

VIRGINIA:

A work session of the Lancaster County Board of Supervisors, the Emergency Services Department, Kilmarnock Volunteer Rescue Squad and the Upper Lancaster Volunteer Rescue Squad was held in the Administrative Building Board/Commission Meeting Room of said county on Thursday, November 1, 2018.

Members Present: William R. Lee, Chair

Jack D. Larson, Board Member

Ernest W. Palin, Jr., Board Member

Robert S. Westbrook, Board Member

Member Absent: Jason D. Bellows, Vice Chair

Staff Present: Don G. Gill, Interim County Administrator and
Planning/Land Use Director

Crystal Whay, Clerk to the Board and
Building/Land Use Assistant

Matthew Smith, Interim Emergency Services Chief

Sophia Welch, EMS Captain of Administration

Others Present: Upper Lancaster Volunteer Rescue Squad-Judy Hammell
And Alex Symons

Kilmarnock Volunteer Rescue Squad-Matt Walker and
Dawn Thompsen

Rappahannock General Hospital-Gary Samuels-EMS
Coordinator

Mr. Lee called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

EMS Discussion

Mr. Lee thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated that he wanted to put everybody at ease and let them know that this was a way for them to learn about the state of emergency services in Lancaster County. He stated that the Board wants to get a sense of where the EMS departments are now and where they see themselves going in the next three to five years. He stated that he wanted both the paid and volunteer staffs to know that the Board of Supervisors support them and that the Board wants to understand

their needs. He stated that the Board wants to know what is really going on out there, on the front lines, when it comes to emergency services.

Mr. Lee asked Mr. Samuels to tell them about his role at the hospital.

Mr. Samuels replied that part of his role is to interact with Matt Smith and his staff as well as the volunteer rescue squads. He stated that he was there to help gather information, so the hospital will know what it can do to help the squads. He stated that the hospital would like to help with the squads recruiting more people and having the proper training and whatever else is necessary. He stated that his background has been in the EMS field and he retired as an EMS Battalion Chief with Henrico County after twenty-eight years of service. He stated that he had been recently hired by the local hospital and he wants to learn all he can and look for opportunities to help the squads and the community.

Mr. Lee asked Mr. Gill to give a brief history of the County's Emergency Services Department.

Mr. Gill replied that the County's paid emergency services started with the first agreement in December 2003. He stated that the department came about to supplement, not replace, the volunteer rescue squads. He stated that the volunteer squads, at that time, were having trouble meeting state requirements, such as needing three people on every call and one of those people had to be an EMT. He stated that the volunteers had full-time jobs and most did not have the time to get certifications and not many volunteers were EMTs at that time. He stated that the Emergency Services Department had grown from a zero budget back then, to at the present time, \$1.07 million dollars. He stated that there is a little bit of revenue generated because they bill for services, however, collections are not where they needed to be. He stated that the department gets a fair amount of grants that help with the costs as well. He stated that the County's EMS Department has grown over the years and has had to cover more hours out of each day for the volunteer squads.

Interim Chief Smith stated that his department has some problems on the career side with retention and recruitment. He stated that it is a problem for the entire state. He stated that he would like to see the retention package adjusted to compete with other localities and to attract and keep employees. He stated that, currently, they were down about six people, with two of those being full-time positions.

Mr. Lee asked what effect that had on the department.

Mr. Smith replied that it puts more calls on fewer people and it can cause burnout. He stated that the volunteer organizations are going through it, too. He stated that many of his employees have families and multiple jobs and they can be stretched thin.

Ms. Thompsen stated that, in the Kilmarnock Volunteer Rescue Squad at the present time, they have five people going through the ALS training program and that takes up a lot of time. She stated that there were four more members going through other

training as well. She stated that when people are in training, they are unavailable to run the calls.

Mr. Lee referred to the training and asked if the squad pays for it.

Ms. Thompsen replied that the squad pays for the training.

