

Santa Rosa County  
Emergency Services Advisory Committee  
September 19, 2007  
2:00 p.m.  
MINUTES

**Members present:**

Stephen Cozart  
Jason Kimbrell  
Joe Diamond  
Werner Panchenko

**Members absent:**

Ryan Jenkins

**Staff present:**

Brad Baker  
Deb Grinde

Agenda approved as submitted for this meeting with the exception that Chris Rucker, LifeGuard will be listed as a person to appear.

Minutes for meeting held on July 18, 2007 approved as drafted with no exceptions.

- S. Cozart, Chairman, advised this committee that he has accepted the resignation of Don Vanderryt, District Four. He commended Mr. Vanderryt for all of his work, his time and his effort that he contributed to this committee. Commissioner Goodin has been asked to appoint a replacement for Mr. Vanderryt who resigned due to health issues.
- S. Cozart introduced Mr. Jason Kimbrell as the new representative for LifeGuard. Jason graciously accepted the position and spoke to the committee about LifeGuard's presence in Santa Rosa County.

**Persons to Appear**

S. Cozart mentioned at this point that representatives from any air ambulance services have not been included in today's agenda as previously planned. The study that was suggested to determine the needs of our county regarding air ambulance service has been tabled at this time. S. Cozart believes that this committee, in itself, does not have the knowledge or skill to determine a need for this service by inviting and listening to representatives of that industry.

Discussion ensued and the committee as a whole agreed to this course of action.

Chris Rucker, LifeGuard Ambulance Service, 4340 Avalon Blvd., Milton

S. Cozart introduced C. Rucker, LifeGuard Ambulance Service, by reviewing the LifeGuard operations report for the month of August. It was noted that the statistics were analyzed on a daily basis and the format has changed. He also noted that the new guidelines actually go into effect October 1, 2007.

C. Rucker proceeded to thank this committee for welcoming LifeGuard to the ESAC meetings and to the community. He provided a glimpse of what LifeGuard intended to make available to the citizens of Santa Rosa County through the next sixty days and beyond.

He pointed out that Jason Kimbrell is the new Operations Manager for LifeGuard and is spearheading the day to day operations. C. Rucker noted that during the first 60 days of operations they are responding within the guidelines of the previous contractor; that is response times that are within 12 minutes in the urban area and within 20 minutes in the rural area. The statistics indicate that during the months of July and August they have attained 87% and 92% compliance respectively. This demonstrates a great improvement already. C. Rucker stated that it seems the community and individual citizens have received them well and together we are optimistic about the way things are going.

He went on to say that October 1 st will be the start of their newer and enhanced level of service that was how they based their proposals to the county. It will include additional ambulances, first responder units and different community and educational programs. Mr. Rucker advised this committee that he or anyone from the LifeGuard Ambulance Service will be glad to attend the ESAC meetings in order to update the committee regarding the status of EMS system and to keep you abreast of what is happening.

S. Cozart asked Mr. Rucker what types of changes they are making starting October 1 in order to meet the new response time goals.

C. Rucker stated that there are many things that will be implemented to meet the new response time of 10 minutes in the urban area and 18 minutes in the rural area. Changes will include having more ambulances available on the road and having established both paramedics and EMTs hired and ready to perform their responsibilities as ALS first responders. We have evaluated posting plans in order to meet the needs in a timely basis. We have utilized statistical analysis and GPS analysis to establish our plans. We realize that we are not at the new standard yet but believe the additional resources will improve these statistics. C. Rucker answered S. Cozart's question regarding LifeGuard's ability to meet the new requirements starting October 1 st by stating that they should be able to meet the new standards. He believes that they will continue to have a learning curve, seasonal changes, and population changes may have effects by exception. The extra two months have assisted tremendously in being prepared for the startup date.

S. Cozart stated that their performance has been very commendable. J. Diamond, Avalon VFD, stated, too, that their department is pleased with their performance to date. He added that the Quick Response Vehicles will be an even greater improvement to a job well done.

C. Rucker explained that the Quick Response Vehicles (QRVs) will get a paramedic on site much quicker than the ambulance, will provide broader area coverage and allows the ambulance more time to arrive on scene. There will be three (3) QRV vehicles generally posted in the north Pace area, in the area between Avalon and Jay, and in the area of East Milton, Hwy 87 South. LifeGuard will have a supervisor staffed twenty-four (24) hours a day and will have a second supervisor working and available during regular business hours (nine hours a day).

LifeGuard will be willing to have the vehicle at this meeting for viewing, or provide a quick tour of their facility on Avalon Blvd. at the end of any meeting at the committee's request.

C. Rucker stated that the Louisiana area is the only other area utilizing the Quick Response Vehicle concept and seems to be a very successful program. The purpose of the program is to assure that medical help is on scene as quickly as possible and it is not necessarily an ambulance. The QRV vehicles are equipped with ALS equipment, drugs, monitors, etc. and are painted with a red, white and blue motif!

S. Cozart questioned whether LifeGuard has had any poor reception from anyone since the inception of their contract. C. Rucker advised that everyone has been very receptive and seemingly delighted with the fact that LifeGuard is operating within the county! Everyone has been very positive!

