



Westchester Regional EMS Council

General Meeting Minutes

Date: November 29, 2007
Time: 6:00 P.M.
Location: Westchester County Department of Emergency Services

OFFICERS
 Daniel J. Blum, Chair
 James O'Connor, Vice Chair
 Jeff Meade, Treasurer
 Dr. Tim Haydock, Secretary

MEMBERS

NAME	AFFILIATION		
Barca	Joseph	Yonkers Police Department	Present
Blum	Daniel	Chappaqua VAC	Present
Burke	Alison	Greater New York Hospital Assoc	Present
Collins	Brendan P.	Larchmont VAC	Excused
DeRobertis	Nicholas	St. Joseph's Medical Center	Present
Faucher	Roland	Mohegan Vol. Fire Assoc. VAC	Alt. – John Dillon
Harding	Scott	Greenburgh Police Department	Present
Haydock	Timothy	White Plains Hospital Center	Present
Jackson	John	Westchester County Dept of Emergency Services	Present
Kalish	Chris	Tarrytown VAC	Present
Klecatsky	Lawrence	Sound Shore Medical Center	Present
Labriola	Luci	Armonk Independent Fire Company	Present
Lazar	Eliot	General Public	Absent
Lipsman	Joshua	Westchester County Dept. of Health	Absent
Liverzani	Michael	Town of Mamaroneck Amb District	Present
Malone III	Eugene	Fairview Fire Department	Present
McGurty	John A.	Hudson Valley Hospital Center	Absent
Meade	Jeffrey	Phelps Memorial Hospital (ELSP)	Excused
Minerva	Daniel	Empress EMS	Alt. – Ray Cordi
Nechis	Alex	Eastchester VAC	Present
Nechis	Barry	New Rochelle Fire Department	Present
Nielsen	Charles J.	Port Chester PD	Absent
O'Connor	Charles	Croton Fire Patrol	Present
O'Connor	James	TransCare	Present
Parsons	David	Harrison VAC	Absent
Simpkins	Gilbert	Vista FD	Present
Volk	Michael	Westchester County Dept of Emergency Services	Present

GUESTS

Cordi	Heidi, MD	NY Presbyterian Hospital EMS
Doering	Garrett	WMC / RRC
O'Connor	Katherine	WC Dept. of Emergency Services / Program Agency
Perez	Cesar	Katonah Bedford Hills VAC
Ramage	David	NY Presbyterian Hospital EMS
Robinson	Richard	NYSDOH MARO
Smalley	Phyllis	WC Dept. of Emergency Services / Program Agency
Sutton	Anthony	WC Dept. of Emergency Services
Wind	Greg	Tarrytown VAC

Chair Daniel Blum called the meeting of the Westchester Regional EMS Council to order at 6:12 P.M.

John Jackson was asked to lead the meeting attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Secretary Dr. Tim Haydock conducted the roll call and determined that the attendance met the quorum requirement of sixteen (16) delegates.

The Chair asked for a moment of silence on behalf of Matthew Lamb, an EMT with Empire State Ambulance who died in the line of duty in an ambulance crash Putnam County recently.



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The minutes of the September 27, 2007, general meeting were disseminated to the members.

- **Motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Malone and seconded by Dr. DeRobertis. Motion approved.**

CHAIR'S REPORT - Chair Daniel Blum reported on the following.

NYS Executive Order (EO) #3: Web-casting of Public Meetings – This meeting is the first one held by the REMSCO that is being web cast.

Leadership Development Program – He and Ms. O'Connor have been working with the staff from the Catskill Area Health Education Center (AHEC) regarding the development of an EMS Leadership Academy to be held on January 26, 2008. A draft agenda is being constructed with topics that are believed to be pertinent to the agencies and personnel in our region. The program will be conducted on a Saturday for about 7 hours including registration, breaks and lunch. Information about the system of EMS here in Westchester County will be included. Other topics being considered are planning and quality improvement issues, management practices and techniques, personnel recruitment and retention, and safety and occupational health issues. While there has been an acute example recently with the untimely death of Mr. Lamb, the lack of attention to safety in operations is a chronic problem in EMS. A representative from the State Department of Health will also be assisting us in reviewing some of the pertinent regulatory and statutory requirements that all agencies need to know. It is hoped that the topics selected are particularly pertinent to the agencies that work in and around Westchester County. If anyone has other ideas for topics, please contact the Regional EMS Office.

The AHEC is an entity that essentially provides education to various disciplines and has done a number of these EMS leadership academies elsewhere in the state. Essentially, the REMSCO is building on their expertise in undertaking this program. He and Ms. Labriola attended one of the AHECs previous academies and found the program to be valuable. This program is also a great opportunity for agencies to get together and share best practices across the county. The agenda will be finalized shortly and the advertising will begin. There will be a cost associated with having this seminar. Since January 26th is not that far in the future, once the details are finalized, the program will be aggressively publicized.