Dr. Westbrook asked if the squad's fund-raising efforts pay for the training.

Ms. Thompsen replied that some of it does and sometimes they get grants from the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund.

Dr. Westbrook stated that he had wondered about the County possibly paying for the training as an incentive to get more volunteers and make it easier on the squads.

Mr. Symons stated that would be helpful because the trainings can be expensive and it would be nice for the County to supplement those expenses. He stated that it would also be helpful for training sessions to be held closer to home.

Dr. Westbrook suggested trying to get instructors to come to the County instead of people having to commute to other areas for training.

Mr. Smith stated that can be expensive.

Mr. Palin stated that there used to be high school students involved with the squads and asked if that was still happening.

Mr. Walker replied that most of the younger volunteers get involved because they have relatives in the squad. He stated that they have talked about getting into the schools for recruitment purposes, like the military does, during the lunchbreaks. He stated that the EMT basic class used to be taught to Lancaster County students at the vocational school in Warsaw, but that has been dropped. He stated that Northumberland County has a class, in-house, for their students. He stated that it would be a good thing if Lancaster County could do that and it would help with having more employees and volunteers.

Mr. Samuels stated that there is scholarship money on the table, but there is also red tape involved. He stated that the state has awarded approximately \$836,000 this year in scholarship money and that is for the Advanced Life Support and EMT classes, but they limit how much they will pay. He stated that students apply for the reimbursement if they can get someone to come to the area and teach the classes. He stated that there were a lot of instructors out there, but it is a big commitment for someone who already has a full-time job and other responsibilities.

There was discussion about Northumberland High School offering an EMT class during the regular school year that was considered an elective course.

Mr. Samuels stated that was a good idea because the students engage in the class and want to get into community service early in life.

Mr. Lee stated that he had heard that the intermediate training was going away.

Mr. Symons stated that the basic EMT course is the most important because that is what is needed to run a squad.

Mr. Lee asked what was the requirement to go on a call.

Ms. Welch replied a driver and an EMT were required. She stated that three people were preferable, but it can be run with just the two.

Dr. Westbrook referred to the \$836,000 paid out in scholarships from the state and asked if any of that was available to help pay for instructors in the schools.

Mr. Samuels replied that the money goes towards reimbursement to the students. He stated that they are trying to figure out how to change that. He stated that some counties are trying to figure out a way to get the money allocated to the localities to help pay for training in their own county. He stated that procurement law protocol has to be followed.

Mr. Palin asked if the County could pay up front for the student and then the County get the reimbursement.

Mr. Samuels replied that they would not reimburse the County, only the student. He stated that procurement law states how the money has to travel.

Mr. Larson stated that he understood about the procurement law and the audit trail, but he did not understand why it had to be so difficult. He stated that it would be nice for the County to be able to pay for the training up front and then after the person has completed the training, the County get reimbursed after it provides the proper documentation.

Mr. Samuels suggested talking with Delegate Margaret Ransone concerning this issue.

Mr. Lee stated that he agreed.

Dr. Westbrook asked how many people, on the volunteer side, needed to be trained if they were to help relieve the expense of the paid staff.

Ms. Thompson replied that they would need about six more volunteers in the Kilmarnock squad.

Mr. Symons stated that his squad could use another six volunteers as well.

Dr. Westbrook stated that it sounded like an on-going problem of recruitment and retention, but to get over the hump, it seemed like an emergency training session would be in order.

Mr. Palin stated that it sounded like they needed to do some recruiting, so they could get a group together for training.

Dr. Westbrook stated that they needed to talk to the school division and see what they might be able to do regarding EMT classes at school.

Mr. Lee asked Mr. Smith about his six open positions.

Mr. Smith stated that his department has two full-time positions open and four part-time positions. He stated that a lot of our part-time employees are full-time employees somewhere else.

Mr. Lee stated that recruitment is the problem, but if they could come up with some form of methodology for training and possibly holding local classes, like in the high school, that would really help.

