



Westchester Regional EMS Council

General Meeting Minutes

Date: September 24, 2009
Time: 6:00 P.M.
Location: Westchester County Department of Emergency Services

OFFICERS
 Daniel J. Blum, Chair
 James O'Connor, Vice Chair
 Cesar Perez, 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	Excused
DeRobertis	Nicholas	St. Joseph's Medical Center	Present
Faucher	Roland	Mohegan Vol. Fire Assoc. VAC	Present
Haydock	Timothy	White Plains Hospital Center	Excused
Jackson	John	Westchester County Dept of Emergency Services	Present
Kalish	Chris	Tarrytown VAC	Present
Kelly	Eugene	Yonkers Fire Department	Present
Labriola	Luci	Armonk Independent Fire Company	Present
Lazar	Eliot	General Public	Present
Liverzani	Michael	Town of Mamaroneck Amb District	Excused
Malone III	Eugene	Fairview Fire Department	Present
McGurty	John A.	Hudson Valley Hospital Center	Excused
Meade	Jeffrey	Phelps Memorial Hospital (ELSP)	Absent
Minerva	Daniel	Empress EMS	Absent
Nechis	Alex	Eastchester VAC	Alternate-Present (Scott Mikos)
Nechis	Barry	New Rochelle Fire Department	Present
O'Connor	Charles	Croton Fire Patrol	Excused
O'Connor	James	TransCare	Present
Parsons	David	Harrison VAC	Absent
Perez	Cesar	Katonah-Bedford VAC	Present
Simpkins	Gilbert	Vista FD	Present
Straub	Frank	White Plains Department of Public Safety	Alternate—Present (John Cullen)
Varlese	Doris	General Public	Present
Volk	Michael	Westchester County Dept of Emergency Services	Present

GUESTS

Guy	Singer	WC Dept. of Emergency Services
Adam	Ochs	Association of Fire Districts
Sam	Lubin	Ossining VAC
Gregory	Wilson	Tarrytown VAC
David	Dawson	TransCare
Charles	Strick	Ardsley Secor VAC
Andrea	Rosenberry	Ardsley Secor VAC
Susan	Briggs	NYSNA
James	Hayes	Sleepy Hollow Ambulance
Timothy	Curran	Sleepy Hollow Ambulance
Olmoz	Daniel	WC Dept. of Emergency Services / Program Agency
Robinson	Rich	NYS DOH MARO
Joseph	Farrell	NYS DOH EMS
Sutton	Anthony	WC Dept. of Emergency Services

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

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

In the absence of Secretary, Dr. Tim Haydock, Cesar Perez conducted the roll call and determined that the attendance (19) did meet the quorum requirement of sixteen (16) delegates.

The minutes of the June 25, 2009, annual meeting were previously disseminated to the members. The minutes were approved without change.

CHAIR'S REPORT – Chair, Daniel Blum reported on the following:

A few items I just wanted to make people aware of. One is I believe it was announced at the last state EMS council that Ed Wronski is retiring. So I think what the council would want to do is publicly thank Mr. Wronski for his many years of service. It was noted that Mr. Wronski will be leaving as early as November.

The only other issue I thought was of real significance relates to the Novel H1N1 Swine Flu that people continue to talk about. For those who did not receive word, the Commissioner of Emergency Services for Westchester County, Tony Sutton, hosted a conference call earlier this week along with Mike Volk, the County EMS Director and Chief. And that call was intended to brief all EMS agencies in the county the most current information available in our region. There is a concern that the Swine Flu, the novel H1N1 will reinvigorate as the fall turns colder and we enter into flu season. Some emergency legislation was adopted by the state, I guess towards the end of the summer. And that emergency legislation does require that employees of hospitals and certain other, I guess, Article 28 facilities, be vaccinated for the regular Influenza A as well as the H1N1 Flu, which is a separate vaccination process. Influenza Vaccine is now available. Some people have received their shipments. The H1N1 vaccine is licensed now by the Fed, but not yet currently in the possession of, to my knowledge, any of the first initial recipients in this region. Hospital personnel are definite under this emergency provision, this emergency rulemaking, and how that relates to EMS folks, we believe, is as follows. It is recommended, strongly recommended by the CDC and others in a position of authority and knowledge that all EMS providers receive vaccination, immunization. But that's a strong recommendation. For subcategories of EMS, particularly those EMS providers who operate in an agency that is owned or controlled by a hospital entity or EMS agencies who are directly contracted to a hospital. Ostensibly, they must be vaccinated. Similar to the other hospital related personnel. So there'll be more information forthcoming for those EMS agencies who are directly hospital related, one way or another. And what we should do is encourage EMS providers out there to get vaccinated. Especially those who are actively participating within the EMS facility transport system. Because we want them to be free of this. We don't want them to be sick and out from work, which can strain the system even more than it might be strained. And we don't want them to transmit disease to our patients collectively. So that's the latest and greatest we're aware of in terms of H1N1.

