Santa Rosa County
Emergency Services Advisory Committee
March 23, 2005
2:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Members present:

Stephen Cozart
Bryan Gibson
John E. Reble
Joe Diamond
Werner Panchenko
Don Vanderryt

Staff present:

Sheryl Bracewell
Deb Grinde

Absent:

T. Simmons
D. Ling

Agenda approved as submitted with the exception of adding the following to the Old Business: First item will be the election of Vice Chairman.

Minutes for meeting held on February 23, 2005 approved as submitted.

Chief Reble introduced new District 2 representative, Werner Panchenko, who replaces G. Goldstein. Mr. Panchenko has an extensive background in emergency response, including work at East Milton, Whiting Field and Rural Metro Ambulance Service.

Persons to Appear
None

Review of Reports and Statistics
Reviewed Analysis of Emergency Calls for the month of February. Did a comparison of those calls not responded to during the months of January and February. S. Bracewell explained that the calls that indicate no response by the fire districts are reviewed thoroughly on a monthly basis to verify that the stations were busy and/or unable to respond.

Request was made to include the priority of each call on the "No Response" report. That information will be on the report for March data.

S. Bracewell stated that the Skyline Volunteer Fire Department has indicated that they will be responding to only those calls that have an Echo or Delta priority level starting the month of March. Responses to any other level will be by exception only. They will respond at Rural Metro's request and/or if there is a delay in response by the med unit to the patient.

Bryan Gibson wondered if the Medical Director could select particular call types for the fire departments to respond to on a set basis. He suggested that we may have a better response to calls if the volume of calls is narrowed down.

Correspondence and Additional Information
Chief Reble referred to an article in the Pensacola News Journal regarding the necessity for the City of Milton Fire Department to respond to those calls that are not responded to within the county by the county fire districts.

Old Business

Vice Chairman
Joe Diamond made a motion to select Stephen Cozart as the Vice Chairman of the committee and Bryan Gibson seconded the motion. Motion carried by committee. Stephen Cozart was introduced as the Vice Chairperson of this committee.

Utilizing Inmate Work Crews for Station Maintenance
Suggestion had been made that this committee investigate whether county jail inmates would be available to perform lawn maintenance duties at each of the fire district stations. Chief Reble will contact H. Walker, County Administrator, regarding this matter prior to our next meeting.

MCI Grant Status Update
MCI equipment supply cache has been received and distributed. The City of Milton Fire Department is starting to receive supplies at this time. No additional news to report regarding this matter.

MSBU Funding

Discussion held regarding the fire districts accountability to the county for the funding they receive.

J. Diamond recommended the districts be required to complete uniform budget request forms. He also suggested that this committee take on the responsibility of reviewing major discrepancies discovered during audits of the departments' books.

S. Bracewell stated that the county is of the opinion that they have met all requests made by the fire districts. However, the county has not seen any marked improvements in some districts.

It was reiterated that each district must submit a roster of training data that indicates classes completed, individual certifications, etc. J. Diamond suggested that yet another request be made to each district for the necessary information. The request should be in the form of a letter. Chief Reble will draft a letter to that point and noted that the state requires a roster be submitted on an annual basis. S. Bracewell stated that Avalon, Jay and Pace have responded to date.

B. Gibson stated that the county may want to measure each district's performance by monitoring the ISO ratings. It was noted at this point that the ISO rating does not take into consideration any calls that have no response.

Discussion ensued regarding the fact that at least six (6) districts were labeled at risk in 1987. The supplements to these departments were increased. The increases in revenue to the fire districts do not keep pace with the rates of inflation.

Disparity, inconsistencies, etc were discussed at length.

S. Bracewell stated that the county would have some recourse by re-allocating funds, denying any requests for funding of special projects, etc.

Chief Reble stated, however, that our goal must be to make improvements to the system and not to undermine the departments. He also stated that the county (BOCC) would need to take a stand if any action is taken on the part of this committee.

Lack of Response

Chief Reble stated that he had attended a supervisory meeting that included representatives from Rural Metro and ECC supervisors specifically to discuss the issue of a lack of response on the part of the fire districts. He wanted to know if this is a problem to the employees of Rural Metro on a day-to-day basis. They indicated that it can be a problem at times.

Chief Reble then attended a Santa Rosa County Firefighter's Association meeting to discuss the statistics regarding the same subject. Remarks from the firefighters indicate the following issues:

Some members are burnt out
No responses occur on workdays when firefighters are not available
Med unit arrives on scene prior to the firefighters
Chief Reble is of the opinion that there seems to be no cause and effect for the lack of response on the part of the volunteers. It was noted that the quality of the responses could also become a concern.

S. Bracewell will provide a listing of the ISO ratings for each district and the date of the last review. S. Bracewell also stated that upon completion of the last EMS Task Force she suggested to the county that they consider paying a rapid response team to respond to medical calls only.

It was reiterated at this point that the purpose of this committee is to take the county emergency services into the next five (5) to ten (10) years. Our responsibilities include making plans, recommendations, etc for this county.

Bryan Gibson suggests the following actions be considered and that all departments be included in the processes:

- Budget Compliance
- Budget Review
- Standard Operating Procedures or Practices
- Benchmarks
    - ISO Review
    - Potential Risks
    - Potential Recompense (in order to decrease the citizens insurance rates)
- Response Time Protocols, by priority, etc.
- Hydrant Maintenance Plan
- Accountability and Standards

S. Cozart stated that we should not be attempting to run the departments. It seems to be a matter of accountability and we should be able to assist and help the districts. A lack of accountability is contributing to this problem and this committee will need to be able to measure the effectiveness of contributions made to the districts by the county.

Discussion by the committee ensued. It was stated that objectives will need to be set in order to measure improved response times. It was noted that some of the departments are doing well and others are not doing well. We have eliminated systemic problems.

B. Gibson questioned whether there are fire standards for volunteer departments.

S. Bracewell stated that there is a Fire Board of Adjustment and Appeals. She indicated that we might want to get input from this group along with the Santa Rosa County Firefighters Association.

Chief Reble indicated that Chapter 69A of the Firefighters OSHA Act lists some requirements for firefighters. It includes regulations and policy regarding the FF1 certification requirements, the 2 In – 2 Out issued by OSHA, and defines qualified, certified, trained, equipped firefighters. It will also provide a definition of a trained firefighter, for which a window for exceptions may have closed in 2004.

Chief Reble would like all to be aware that on March 31 Walt Malo from the Bureau of Fire Standards & Training (BFS&T) will be in Santa Rosa County at 7:00 PM to review the issue of training requirements. It was stated that if the requirements are not met, the department will not be in compliance. The county may then have to determine whether that district will continue to receive funds.

Chief Reble stated that volunteer fire departments do not have to meet the standards of paid departments.

Fire Hydrant Maintenance

The Commissioners are interested in the project of maintaining our hydrants. It will be necessary to meet with the water purveyors as quickly as possible. It is necessary to discuss each others needs in order to move forward with this project.

Public Forum

Richard Collins, 8600 Chumuckla Hwy, Pace, FL
Agrees with and suggests that a completed audit for each department be reviewed by this committee
Stated that out of fourteen (14) or fifteen (15) members of American Water Works in Santa Rosa County, only four (4) or five (5) serve on our water boards
Suggests that one reason for no response may be a lack of membership; indicated that no departments looked to the county for assistance with recruiting. Mr. Collins suggests that this committee help them in spite of themselves.

Next meeting is April 27, 2005 at 2:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Submitted by: D. A. Grinde