Dr. Westbrook stated that he wanted to find out how many people would be needed for a class and how much it would cost for an instructor to teach a class locally. He stated that he would like the EMS people to make those contacts and let the Board know what they have found out.

Mr. Palin asked how long was the basic training class.

Mr. Smith replied approximately a year and a half. He stated that most classes only meet once a week.

Mr. Lee asked the EMS Department and the volunteers if they could check on how many students were required to have a class locally, as well as a price range and give that information to Mr. Gill. He stated that he would also like to know about the method of instruction, such as whether or not it could be a combination of classroom and internet classes.

Mr. Lee asked about the turnover rate in the volunteer squads and what would be the incentive to stay in the volunteer squads. He stated that the recruitment rate needs to at least equal the turnover rate.

Mrs. Hammell replied that the turnover rate is a problem and if a volunteer gets upset, they sometimes think they just don't need to show up.

Mr. Symons stated that people can get burnt out and some may leave for personal reasons.

Dr. Westbrook asked if some of the turnover could be attributed to the perception of a lack of appreciation. He stated that it is all about morale and asked for some hints on how the Board and the County might be able to show more appreciation. He stated that people stay where they feel welcome.

Mr. Lee stated that they had touched on recruiting, but the retention issue bothers him and he did not know what the answer might be. He stated that they needed to try to figure out where both the paid and volunteer staffs would be in three to five years. He stated that, for the County, the price tag continues to climb each year. He stated that the Board sees the money being spent, but it does not see the day-to-day challenges that both the paid and volunteer squads experience. He stated that he wanted to start down the path of giving the proper support to both the volunteer and paid staffs.

Dr. Westbrook asked if there were people that were working on the retention of the volunteers. He stated that he would like some ideas about showing appreciation to the staff that the Board of Supervisors could consider.

Mr. Symons stated that he thought something monetary, such as a tax break would be nice to have.

Mr. Palin asked what was currently done for recognition in the squads.

Ms. Thompsen replied that her squad has a banquet and some members are recognized with trophies. She stated that the members are also remembered at Christmas time with gifts.

Mr. Palin asked if any recognition was given for years of service.

Ms. Thompsen replied yes.

Mr. Larson stated that it was his understanding that the Kilmarnock squad was in pretty good shape financially.

Ms. Thompson replied yes.

Mr. Larson stated that the Upper Lancaster Volunteer Rescue Squad was not in as good of shape financially as the Kilmarnock squad.

Mrs. Hammell stated that the Upper Lancaster Volunteer Rescue Squad doesn't even get the Jessie Ball DuPont grant like the Kilmarnock squad does.

Mr. Larson asked Mrs. Hammell about their fund raising efforts.

Mrs. Hammell replied that their last two fund raising events were cancelled because of storms.

Mr. Larson asked about the community support in terms of donations.

Mr. Symons replied that the Upper Lancaster Volunteer Rescue Squad received \$22,000 from the fund raising letters and another \$6,000 from other donations. He stated that figure was down approximately \$10,000 from previous years.

Mrs. Hammell stated that they do stand-bys at the high school games and when she first started with the rescue squad nine years ago, the squad used to receive money for that service, but they do not any longer.

Mr. Lee referred to the call sheets and stated that the call volume is increasing.

Dr. Westbrook asked if that was because of the aging population.

Mr. Smith replied that the majority of the calls are for the elderly.

Ms. Welch referred to the Upper Lancaster Volunteer Rescue Squad and stated that they needed help with furnishing a bunkroom for their volunteers.

Dr. Westbrook asked if the squad building was privately owned.

Mr. Gill replied that the squad building was privately owned, but the County contributes annually to the Upper Lancaster Volunteer Rescue Squad. He stated that the contribution could be increased and the money used for improvements.

Mr. Symons stated that the squad had obtained a loan for some of the improvements. He stated that the loan payment was approximately \$2000 per month.

Mr. Palin asked about the length of the loan.

