



**ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
ADVISORY BOARD**

March 25, 2010

Meeting called to order at 1902 hours with President McLear in chair.

Members Present: Carol Muench, Richard McDougall, Phyllis McDougall, Jean McLear, Ken Gardner, Donald Thompson, Chris Adams, Gary Jarvis, Kevin Wells, Sally Brothers, Curtis Newtown, Dale Barker

Members Absent: Ron Hance

Members Excused: Grover Katzman, Storm Cilley

Guests: Ann Smith-director NCEMS Program Agency, Craig Ballard – Office of Emergency Services, members of the Fire Advisory Board, Marty Hassett-Car 1

Meeting began with joint discussion from both the Fire Advisory Board and EMS AB concerning the dispatching procedures currently being done by Potsdam Volunteer Rescue Squad. Some of the following discussions and concerns were presented as follows:

Joe Finnegan –raised concerns regarding PVRs privately being dispatched. As a result of a conversation with Board of Legislators Chairperson, Mr. Gregory Paquin, it was suggested the two boards compose a letter with concerns over these dispatching procedures by PVRs and send it to the County Board of Legislators. The county is ultimately responsible for delay and loss of information from OES dispatchers to Potsdam PD to PVRs.

Bob White – Bob is the District Deputy Coordinator for the PVRs response area. His concern is also about the delay of care with dispatch receiving the initial 911 call, then they having to call PPD and relay this same information to them so they can now dispatch PVRs. Bob stated the Village and Town Boards of Potsdam have gone along with this form of dispatching for several years and it is their feelings it should stay the same. After the initial transfer of information regarding a 911 call, dispatch loses accountability as to a second or third tone to get an ambulance out the door. Bob emphasized he has no problem with the professionalism and quality of care that is given by PVRs and spoke very high to them. His main concern was the procedure now in place for that organization being paged out for emergency calls.

Marty Hassett – Marty explained how this issue has been an on-going thing and that he did meet with Chief Kaplan of the PPD. There have been 3-4 meetings with him and Craig Ballard. Marty stated he was open to it and also spoke to several of his PPD dispatchers, 911 dispatcher and PVRs. As reported by Mr. Hassett this fell upon deaf ears from PVRs. He told the chief about the two board meetings and that Chairperson Paquin has suggested to go through dispatch. PVRs objected to this. There reasons were it was too busy to use

the 911 dispatch, they know the area better than dispatch and that dispatch makes too many mistakes. Marty stated that Chief Kaplan would go along with whatever PVRS wants. Marty, then, explained how the calls to PVRS worked starting with the initial 911 call to OES and eventually to PVRS being paged. Marty spoke with the County Attorney, Mike Crowe, and stated there may be a liability issue once OES receives the initial call and then it is passed off to PPD. It was suggested both boards unite on this issue and write a letter to the Board of Legislators.

Frank Burns – By law the two boards are just advisory entities to the Board of Legislators and that we do not set policies or procedures; we just advise. He stated we need the blessing of the Board of Legislators to have Mr. Hassett make the change because, ultimately, it will fall back on the board if a liability suit is made.

At this time, reference was made to the thoughts and finding of Trooper Michael Dolan, concerning dispatching procedures currently being used by PVRS. Copies were made available for those who had not received this document. This was first written by Trooper Dolan back on January 30, 2009. This letter fell upon PVRS with deaf ears.

Gary Jarvis had one question for Marty Hassett. How does one break the log jam if we write this letter of concern and there is no response? He next asked if county can dispatch PVRS over the current paging system and was told no. PVRS would have to have their pagers reprogrammed in order to have this work.

Marty suggested maybe the County Attorney can talk with the Village of Potsdam and PVRS attorneys and come to some conclusion.

At this time Chris Adams made the motion that the chairperson of the SLCEMS AB, in conjunction with the SLCFAB, SLC OES and any other persons or agencies as needed, work together to have Potsdam Rescue be dispatched by SLC OES dispatchers who can provide EMD. Motion was seconded by Curtis Newtown and carried unanimously. Joe Finnegan suggested the two board Presidents, Marty Hassett, Craig Ballard, Chairperson Gregory Paquin and SLCEMS AB Legislative Representative Sallie Brothers meet and comprise this letter of recommendation to the Board of Legislators. Sallie recommended that a hard copy of this letter be sent to all Legislators as well as an email copy. Kevin Wells suggested that the County Attorney be involved.

At this time, the Fire Advisory Board members were excused.

**Minutes of the previous Advisory Board meeting** – Due to the lengthy joint EMS and FAB meeting, Gary Jarvis moved we dispense with the reading and discussion of the previous monthly meeting, seconded by Carol Muench and carried.

**Communications** – none

### **NCEMS/REMAC/REMSCO**

Report given by Ann Smith

Handouts were issued which contained both REMSCO/REMAC information as well as the State EMS notes.

Some of the topics that were emphasized:

1. The continuing saga of agency's CONs and will have Lee Burns attending the next REMSCO meeting which will be April 5<sup>th</sup>.
2. Reminded everyone the Vital Signs conference is in August this year which means we need to have state award nominations in earlier this year. So far her office has received no recommendations.
3. On the new PCRs coming from the state, there will no longer be a red number found on the top.
4. Gary Jarvis asked Ann if her office or REMAC could help with the problem of dispatching concerns regarding PVRs. At this time Chris Adams made the motion that the resolution he had drafted regarding PVRs dispatching procedures be accepted by this board and passed on to the joint meeting of both county fire and EMS advisory boards. Motion seconded by Ken Gardner and carried.

Regarding the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting with department representatives from the county as well as state representations about CONs, it was suggested to keep operating as per say until a definite change comes down from above.

### **Office of Emergency Services – Craig Ballard**

Fire and EMS calls:

	EMS	Fire
Jan.	600	167
Feb.	unavailable	

Craig commented on this February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting and feels this issue is about monies being received by agencies. He has an issue of being told these monies may be forced to be paid back to the state but, yet, don't stop what you are doing. Is this a double standard? He then continued to give his thoughts about this entire issue.

Old Business – none

New Business – Election of Officers. Need to get a slate of officers or appoint a committee and come back with recommendations at the next meeting. Dick McDougall and Don Thompson were assigned this committee task.

Next meeting will be May 25<sup>th</sup>

Upon a motion made by Carol Muench and a second by Curtis Newtown, meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm

Respectfully submitted

Donald D. Thompson, Secretary  
St. Lawrence County EMS Advisory Board