

FAB Minutes

4/19/18

Meeting called to order by Chair Joe Finnegan at 1900 hours.

Present – Mark Bomyea, Adrian Bush, Joe Gallagher, Pat O’Brien, Bob Kerr, Larry Whitton, Rick Rusaw, Scott McRobbie, Ron Streeter, Augie Weiss, Vinny Ferry, Kevin Crosby, Chris Sherwin, Jeff Hammond, Nick Friot, Paul Baxter, Joe Finnegan, Michael LeCuyer

Excused – Craig LaPlante, Tom Miller, Robert Crowe, Arthur Howie, Mike Farrell, FPS Nicole Harris-Reid

Chair Finnegan asked if there were any objections to minutes of last meeting that were received electronically. There were none. Motion made by Pat O’Brien that the minutes be approved, Seconded by Augie Weiss. All approved.

Legislator Larry Denesha discussed the Legislative Agenda that was shared with State representatives. This is available for view on the County website. Waddington Bass Master did receive County Legislative support. CR24 bridge closure in Russell. Director LeCuyer stated that a plan for fire and EMS dispatch has been established and set-up in the CAD.

Director LeCuyer provided a report on calls the numbers. (See Attached)

Office has 2 openings for part time dispatchers Civil service test results are back, HR has scheduled the typing test for 5/19.

Communications tower updates: All 4 towers constructed in 2017 are now on-line. Site development and regulatory work have begun at the Gouverneur tower location with the Hammond tower site to follow.

Grant \$ awarded this year was 900k for the tower projects. The County has been identified to receive Targeted Grant funding to support the Communications project and will develop a plan and budget to submit to OIEC.

The Legislature has approved the creation of a Deputy Director position for the Office. This position was abolished in 2013. This will be a civil service competitive (test) and will also assume the role of EMS Coordinator that is currently under the Director’s role.

Training: Mike spoke for Nicole. BEFO class starting at the beginning of June in Star Lake for the fire departments in the southern part of the county. This class filled up quickly with trainees from Star Lake, Cranberry Lake, Newton Falls, DCSR and Fine. There is an IFO/SCBA class beginning on 5/07 at the training center. This class has 30 trainees registered.

Bob Kerr reported on the new push pull apparatus that has been constructed by BOCES students for use in the TOAC portion of IFO/SCBA training.

A discussion took place revolving around the Smith farm (Morley) fire and the incident that Mark Bomyea experienced. This goes to the fact that all fire scenes present unknown hazards and that farms particularly may have specific hidden dangers. Director LeCuyer will attempt to coordinate a training specific to farm incidents with Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Old Business:

Deputy Coordinator Chaplin program is still under review.

NFIR's completed. Some departments were done by the Office. County reached 100% for 3rd consecutive year.

New Business:

County Risk Manager Paul Baxter presented on his role and the plan to meet up with each fire department individually to review training and provide guidance.

Pat O'Brien provided the Committee with the Draft guidelines for minimum training requirements for fire officers. This is based upon OSHA best practices. Bob Kerr cited Onondaga County and will reach out to them on how implemented and compliance. Legislator Denesha supports moving forward. A reasonable effort by AHJ's is needed to meet the minimum standard to continue participation in the County's Workers Comp. plan. There would need to be a time frame considered for implementation to allow for course scheduling regarding the necessary training. Director LeCuyer was tasked by the Committee to bring this to the EMSAB for discussion.

Director LeCuyer presented on Franklin County's Medical Evaluation Policy and believes this is a logical progression to be included with the Minimum Training Standards.

A committee was formed to put together a list of minimum requirements that we recommend to fire departments in the county that they can adopt for line officers.

Next meeting June 21st @ OES

Meeting adjourned 2030

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FIRE
E.M.S.

EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

TO: Ruth Doyle, County Administrator
 FROM: James Chestnut, Supervisor of Dispatch Operations
 DATE: May 2, 2018

The following is a report of CAD calls for April 2018:

	APR 18	YEAR 2018
FIRE DEPTS DISPATCHED	558	1,529
EMS DISPATCHED	1,518	6,137
LOCAL PD CALL FOR SERVICE	239	1,049
NYSP DISPATCHED BY B-COMM**	1,125	4,650
NYSP DISPATCHED BY SLC ES***	245	1,069
INFORMATIONALS CALLS*	949	3,527
SHERIFF'S CALLS FOR SERVICE	<u>886</u>	<u>3,453</u>
 TOTAL CALLS DISPATCHED IN SLC	 5,424	 15,894

*Informational calls include pocket dials, hang up calls, and test calls

**Dispatched by NYSP at B-Comm from Lewis

***St Lawrence County ES dispatched (911 calls)

Phone calls handled in dispatch center incoming and outgoing by line:

Emergency Services Dispatchers handled:

911	2577
EMS	3306
TEXT_2_911	2
NYSP	104
SHERIFF	<u>2821</u>
TOTAL	8,810

TOTAL PHONE CALLS HANDLED FOR APRIL: 8,810

YTD: 34,132

Michael LeCuyer, Director
James Chestnut, Supervisor of Dispatch Operations



**ENCOURAGING NEW YORK STATE TO CHANGE THE ENTITIES
RESPONSIBLE TO FUND AND PROVIDE FOR PRE-K EDUCATIONAL AND
RELATED SERVICES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS AWAY FROM
COUNTIES TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND/OR BOCES CONSISTENT WITH
ALL OTHER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING**

The Opportunity and/or the Need

Despite having impressive bureaucratic structures and programs, a myriad of regulations, distinct funding streams including property tax authority and even its own building code, the New York State Department of Education and K-12 institutions throughout the State seemingly cannot fathom how to provide Pre-K educational services to children with special educational needs without the financial support (but not any participation in determination of need or provision of service) by county governments. Currently, two separate systems are operating to provide pre-school education in New York State. The state education department administers the pre-kindergarten school programs, and local health departments are responsible for overseeing preschool education for special needs children. Counties also foot a substantial portion of the bills for preschool special education for special needs students.