Commissioner Sutton provided the following comments - the information for the EMS community focuses around personal protective equipment and vaccinations right now, and what to expect. And also to make sure every agency who transports patients to a hospital stays in close contact with that hospital to see if at any point in time they implement some kind of a forward triage system. The bottom line, ... so far, it's proven to be a mild form. Obviously we have plans to ramp up...-- and respond to a problem. The vaccine should start flowing, officially on October 15th. There are five priority groups, it includes pregnant women, first and foremost. The second group would be caregivers of...or family members that are close, around infants younger than 6 months of age. Because they can't be vaccinated, and the idea is to kind of wrap them with people who have been vaccinated. The next is health care workers, and that includes EMS workers. I'm sure my uniformed friends in the room want to know what does that include? Does that include first response fire, first response P.D.? The current guidance is no. Emergency medical service workers who are involved in the transport. But this isn't something foreign to anybody, because you transport people who could have stuff everyday, and you always key in to what their signs and systems are and take compensatory measures based on that. That being said, you've got the next group that are the 6 month, the 24 year olds, and that's because that's the group that seems to be the easiest pathway for transmission. They're in school, daycare, college, they congregate in close places, not a lot of air moving. And that's where it spreads like wildfire. The last group would be anybody older than that, 24-64, who have underlying...other medical issues. Again.... Make sure you've got your respiratory protection program in place. Make sure you get your seasonal flu shots now. Make sure you stay in close contact with your medical director, I'll explain why in a second. Make sure you've got your personal protective equipment. Surgical masks? Most of the time? Okay. Up close and personal, a fit-tested mask, and then you find one that fits you. Of the brand and size that you were fit-tested for. If this gets way out of control, and we break into national stockpiles, and we give you masks of a different manufacturer than a 3M mask, you need to be fit-tested for the other brand. And we're looking at that internally now. Just because you're fit-tested for a 3M mask doesn't mean you're fit-tested for all N95 masks. The reason I brought up the part about medical directors, is we're going to send out a communication in the next day or so to the medical directors of the agencies who have been identified. And the letter will say,

because this is a moving target and the guidance changes literally on a daily basis, we want to be in position to be able to supply first responders should it become our role to get it out there. We want to push that to the medical directors, and have them service the agencies they normally take care of. If that happens and the physician who's your medical director is not registered with the state of New York, I cannot give him the vaccine. Nor could he order the vaccine in the future. If you go to the county health department website, there's a box in the right-hand corner that says "professional's corner." Click on that, and there are all the links to how to register with the state system. You can register and not order, but that will put you in position to be able to receive. We're going to try and push that letter out in the next couple days. Again as I said, my feeling is that the existing provider network and existing plan may be taxed initially. The one thing I want to point out to everybody is the CDC website, the New York State Department of health website, the county health department website, and just because you went there last week or just because you went there on Monday does not mean you have the latest information. But the thing that people should remember is that so far the seasonal flu has more of an impact on the population. The overwhelming majority of people who get the H1N1 have mild flu illness and get better without any real complications. It's all about continuity of operations plan. And basically what that really boils down to is, how do you deliver the service that you deliver now everyday with half the amount of people? And keep in mind that the demand for that service will go up because there's going to be a lot of sick people who think they need to go to the hospital or in fact, do need to go to the hospital.

There was an announcement of 2 letters of enforcement received from NYSDOH regarding 2 providers who have there certifications acted upon by DOH.

VICE CHAIR'S REPORT - None

TREASURER'S REPORT – Cesar Perez reported the following - *We're sound for now. I don't know how much Chris is going to go into the picnic. We did have 300 people show up, I believe 250 preregistered. We did bring in a total of 5800 dollars. – our cost for the evening was a little bit higher than what we brought in. So, the council ended up putting out about 700 dollars for the event. So we're looking into different cost structures for next year. We can go up, we can go down. We can look for other funding, for other people to pay for it. So we're looking at all those aspects so that people coming to enjoy EMS Appreciation Day don't have to put out 30 bucks for themselves and then another hundred bucks for their family to attend. We're working on it.*

It was also mentioned that the accounting firm applied for an extension to file the council's 990 tax documents and is finalizing a compilation report.

