

**EMS System Oversight Committee Meeting
November 13, 2008
EOC Conference Room**

Members/Liaisons Present: Faye Barefoot, Tom Czaplijski, Jack Cote, Jimmy Garris, Kyle Willis, Chuck Owens, David Lusk, Jack White, Ted Delbridge, MD, Juan March, MD

Staff Present: Noel Lee, Scott Elliott, Helen Bryant, Janis Gallagher, Melonie Bryan

Absent: Duane Holder

Open: Jack White called the meeting to order. Upon his arrival, David Lusk chaired the meeting.

Approval of Agenda: Tom Czaplijski requested to add "Hospital Supplies for EMS Units" to the agenda. Jimmy Garris made the motion to approve the agenda with the above addition. Tom Czaplijski seconded the motion. Motion passed. Vote was unanimous.

Approval of Minutes:

October 9, 2008 Minutes: Jimmy Garris made the motion to approve the minutes. Jack Cote seconded the motion. Dr. March abstained since he was not present at the meeting. Motion passed.

Old Business:

Pactolus Lease: Noel Lee distributed the package from Pactolus Fire Department to the committee members.

Letter to Grifton: Noel Lee reported that a letter was sent to Grifton EMS by Legal following the last meeting regarding noncompliance issues.

Ayden EMS: Noel Lee reported that Ayden EMS had their site visit for their DEA License. They have received their federal license and are waiting for the forms.

Falkland EMS: Falkland EMS met with county staff to work out a solution for the funding shortfall. On 10-23-08, Falkland was advanced their November allocation.

Ambulance Purchase: The County Commissioners approved the request to purchase three new ambulances.

Submission of Data Reports:

Noel Lee reported that all reports were submitted by the squads by November 3. Scott Elliott pointed out that this is the first time that all reports have been received on time.

Quarterly Financial Reports: Committee members were given financials for the first quarter. In reviewing the reports Noel pointed out that in the first quarter squads had insurance payments.

Melonie Bryan reported that 40% has been collected for transports and property tax collections are up, exceeding collections for this time period. This gives an excess of \$150,000 in transport fees.

Noel distributed a Consolidated Quarterly report. This report is only from budgeted funds.

Items for Discussion:

Prioritization of Fitch & Associates Recommendations: Noel reported for Mike Taylor. Mike has made the changes and they have been emailed out to members. Staff will also work on the recommendations and give a deadline for them to be completed. The recommendations will be taken to the county commissioners at some point. Noel will change the form to a word document and email it out to everyone. Email your comments back to Noel by December 10th. The next meeting is December 11.

QM Report: Dr. March reported that NCOEMS has made some rule changes and changes in the protocols. They are trying to make all the counties use the same protocols. The changes still have to be approved by the State Medical Director. The Rules and Protocols were voted down in October and were voted on again yesterday. Most of the changes in the Protocols will not affect Pitt County.

Tom Czaplijski asked who is the representative from the hospital to the Rescue Association. Kyle Willis reported that the nurse liaison is the representative.

NEW BUSINESS

Falkland EMS: Melonie reported that the November wire for Falkland was advanced on 10-23-08. The following Financial Status Report was distributed.

Financial Status Report

21,391	November wire (paid 10/23/08)
<u>-13,137</u>	Payroll & related fringes - due 10/27
8,254	Balance available to cover outstanding bills
8,254	
<u>-11,170</u>	Total of outstanding bills
-2,916	(Shortage) to cover outstanding bills
2,916	Carry forward need for outstanding bills
16,000	Fundraiser \$\$ used to cover truck purchase
15,500	Payoff of credit line used to cover operations
25,000	Replacement funds to cover November costs
	November allocation exhausted covering outstanding bills & payroll

28,000

(allocation = \$21k/m and runs \$4k short)
Add'l \$4k/m Dec - June

\$87,416

**Need for remainder of fiscal
year**

Melonie reported that the amount needed for the remainder of the fiscal year is all of the money in the contingency fund.