Mr. Symons replied that it was a twenty-year loan.

Mrs. Hammell stated that they were in the process of obtaining bids for the bunkroom. She stated that the building also needed a new HVAC system. She stated that the building had been recently flooded during the last storm.

Mr. Lee referred to the bunkroom and asked if the building had the space for it or if they would need to build an addition.

Mrs. Hammell replied that they were not adding on.

Mr. Symons stated that the HVAC estimate was approximately \$9,000 and they haven't heard back from the contractor concerning the bunkroom, yet. He stated that they also needed an electrical upgrade for the new ambulance.

Mrs. Hammell stated that the building may also need a new generator in the near future as well.

Mr. Symons stated that they were trying to be as frugal as possible. He stated that bunkbeds were being donated to them.

Mr. Larson referred to the loan proceeds and asked how much had been spent.

Mrs. Hammell replied not much had been spent because they were still in the process of getting bids.

Mr. Larson stated that his idea was “thinking outside of the box” but what was the possibility of abandoning the squad building and operating out of the fire department building.

Mr. Symons stated that the rescue squad has four vehicles to house.

Mr. Gill stated that there was not enough room for all of the fire and rescue vehicles at the firehouse. He stated that would be the main problem.

Mrs. Hammell stated that their loan is tied into their building as well.

Mr. Smith asked about the possibility of the Upper Lancaster Volunteer Rescue Squad requesting the funds needed for a new HVAC system at the next Board of Supervisors’ meeting.

Mr. Lee replied that the Board could consider that.

Mr. Gill stated that the request would not be a Capital Improvement Budget item because the County does not own that building. He stated that it would have to be an increased contribution from the County. He stated that it could also be considered during the next budget cycle as well, but that would be up to the Board.

Mr. Gill asked if the volunteer rescue squads have junior departments like the fire departments.

The representatives from both squads replied yes.

Mr. Gill asked how many junior members were in each squad.

Ms. Thompsen replied that the Kilmarnock squad has three junior members.

Mrs. Hammell replied that the Upper Lancaster squad had two junior members. She stated that the junior members can only run calls until 10:00 p.m. and they are involved in other after school activities as well.

Mr. Gill asked if 16 was the age requirement for the junior membership.

Mrs. Hammell replied yes.

Mr. Larson referred to recruitment and asked about older citizens becoming involved in the squads.

Mrs. Hammell replied that her squad has some older ladies that help with fundraising, such as baking pies for their Thanksgiving pie sale.

Mr. Larson suggested some older people who could keep the books or provide other skills to the squads. He stated that these people would not necessarily get the training because of where they were in their lives, but could help in other ways.

Mr. Walker stated that there were a few older members in the Kilmarnock squad that go on calls to help out the EMT. He stated that another older member drives the squad sometimes. He stated that any help is great help.

Mrs. Hammell stated that her father-in-law is a driver for the Upper Lancaster squad and keeps up with the training and helps them out about four nights a month. She stated that her squad has other older members, too.

Mr. Lee stated that he wanted to point out the amount of hours covered from last year compared to this year. He stated that there was a big increase.

Mr. Smith referred to the revenue recovery program and stated that he wanted the Board to know that they were writing off \$97,488 in uncollected bills that were over three years old.

Mr. Larson stated that as long as they were soft billing, people were not going to pay their bills.

Mr. Smith stated that the VA bills are no longer being paid.

Dr. Westbrook stated that he understood that Westmoreland County was pretty aggressive in its bill collections.

Mr. Smith stated that every bill includes a hardship form, but most are not completed.

Mr. Lee stated that he wanted to summarize what had been discussed. He stated that recruitment and retention were the two big factors. He stated that talking to the schools about possibly having an EMT class is one thing that they have discussed. He suggested doing some research on how Northumberland County does its classes and how it is working out. He stated that there was also discussion on giving the volunteers recognition for their hard work and dedication. He stated that they also need to talk to

Delegate Margaret Ransone about a reimbursement program for the County in reference to the state scholarships for EMT training. He stated that he understood the scholarships were available to anyone that was interested. He asked Mr. Samuels about that.