Chris Kalish added the following comments in regards to EMS Appreciation Day - *Even though we operated a little bit of a deficit, I think it was very well done. We had over 300 people; more than 30 agencies came to the picnic as well. So it was very nice. The dinner was nice. For any of you that didn't make it, I encourage you to make it next time. The awards applications were also up this year. It was good and bad. It was difficult for the committee. We spent a lot of time going through the review on those. But it was good to see applications were up a little bit and it encouraged people to pull call sheets during the year as interesting calls and lifesaving events come up so you have those, and it's easy to file them.*

Phyllis Smalley and the Public Information Committee were thanked for making the event such a success once again.

SECRETARY – None

STANDING COMMITTEES

Communication –

Trunked Radio System – Chief Volk reported the following - *Just real quickly, our radio system is working well. I've spoken about this already in the past, but agencies need to be aware of the FCC's rule to narrowband, VHF and UHF radio frequencies by January of 2013. It seems like a long time away but it's really not, because a lot of planning has to go into changing licensing, if you have to buy new equipment, especially if it's infrastructure equipment, you have to do that now. Listening to experts about narrow banding, there may be coverage difference with narrowband versus wideband. You really need to talk to your radio vendors and make sure your agency's ready for this change. It sounds like the FCC will*

not back down and not grant a license. And you may either lose your license, your ability to transmit, or be fined. Or a number of those things together.

Disaster TAG – Chair Barry Nechis reported on the following - *In the summer, we did a fair amount of work towards getting the -- plan up to date. And we will be shortly meeting again with the intention, by the end of the year, of having a full report for the council to review.*

A request was made for delegates interested in participation with the Disaster TAG to contact Barry Nechis.

Finance – see Treasurer's Report

Legislation and By-Laws – none.

Nominating – It was announced that an application for the vacant Nursing Association constituency seat was received from Ms. Susan Briggs. It was noted that Ms. Briggs is a registered nurse employed at Westchester Medical Center who previously served on the Council. A motion was made to accept Ms Briggs application for membership. The motion was seconded and approved.

Policy & Procedures – none.

Public Information & Education – see Treasurer's Report

REMAC - Chair Dr. DeRobertis reported that the REMAC had met on September 21, 2009. Among the items that are being discussed are:

Protocols – updated paramedic protocols were implemented on September 1, 2009

STEMI TAG – the STEMI TAG plans on further meetings to discuss EKG interpretation processes and diversion transport procedures.

Interfacility Transports– A TAG has begun looking at oversight and coordination from a regional focus and will be considering processes such as utilizing 911 ambulances in urgent transport situations. The tasks involved are major and will take some time to discuss and plan out.

Training and Education – D. Olmoz reported on the following on behalf of Chair, Alex Nechis:

Certified Instructor Update – Preliminary plans are being discussed to hold an instructor update in late October or early November.

Respiratory Protection Training – A list of interested members of the Training and Education Committee was provided to NYSDOH for a respiratory protection program instructor cadre.

Transportation - Chair, Joe Barca reported on the following:

CON Hearing – *for the record. Tonight, the Westchester EMS County Transportation Committee brings before you a series of ambulance operating certifications or -- applications that have resulted from several issues affecting service and the primary territory that they operate within. Earlier this year, the Westchester EMS Council received inquiry from agencies operating in the region who have found the operating territory identified on their official certificate of need may not exactly match the actual boundaries that their organization has historically responded to. These situations created a conflict within the requirements of Article 30, and may also have consequence related to the revenue recovery programs. It was found that in various locations around the state there were also EMS agencies identified as having historically responded to territories not listed on the agency's CON issued by the New York State Department of Health. This discrepancy may have resulted from an administrative omission that occurred during the initial requirement of the ambulance certification. In the past,*

such administrative omissions were resolved by the Department of Health under a grandfather clause established within Article 30 or the Public Health Law. However, subsequent to a New York State Supreme Court Decision, the Department of Health is no longer authorized to continue this practice. In an effort to resolve those CON discrepancies identified in the Westchester Region, the Westchester REMSCO hosted an information session for EMS agencies and invited representatives from New York State DOH., REMSCO, and the Westchester County Department of Emergency Services. Based on the information provided by numerous EMS agencies in attendance of the potential for CON discrepancies, it was determined to hold additional sessions to discuss the matter further with affected EMS agencies. In determining the existence of several CON discrepancies, the REMSCO Transportation Committee created a policy for CON discrepancies resulting from an administrative omission. The policy was based on a currently existing regional expansion of operating authority process, and included a one year sunset clause. Although the policy was based upon discussion with the New York State Board of Health representatives, there was no formal written guidance made from the Department of Health regarding this matter. On May 4, 2009, a letter seeking feedback from the Department of Health was sent to Edward Wronski, Director of EMS. To date, no response has been received in this regard. On June 25 2009, the Westchester Council approved its policy entitled "Expansion of Primary Operating Territory, Administrative Omissions/Uncontested." Tonight's hearing is a part of the procedure outlined in this new policy, and resulted in an unprecedented number of CON applications being brought forward together. The purpose of which was to offset the financial burden associated with an individual expansion of operating authority. An exhaustive amount of time and effort has been expended to address this matter. We have received a total of seven requests for amendments. With two of the agencies in the last couple days, we were notified by the New York State Department of Health, that their fitness and competency review needed further clarification or information. So those two agencies will not be brought to the floor tonight for a vote. And at the November meeting, we hope that everything resolves by then and will bring it to a vote then. Those two agencies are the Tarrytown Volunteer Ambulance Corps and the Sleepy Hollow Ambulance Corps. With the other five we have here, we're going to be handling them individually, which means we'll have to do five separate votes on each one.