Kyle Willis asked why Mecie had to go before the county commissioners. Scott reported that Falkland EMS was on suspension from the State Auditors Office from 2006 grant and until this has cleared up they would not receive the grant of \$25,000. Scott reported for Mecie that Falkland was cut \$15,000 and they have lost 3 volunteers.

Scott reminded the committee that any recommendation has to go to the county commissioners for approval.

The following options for Falkland EMS were distributed to the committee.

Options:

1. Take no action at the EMS Oversight level and see if Falkland can make it through the fiscal year.
2. Recommend to the BOCC that Falkland's original budget request be met and allocate the additional \$15,000 immediately.
3. Allow Falkland EMS to approach the BOCC directly with an endorsement from the EMS Oversight Committee seeking General Fund monies to cover all outstanding debts.
4. Recommend to the BOCC that all remaining EMS contingency funds be allocated to Falkland EMS and seek General Fund monies to match any grant applications that may come in during the rest of the FY.
5. Close the Falkland station outright and reallocate remaining funds to EMS contingency; divide the response district amongst neighboring departments.
6. Request the BOCC to allocate General Fund monies to purchase both of Falkland's ambulances, title them to Pitt County Government, and recommend allocation of contingency funds to cover any other outstanding debts/expenses.

Scott requested that another option be added to the list:

7. Direct Falkland EMS to operate on peak demand schedule for the balance of the FY08-09.

David Lusk asked what level the volunteers were that left. Mecie reported that they are basics and intermediates. She also reported that they try to hire medics if possible.

Tom Czaplinski asked how does purchasing Falkland's new vehicle help. Noel reported that it would put money back into Falkland's budget because they used a lot of their funds to purchase the ambulance.

Mecie reported that Falkland EMS paid all but \$45,000 of the total cost of \$115,000 vehicle. When the grant comes in it will be applied to the vehicle and that will only leave \$20,000 left owed on it.

Tom Czaplijski asked what is the sense of where squads will be fiscally by the end of the year. Scott reported that Noel has been meeting individually with the squads. He has met with four squads already.

Chuck Owens asked the Chair to recognize Mecie to see if she has any recommendations to add.

Scott reported that the county has always asked squads to base their budgets on staffing. David Lusk responded that the idea of volunteer medics is gone. You would not expect a nurse to volunteer and medics are not going to either.

Melonie Bryan reported that when the system budget went before the county commissioners it was cut. It is a systemic problem in that the current structure of the EMS system is not sustainable at the current funding level. .

Mr. Garris reported that Mecie has a legitimate concern. If you add \$87,000 to her budget that would bring it up to \$344,000.

Motion: Dr. March made the motion to eliminate Option #1 and #5 from the table. Kyle Willis seconded the motion.

Vote:

Yes

Tom Czaplijski
Jack Cote
Juan March
David Lusk
Jack White
Kyle Willis

No

Faye Barefoot
Jimmy Garris

Motion passed.

Tom Czaplijski asked what would be the amount needed to sustain Falkland through January 1, 2009.

Melonie Bryan responded that it would be \$64,000 because the bulk of the money is for items that have already been incurred.

Scott Elliott recommended a combination of Option #2 and #7, allocating \$15,000 immediately and Falkland going to peak time service as a temporary solution to get through this year and then re-evaluate the situation.

Tom Czaplijski asked what would be the impact on other squads if Falkland went to peak time. Scott reported that Falkland runs 128 calls in a quarter which averages out to 1.5 calls per day. Noel reported that Falkland EMS covers a 60 square mile area.

Motion

Kyle Willis made the motion to advance December and January allocation and this will sustain Falkland EMS through January 1, 2009 and give the committee time to explore options. Jack White seconded the motion.

Discussion: Melonie Bryan reported that she does not have the authority to advance monies. You also have to have a commitment from the squad that the bills are being paid since we do not see the check register and do not know the liability that has already been incurred.