Press Conference – The Vice Chair, Mr. James O'Connor, will be reporting on a press conference held by Senator Schumer (D, NY) in White Plains earlier today. The topic of the press conference was EMS reimbursement, specifically to increase the rate at which EMS is reimbursed by Medicare. It was very, very nice to see a lot of different EMS agencies attending. There exists a significant problem in EMS - it is abundantly clear that we are not adequately reimbursed for our services. This prevents us from refreshing our equipment, addressing any development of new requirements, or adequately reimbursing the people who do this as a profession. All agencies are urged regardless if they are a volunteer, municipal, or commercial as we all need to be funded to provide the service. All agencies are urged to support the legislation that Senator Schumer is putting forth; it is beneficial to all EMS.

HEAL NY Grant – New York State (NYS) recently released a grant program known as HEAL NY - it stands for health efficiency and affordability law. The grant is funded through NYS and federal monies. There are several parts to the grant, this one being the improvement of health information technology. The grant also allows for the creation of entities known as regional health information organizations or exchanges, or RHIO. The idea is that as disparate constituencies in health care are beginning to computerize records and there is a need to enable these organizations to "talk." EMS and other areas of health care are lagging in acquiring this technology. The benefit of a RHIO is that they accept different constituent providers. The Taconic RHIO that operates in the Hudson Valley, which has been awarded a fair amount of funding in the past, has been approached to have the REMSCO included in their organization. A report of progress with this endeavor will be provided at future meetings.

1199 Union Ad – The health care Union 1199 recently had an ad in an industry newsletter supporting the EMS providers who died in 9/11. The ad highlights the disparity in benefits provided to those EMS responders immediately following and in the years after the event. EMS is not a very powerful lobby, and it was nice that this message was put in front of the rest of the health-care industry.

Safety in EMS - Following the line of duty death that occurred recently, the Executive Committee has been discussing what we can do to try and honor the passing, as well as make positive efforts to help our colleagues to improve safety practices. Since career providers don't earn a lot of money doing this job, they work multiple



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jobs in order to make ends meet. As a result, people do this job in a state of exhaustion at times. In the coming year the REMSCO should look to promote seminars that are focused on health and well-being of EMS providers.

Discussion regarding how to help EMS providers take better care of themselves. It is recognized that low pay is the reason why many career EMS providers work so much overtime. It was noted that limitations to the number of hours medical interns worked were not implemented until someone died. As a system, we should be thinking of ways to keep our providers safe, even from themselves. It is anticipated that the issue will continue to be examined at both the local and state level.

VICE CHAIR'S REPORT - Mr. O'Connor reported more on the press conference involving Senator Schumer. The genesis of the senator's visit was two-pronged: one was from his office and the other from the American Ambulance Association. Senator Schumer has sponsored legislation on the federal level to have a 5 % relief package available for Medicare calls done within the EMS system. He has been conducting a whistle-stop tour across NYS. The reason for the big push at this time is because the last Medicare adjustment was a five-year plan from 2002 to 2007, and it expires at the end of this year. A recent General Accounting Office (GAO) report documented that Medicare under funds EMS responses by 6% percent. Generally, reimbursement for EMS calls are not based on what the actual cost is to provide the service, but rather it tends to be more based on what the insurance provider feels that they are going to pay for the service. It is analogous to going to a grocery store, buying \$100 worth of groceries, and then offering the clerk \$60. The Senator is trying to get that message across to his colleagues in the Senate and also in Congress, as well as that EMS as an important part of the health-care system. Funding has become more and more vital over the past few years. There have been unfunded mandates from the state requiring new equipment or different pieces of equipment you have to carry, or training that has to be completed, operating costs are increasing annually, but no one has monies to help pay for it all. Some agencies have access to grants, but some agencies don't. Right now in Westchester County, more EMS agencies bill for services then don't. In the beginning, a lot of voluntary services started to bill for services because it was a way to generate revenue to help off-set costs of special projects. Now it has become a necessity for many organizations to bill in order to operate. When it comes to the full scale of Westchester County, we are all in this together whether we are in a private service, a municipal service or a voluntary service.

TREASURER'S REPORT – The Chair asked that the Treasurer hold his report until the Finance Committee report.

CORRESPONDENCE – The Secretary had no report. A listing of the significant correspondence sent and received on behalf of the REMSCO was distributed to the members (see attached).

RE-APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS - At the September meeting it was reported which members' terms were expiring at the end of the year:

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	CONSTITUENCY	ORGANIZATION
Luci	Labriola	EMS - Volunteer (Fire)	Armonk Independent Fire Company
Eliot	Lazar	General Public	General Public
Joshua	Lipsman	Public Health	Westchester County Dept. of Health
Michael	Liverzani	EMS - Municipal	Town of Mamaroneck Amb District
Eugene	Malone III	Fire - Career	Fairview Fire Department
John A.	McGurty	Hospital	Hudson Valley Hospital Center
James	O'Connor	EMS - Commercial	TransCare
Charles	O'Connor	EMS - Volunteer (Fire)	Croton Fire Patrol



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Letters had been mailed out prior to the September meeting to canvass which individuals were still interested and eligible for membership. Out of the letters that were sent out for canvas, only one person, Dr. Lipman (Public Health), indicated that he did not wish to remain on the council.