#### Reports and Statistics

Reviewed reports for July and August. The No Response calls were discussed and it was noted that the percentages were still greatly improved from the past performances. S. Cozart plans to review the trends of the statistics over the next few months. It will be advantageous to review LifeGuard's performance data at the beginning of the year also.

#### **Correspondence**

None

#### **Old Business**

##### Fire Services Plan

The meeting was held on September 11 and it was determined that the scale would be adjusted somewhat. Rates were changed to the following scale:

0 - 3,500 square feet \$85.00

> 3,500 square feet \$175.00

Commercial structures 2.5 cents per square foot

Corrections were made to the R.V. parks' tax structures to reflect \$30.00/lot

Changes to the administrative side of working plan included the addition of two (2) private citizens to the Fire/Rescue Executive Group. The funding mechanism remained the same through the final proposal.

S. Cozart discussed the fact that the media referred to the new plan as more of a tax increase to the MSBU rates than a new set of operating procedures and guidelines. He stated that the rate increase is not the most important part of the working plan. The work put into the plan by B. Baker and the changes to the administrative functions are by far the more important changes made to the operations of the MSBU districts.

R. Collins, Pace, FL

Mr. Collins stated that the current structure of the ordinance covers only 4-5 ordinances for the departments. He believes that it is obvious the ordinance should be re-written at this time. He stated that the duties and the responsibilities of the Fire/Rescue Executive Group should be spelled out within the ordinance, and that it should be similar to a legal and binding contract. Mr. Dannheisser, County Attorney advised Mr. Collins that they will be included and that he, Mr. Dannheisser, is currently re-writing the ordinance at this time.

B. Baker interjected that Emergency Management staff has been assisting with the re-write of the ordinance and the agreements referred to within the ordinance. Mr. Collins

also stated that he, too, agrees that the media did not expound on the positive aspects of the overall plan. He stated that there is a greater team effort at this time in realizing cost savings by making consolidated purchases, etc. There are many positive aspects of the plan that should be included in press releases in a push for greater PR.

S. Cozart agreed with Mr. Collins and stated that there were no controls in place and, consequently, previous requests for rate increases have been turned down. These changes, then, are an improvement.

W. Panchenko stated that, in particular, the bulk purchases will realize significant savings. He then asked B. Baker who would be responsible for distributing the funds throughout the MSBU districts.

B. Baker advised that the Finance Dept. will continue to collect and disburse the funds as they have in the past. The final approved budget will dictate what each department receives. Some districts will get their funds in monthly increments for the first six (6) months. Some will get their funds in monthly increments through the entire year. The Executive Group will monitor and be responsible for

reviewing and auditing the districts' budgets, receipts, etc. that are provided by each Board. Anything that the BOCC auditor finds out of line will be kicked back to the Executive Group to correct any problems. The Executive Group will oversee the Boards in order to assure that they understand good business practices and an understanding of their budgets.

J. Diamond questioned B. Baker regarding the timing of the collection of the funds. B. Baker stated that the funds are collected according to the due dates established by the Tax Collector's office.

J. Diamond also questioned whether there would continue to be extra funds subsidized by the county to some of the less populated districts (all of the north end departments plus Bagdad VFD). B. Baker stated that the extra assistance provided by the county would be discontinued; there will no longer be a subsidy from the county for the fire districts.

J. Diamond also questioned whether the county charges a percentage of the funds to collect the taxes. B. Baker stated that the county (tax collector) receives a collection fee of 2.1%.

W. Panchenko asked whether we would be requesting the ISO to be re-addressed. B. Baker stated that we have a new ISO representative that lives in Santa Rosa County. He has reviewed a couple departments. However, at about year 3 we will probably request that they come in to do new adjustments.

S. Cozart commended B. Baker for making all of these issues come to fruition through all of his hard work.

### **New Business**

None

### **Public Forum**

R. Collins, Pace, FL

Mr. Collins talked about the fact that the fire departments need to maintain information for the public to view on their web sites. Some things he would like to see included are:

Each apparatus

Age of the apparatus

Condition of the apparatus

Life expectancy of the apparatus

Maintenance costs for each

He questioned what the status of the updates to the individual web sites might be. B. Baker stated that he has requested that the web sites be implemented. There has not been a lot of response to the request. However, considering what has been accomplished, it may be that they have been focusing on the other issues. He will re-address the subject.

R. Collins stated that the first year will have a lot of trial and tribulations. The web sites will increase the public's knowledge and eliminate their excuse of a lack of knowledge.

B. Baker asked that R. Collins assist with the Allentown VFD creating a prototype of a web site format that would satisfy everyone's requests.

Discussion led by S. Cozart regarding the meeting schedule. He suggested that this committee not meet again until January, 2008.

R. Collins, Pace, FL

Mr. Collins stated that with a new ambulance provider, a new fire services plan and new taxes being implemented, he believes that waiting until January would let too much time lapse.

S. Cozart stated that this time frame would help ease learning curves, start-up issues, etc for the new service provided by the new ambulance service. He believes that we will get a better perspective of the trend.

It was suggested that in the event that anything needed to be addressed, a meeting could be scheduled.

Discussion ensued and it was determined that the next meeting will be scheduled in January, 2008.

Next meeting date and time will be: Wednesday, January 16, 2008 at 2:00 PM