Chair, D. Blum reviewed the procedures for the hearing. The conflict of interest statement was read into the record. Attendance was taken. J. Barca presented the Transportation Committee's reports for the following applications and each one was voted on accordingly:

- **Ardsley Secor VAC**; A motion was made by Lt. Barca to approve the Ardsley Secor Volunteer Ambulance Corps application for an expansion of operating authority to include School District #5, Ardsley and the New York State Thruway from mile marker 5.5 to mile marker 11.2. The motion was seconded and a roll call vote held. The expansion of operating authority was approved: 19 yea, 0 nay, 1 abstention, 8 absent, 2 vacant seats.
- **Briarcliff Manor Fire Dept. Ambulance Corps**; A motion was made by Lt. Barca to approve the Briarcliff Manor Fire Department Ambulance Corps application for an expansion of operating authority to include Village of Briarcliff Fire Protection District and the following locations within the Mount Pleasant Ambulance District; *Country Club Lane (North and South), Ivanhoe Place, Union Street, Requa Street, Kings Grant Way, Old Sleepy Hollow Road Extension, Sleepy Hollow Road with Route 117, Chappaqua Road, Washburn Road, Summerland Road, Canterbury Lane, Stonington Heights, Briar Corners, Fox Run Road, Iron Ridge Oval, Woodsford Bend, Patricia Lane, Carlton Avenue, Doxbury Circle, Pine Hill Road, Pea Pond Road, Todd Lane, and Route 9A.* The motion was seconded and a roll call vote held. The expansion of operating authority was approved: 19 yea, 0 nay, 1 abstention, 8 absent, 2 vacant seats.
- **Elmsford Fire Department**; A motion was made by Lt. Barca to approve the Elmsford Fire Department application for an expansion of operating authority to include Village of Elmsford and *the Saw Mill River Parkway from the Route 87 overpass to the Eastview Exit 23 (milepost 9.9 to 13.2), Sprain Brook Parkway from the Hartsdale Road overpass to Route 100C (milepost 8.5 to 10.4), and Route 287 from Route 87 to Knollwood Road (milepost 0.0 to 1.9).* The motion was seconded and a roll call vote held. The expansion of operating authority was approved: 20 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstention, 8 absent, 2 vacant seats.
- **Ossining VAC**; A motion was made by Lt. Barca to approve the Ossining Volunteer Ambulance Corps application for an expansion of operating authority to include Village and Town of Ossining including the area covered by Union Free School District #1 of the Towns of Ossining, New Castle, and Yorktown, and *Pinesbridge Road-parcel numbers 212, 214, 216, 218, 220, 222, 226, 230, 234, 236, 244, and 246, Warburg Park (entrance off Pinesbridge Road opposite #199), New Castle Recycling/Compost Grounds, Marian Place, Taconic Road, Inningwood Road, Somerstown Road, Ryder Road, North State Road*

including Stone Creek Development. The motion was seconded and a roll call vote held. The expansion of operating authority was approved: 20 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstention, 8 absent, 2 vacant seats.

- **Valhalla Ambulance Corps;** A motion was made by Lt. Barca to approve the Valhalla Ambulance Corps application for an expansion of operating authority to include Valhalla Fire District and *the North White Plains Fire District.* The motion was seconded and a roll call vote held. The expansion of operating authority was approved: 20 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstention, 8 absent, 2 vacant seats.

NEW BUSINESS –

An announcement was made that the Department of Emergency Services has a fit-testing machine loaner program. So, if agencies need to borrow the equipment, it may be loaned out to fire, police and EMS agencies.

Questions about the program and reserving the equipment may be made to Ms. Nyle Sally's who is managing the program.

Next Meeting – The next REMSCO meeting will be on November 19, 2009, at 6:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by D. Olmoz for Dr. T. Haydock.