Mr. Samuels replied that the stipulation with the scholarship is that the individual must work one year at an agency, either paid or volunteer.

Mr. Palin asked if the Board was to decide to increase its contribution to the Upper Lancaster Volunteer Rescue Squad would the Kilmarnock squad expect the same.

Ms. Thompson replied no. She stated that with her being captain, the Kilmarnock squad would not ask for more money. She stated that she could not speak for anyone else. She stated that the Upper Lancaster squad has more needs than her squad at the present time.

Mr. Lee stated that he thought the HVAC system for the Upper Lancaster squad almost seems like an emergency, especially if there is a mold issue.

Mrs. Hammell stated that they have received three quotes for a new HVAC system.

Mr. Lee stated that he thought it should be a top priority.

Mr. Lee stated that they will need to keep the lines of communication going between the Board of Supervisors and the paid and volunteer staffs. He stated that he did not think this kind of meeting had ever been done before.

Mr. Palin stated that the Board had met with the Upper Lancaster squad before, but not with everyone coming together like this.

Dr. Westbrook stated that he would be happy to talk to the school division concerning EMT classes.

Mr. Smith stated that he had also been working with Rappahannock Community College about trying to get an EMT class at the Kilmarnock campus.

Mr. Lee stated that after the information has been gathered, they will all meet again to discuss what they have learned.

Mr. Larson thanked both the paid and volunteer staffs for the service they provide.

All of the other Board members agreed.

County Administrator

Mr. Gill stated that the County Attorney, Jim Cornwell, had asked him to state publically that four members of the Board of Supervisors will be attending the Virginia Association of Counties annual conference being held at the Omni Hotel in Bath County on November 11th through the 13th for educational purposes. He stated that, although public business matters may be discussed, no action or vote will be taken.

CLOSED MEETING

Motion was made by Mr. Lee to enter into closed meeting to discuss matters exempt from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The subject matter to be discussed in the closed meeting is Personnel, § 2.2-3711.A.1 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, *as amended*. The subject and purpose falls within the following exemption under § 2.2-3711.A.1 (for the discussion and consideration of the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance or salaries of specific public officers, appointees or employees of the public body.)

VOTE:	William R. Lee	Aye
	Jack D. Larson	Aye
	Ernest W. Palin, Jr.	Aye
	Robert S. Westbrook	Aye

RECONVENE

Motion was made by Mr. Palin to reconvene the open meeting.

VOTE:	William R. Lee	Aye
	Jack D. Larson	Aye
	Ernest W. Palin, Jr.	Aye
	Robert S. Westbrook	Aye

CERTIFICATION

WHEREAS, the Lancaster County Board of Supervisors convened in a closed meeting on November 1, 2018 pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote on the motion to close the meeting to discuss Personnel, § 2.2-3711.A.1 of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act;

WHEREAS, § 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the board of supervisors that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Lancaster County Board of Supervisors hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting to which this certification applies and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting to which this certification applies.

Motion was made by Mr. Palin to certify the closed meeting.

Before a vote is taken on this resolution, is there any member who believes that there was a departure from the requirements of number 1 and number 2 above? If so, identify yourself and state the substance of the matter and why in your judgment it was a departure. There was no comment.

Hearing no further comment, Mr. Palin called the question. A roll call vote was taken:

ROLL CALL

VOTE:	William R. Lee	Aye
	Jack D. Larson	Aye
	Ernest W. Palin, Jr.	Aye
	Robert S. Westbrook	Aye

This certification resolution is adopted.

No action taken on the closed meeting matter.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Lee to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE:	William R. Lee	Aye
	Jack D. Larson	Aye
	Ernest W. Palin, Jr.	Aye

Robert S. Westbrook

Aye