New York is the only state that mandates counties to fund the federally required preschool special education programming. In large rural counties like St. Lawrence, this has historically proven to be both a logistic and financial nightmare.

It should come as no surprise that the employers of special skills staff (e.g. audiologists, speech pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, education specialists, etc.) and the provider of group services tend to be, the school districts and/or BOCES of St. Lawrence and Lewis Counties and/or providers contracted by the districts.

Apparently, the State perceives no conflict for the sole source providers of such services to sit on the assessment committees to determine demand for and scope of services to be paid for by the counties. Further, because the schools are not providing these services as a district activity, there is no local district willing to provide transportation and the County must contract with a private operation to provide summer bus services and monitors. Further, all group services and activities occurred within existing education buildings and settings.

The net result is a very expensive program providing services to a very limited clientele. In 2017, the estimated net cost for the pre-K program is \$ 1.996M. The number of children that benefited was: 164 (Summer) and 222 (peak month for the Regular school year). This county cost works out to be roughly \$ 9,000 per student at the peak count of 222 students for programming that can be as little as 2.5 hours per day and/or related services as determined appropriate. In actuality the cost per student was greater because peak enrollment was not maintained all year.

The gross cost of the program was approximately \$ 2.8M. Exacerbating the problem is the fact that schools do not have to be timely in their reporting and billing in order to be reimbursed and rates for services are often determined by the State after the fiscal year for the County's ends. There are timeliness issues related to the counties' ability to be reimbursed for program expenses. The situation is frustratingly absurd.

Further, as a mandated activity, the County needs to provide for administration and accountability for the program at its end and the county assigns approximately 1.9 FTE split between 3 staff members to fulfill this obligation.

From the tax payer's perspective, it is really only which tax bill the money comes from but the County cannot deliver services in as efficient a manner as can the schools themselves or through BOCES and these operations are singularly focused on educational needs for the next 13 years of these same student's lives.

It is not as if the NY SED does not financially support UPK now. All 21 school district serving students in St. Lawrence County have some form of pre-k programming (however, only serving 4-year-old Pre-K students) with combined SED budget allocations of \$ 2.791 M with a pre-k allocation of 306.5 FTE students.

Shift the responsibility to provide for all aspects of pre-K education to school districts and/or BOCES.

County legislators cannot help but ask why not simply add one more year of educational planning, services and programming and financial obligations to the responsibilities of the schools that already provide the balance of educational services for these same special needs children and absolve the counties of the need to be actively NOT INVOLVED in determining service planning for the affected children and for acting as the payer of first and last resort?.

ENCOURAGING NEW YORK STATE TO RECLASSIFY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FROM A TRANSPORTATION SERVICE TO AN ESSENTIAL CARE SERVICE AND TO REDUCE FUNDING BARRIERS FOR IT

The Opportunity and/or the Need

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a rapidly evolving industry and patient care standards and expectations have also shifted significantly during the past decade. Frustratingly, most funding formulas and models still treat EMS essentially as a transportation service and thus do not structure reimbursements such that the cost of medical equipment and medical supplies are adequately accounted for and/or covered by the reimbursements.

As with many services associated with health care, the costs continue to rise at rates often higher than the change in rates of revenues. The funding conundrum is exacerbated by the fact that municipal tax caps mitigate against increased contractual funding from municipalities serviced by the providers.

The result of the shifting standards of care and the decreasing availability of off-setting revenues has both diminished the number of viable providers of appropriate EMS services and the number of qualified volunteers trained to provide first response care and continuing care in transit. In more rural areas of the State, having volunteer staff available to respond 24/7 is also limiting the viability of EMS services.

Re-evaluate EMS as an essential service as opposed to a transportation service; establish incentives for the consolidation of service and consider legislation to reduce funding limitations as appropriate.

The merging failure of the EMS response network, statewide, is an emerging public health emergency. The increased fiscal stress coupled with higher service expectations

and lack of appropriately-trained first responders is creating dangerous voids in EMSS services for communities throughout the State.

A “blue ribbon panel” should be convened to evaluate the evolution of EMS services over the past few years and the challenges this evolution has caused to the provision of services State-wide. The panel should also consider and define the break points between the “quality of service” and the “quantity of service” and recommend standards to consider relative to the consolidation of services. In more rural areas, the panel can and should speak to the potential benefits of a comprehensive, county-wide and managed EMS district.

Financially, support:

- Recognition of EMS as an essential service with respect to the provision of State Aid (S02770 / A08891));
- Prospectively exempt cost associated with contracting for or providing EMS services from the tax-cap calculations for municipalities;
- Support increased Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements for EMS services and transport;
- Support Direct Insurance Reimbursement for EMS services (S02527 / A0343);
- Support special funding districts established at the discretion of local governments for the creation and provision of ambulance services (S07443 / A09589)

Structurally support:

- Decrease the age to become an Emergency Medical Technician to 17 and leverage resources and training for such through local school districts and/or BOCES programming.
- Encourage the NYS Department of Health to facilitate more accessible distance learning for rural areas for credentialing and certifications