Option #6 can be removed from the table because the grant for the truck requires that the truck be titled to the squad for five years.

Dr. Delbridge reported that there needs to be a strengthening of oversight of the squad. The committee should have more fiduciary oversight of the squad. He suggested that the county write the checks and pay the bills.

Melonie reported that she has offered to pay operating expenses. The county cannot pay payroll with county checks.

It was reported that neighboring counties have assigned management of failing squads to other squads.

Janis Gallagher reported that if Falkland EMS agreed for the county to take over financial duties, it does not matter what the contract reads. If the committee recommends something administrative, it can be approved at the committee level. Funding has to go the commissioners for approval.

Chuck Owens reported that he does not remember in the Fitch recommendation that there was a recommendation to reduce services.

Tom Czaplijski reported that the committee needs to know the ramifications of the options before making a decision.

Amendment to Motion: Tom Czaplijski made the amendment for the county to pay Falkland's bills with county oversight and administrative approval of expenses not to exceed monthly allotment of \$42,000.

No Second. Motion Failed.

Kyle Willis reported that the any decision made has to have the approval of the Chief and he is not present.

Mr. Garris reported that it is inevitable that there has to be an increase in funding or a reorganization of the system.

Scott reported that if we are going to look at system changes we have to move forward with the Fitch Study recommendations.

Vote:

Yes

Kyle Willis
Jack White

No

Jack Cote
Tom Czaplijski

Faye Barefoot
Jimmy Garris
Juan March
David Lusk

Motion was defeated.

Dr. March reported that there has to be a decision made as to whether we want to decrease services or increase funding.

Melonie reported that if you give money to Falkland then you owe it to other squads to see if they have needs. Did buying the vehicle contribute to Falkland's shortfall?

Noel stated that as much as it may seem, Falkland is not the scapegoat but only one of the first squads to start to experience possible short falls that other squads in the system may soon experience. It was mentioned as a reminder to the EMS-OC that Bell Arthur experienced some of the same problems last year.

Motion: Faye Barefoot made the motion to recommend that Falkland's original budget request be granted (Option #2) and county staff evaluate other options.

No second. Motion Failed.

Motion: Jimmy Garris made the motion to grant Falkland EMS \$32,000 out of the contingency fund and staff look at the overall EMS system and bring back a recommendation to the committee to stay within the budget. Faye Barefoot seconded the motion.

Vote was unanimous. Motion passed.

Ambulance Replacement Discussion:

Noel distributed a listing of all the ambulances in the county. Actions needed are:

1. Vehicle plan for Front Line and Reserve unit replacement, i.e. 5 years/100,000 mi. or 8 years/150,000 mi.
2. Need to establish a Maintenance Plan to maximize longevity of fleet.
3. Need to consider Maintenance Program on High End Equipment, i.e. Defibulator.

Scott reported that a maintenance plan for the squads could be a part of the contract.

Kyle Willis asked if the county could approach Charles Mayo at the hospital regarding a vehicle maintenance plan.

Mr. Garris asked if the committee would make the decision as to what squads the three ambulances would go to. It was reported that staff will bring back a recommendation to the committee.

Rescue Supplies:

Tom Czaplijski reported that there has been a change in the process of replacing rescue supplies at the ED. The reason for the change is to adhere to federal guidelines. The supplies will be replaced one for one so that the hospital can identify the patient.

Kyle Willis asked if the county could research to see what other items can be billed that are not being billed now.

Discussion: Dr. March asked if it would be worthwhile for the county to start paying bills for the squads?

Motion: Dr. March made the motion to set up a subcommittee to meet every 2 weeks to move along the Fitch recommendations. David Lusk seconded the motion.

Members nominated: Dr. March, Chair, Kyle Willis, Jack Cote, David Lusk

Vote was unanimous. Motion passed.

The next meeting is December 11, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Bryant, Secretary