- **Motion made by Mr. Nechis and seconded by Ms. Burke to re-appoint Luci Labriola, Dr. Eliot Lazar, Michael Liverzani, Gene Malone, Dr. John McGurty, James O'Connor, and Charles O'Connor to another 4-year term of membership on the REMSCO. Motion approved.**

STANDING COMMITTEES

Communication –

Disaster TAG – Barry Nechis reported that the TAG has been working for some time on updating the mutual aid plan. It had been expected that NYS was going to come out with the new language related to indemnification of agencies when they go into neighboring territory for purposes of mutual aid - particularly the disparity in the law between municipal services, independent nonprofit, and private emergency services. However, in October, at the NYS Disaster Commission Conference, it was very clear that there was no indication as to when that new legislation would be released, or even when they will continue to discuss it. The general impression was that it could be at least 3 more years before it sees the light of day. It appears that the REMSCO and county will have to forge on without this assistance and work on the language again. The TAG has a copy of the draft that NYS was considering on proposing. The Chair indicated that he would try to find out at the next SEMSCO meeting if there was any hope of that proposal coming up sooner.

Trunked Radio System - Chair Michael Volk reported that so far the new system is working out well. There are 23 agencies that use the system day to day. There have been very few complaints. A tentative training schedule has been set up for police agencies and the hospitals the second week in January. The Communications Division would like to remind everyone that they want receive feedback regarding system, both positive or negative, and a reporting form has been DES website, www.westchestergov.com/emergserv in the 60 Control Section for this purpose.

Finance – Treasurer Jeff Meade distributed a written report to the members. He reported that the documents showed a summary of the two account balances, year-to-date. Following where the REMSCO was at beginning of the year, it coordinated 2 major events that were responsible for most of the cash in and cash out, the Annual EMS Awards Dinner and EMS Appreciation Day. In addition, the numbers show that the Specialty Course Sponsorship programs for instructor level training is also responsible for large amounts of cash in and cash out when we run multiple classes. Overall the financial picture is fairly neutral: the REMSCO is up \$1,000, down a dozen dollars on each of the accounts with not a lot pending. Mr. Meade offered to review the check registers with anyone for specific questions regarding the summarized report.

Also, Mr. Meade reported that since it had obtained the federal 501(c) 3 status, the REMSCO was in the process of applying for NYS tax exemption and charity registration.

Legislation and By-Laws - No report.

Nominating – None.

Policy & Procedures – Katherine O'Connor reported on behalf of Chair Roland Faucher, who was unavoidably absent. A draft copy a policy was distributed to the members. Ms. O'Connor reported that the purpose of the proposed policy is to provide guidance on how to handle REMSCO membership issues. While there is some direction in the bylaws, it does not address the processes of how certain things are supposed to be handled. The draft was developed by reviewing neighboring regional policies and looking at how other organizations are



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handling their processes. The members were asked to review the document and submit any recommended changes before the next REMSCO meeting.

Public Information & Education – Chair Chris Kalish reported on the following:

Annual EMS Dinner – The planning is beginning for the 2008 EMS Awards Dinner. While a date has not been locked in yet, it would be preferred to be during EMS week, probably around May 22nd, but don't pen in anything yet. An announcement regarding the date and location will be available at the next meeting.

PR Programs – There has been some work towards trying raise people's awareness and consciousness about EMS. Preliminary meetings were held with Cablevision regarding running a series of public service announcement (PSA) type videos for EMS on community access. The committee is in the process of working on potential content for that type of project. A more specific report will be available in January.

REMAC - Chair Dr. DeRobertis reported that the REMAC had met on October 15, 2007 and November 19, 2007. Among the items that came up at that meeting were:

Paramedic Protocols – The changes related to the American Heart Association (AHA) updates were finalized. The SEMAC had authorized the regions to implement those changes to the protocols without having to go through the formalized protocol approval process. While the protocols are effective immediately, the ALS EMS agencies will have until March 31, 2008, to ensure that all their providers are in serviced and implementing the new material.

Trauma Report Form – The Hudson Valley Regional Trauma Committee has promulgated a trauma notification tool which is intended to standardize the radio presentation report from EMS to the ER and allow the hospital time to determine the level of trauma care that will be needed for that patient. The placards will be handed out to all the ambulance agencies for placement on the ambulances. A training program will be put out as well, but it is a fairly simple tool.

Training and Education –Chair Alexina Nechis reported on the following:

Schedule Change – The next meeting is being moved from Friday, December 7th to Friday, December 14th due to a scheduling conflict. It is still scheduled for 3:00 pm.

Southern Westchester BOCES – The Regional EMS Office recently received a letter from the NYS DOH, approving the Course Sponsor application of Southern Westchester BOCES with the restrictions that had been requested by the REMSCO that the training site be limited to the high school students enrolled in their programs. It was noted that the determination was very unusual.

Transportation - No Report.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS:

Next Meeting - The next REMSCO meeting will be held on January 24, 2008, at 6:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by K. O'Connor for Dr. T. Haydock.