Business

- John Neumayer, on behalf of the Bylaws Committee, presented a number of changes, most reflecting the ways things are already happening, including:
 - Aligned the dates of confirmation for Council officer eligibility with recently changed election dates.
 - Chief of Dept of EMS and Executive Director of the Foundation are non-voting members of the Rescue Council, but not on the Council's Executive Committee.
 - Encourages participation in other organizations' committees, rather than duplicate committees, when those organizations are effectively managing an issue common to the squads (e.g. recruiting and retention, fund-raising, medical equipment and supplies).
 - Agenda format removed from Bylaws since it already follows the typical Roberts Rules content and sequence.
 - More detail on how a member of the Council may be dismissed for misconduct.
- A suggestion was made to add an electronic voting clause, which John will do.
- Comments and suggestions should be sent to John until mid-June. A final version will be shared a minimum of 27 days before the July meeting when Council will vote to approve it.
- Mike McCracken followed up on the Billing for Service Survey, saying that work stopped when we found out that City Council was unwilling to discuss or consider it.
- Mike suggested that rather than ever pursuing Billing for Service we could just ask the City Council to give us \$185,000 per year operating expenses.
- Chief Brazle didn't respond to Mike's idea, but said that the City Council is now aware that Billing is an issue being discussed.
- Mike said rescue Council should continue to educate the City Council with facts.

New Business

- Chief Brazle introduced a new issue for the Council's awareness. Since the Virginia General Assembly is allowing collective bargaining, it seems that police, fire, and possibly career EMS will unionize. The unions will begin to have considerable say in operational, as well as administrative matters. Even the squads will be impacted if unions demand something related to truck safety, as an example.
- There has also been a court ruling which finds the way that CVB is districted for Council representation to be illegal. It could lead to a change in the faces we know, and we may need to educate the newly elected Councilpersons.
- David Wheeler reported on the Chesterfield Insurance we collectively buy for ambulance coverage. He said the invoices have been sent out to squads. Coverage is from Feb 15th 2021 – Feb 15th 2022. He talked about how the policy

only covers \$50k although several squads requested \$250k coverage because Chesterfield's underwriters backed out of the deal. Kevin from Chesterfield is willing to come talk to the Council.

- Mike McCracken and John Neumayer said they thought they had already been covered for \$250k for some time. Mike said he thought that his squad already paid two bills (one for \$50k coverage and one for the extra \$200k). John didn't think R14 paid anything directly, but wasn't sure. Andrew Rabideau said that his squad does pay Chesterfield separately.
- David Wheeler said if squads want to send their vehicle information, he will ask Chesterfield to calculate another coverage quote.
- John said maybe we should go shopping somewhere else.
- Mike McCracken said as the Council's Member-At-Large, he thinks he needs to "check to pulse" of all the volunteer members and proposed a survey and SWOT analysis of the results.
- Chief Brazle said that he has lots of historical survey results.
- John said, let's not duplicate Foundation efforts, and if the focus is Recruiting and Retention, let's have the squad's RnR points of contact involved. Mike agreed and asked the squad's to send him the name of their POC.
- David Wheeler asked the squads representative to report who their squad primary and alternate representatives will be for the coming year. All but Kempsville reported. John said he would contact Kristine Benadum.
- David Wheeler also asked members to consider and bring to the next meeting Rescue Council objectives, potential projects and budget items for the coming year.
- Peter Gonzalez of VB EMS said he was here to represent the EMS Association and its President Will Shackleford. He followed up on Chief Brazle's comments about unions. Specifically I.F.F. is lobbying career medics to join and looking for a contract with the city. They would speak to City Council on behalf of medics, and volunteers by association.
- Chief Brazle added a follow-up to the Virginia Assembly's Presumptive Cause, saying that although it does cover all EMTs, the City Council will be looking at the implications of "step 1" in June, considering career medics only initially.

Squad Reports – Brief Reports from each Squad present

- **R1-** Tom Reading said they are doing cookouts for EMS Week and have resumed study groups on Sunday nights.
- **R2-** Joyce Mullins said they've been working on getting supplies straight, fixing and upkeep around the squad's spaces. They are resuming in-person meetings. Also having cook-outs. Anyone having an issue running out of R2 please notify Joyce.
- **R4-** Mike McCracken said they are having a member appreciation picnic at Froggy's and on the Beach. They have been doing a lot of onboarding. CEU training occurs monthly and next is a Radio Comms class.
- **R5-** Andrew Rabideau said they've lost a couple of key leadership people (IT, Supply and Training), but still having an EMS Week Party, and getting the Utility Truck back on the road.

- **R6-** NTR
- **R9-** NTR
- **R13-** NTR
- **R14-** John Neumayer said they have resumed in-person meetings. Next meeting is dedicating a Training Area to Jack Dye.
- **R16-** Kyle Musicant said they are cleaning and moving rooms around in the station. They're also having an EMS Week Cook-out.
- **R17-** NTR
- **MRT-** David Wheeler said normal patrolling has started and will continue through Labor Day. He said he'll be attending Rescue College in June and the VAVRS is planning to come back to VB in September with a training symposium.

Announcements / Dates to Remember

- **Next meeting:** July 21, 2021

Meeting adjourned at 19:15.