



Council of Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squads, Inc.

September 15th, 2021

In-person Meeting At: VB EMS HQ

Minutes:

Members in attendance: Joyce Mullins and Kay Laws (R02), Mike McCracken (R04), Paul Kalmus (R09), Bonita Teaford (13), John Neumayer (R14), Kyle Musicant (R16), Joan Davis (R17), Billy Hacskaylo and David Wheeler (MRT), Ed Brazle (EMS), and Gina Benefiel (Foundation).

Guests: Ellen McBride (Sustainability Cmte); Pam Catindig and Taylor Waldron (Maverick Marketing)

Meeting commenced at 18:18 with President David Wheeler presiding.

The Minutes of July 21st 2021 RC Meeting was approved (after three corrections) by motion (Kay Laws moved, Joyce Mullins seconded).

President's Report: David Wheeler previewed the agenda and asked if there were objections to moving the Foundations report and guests closer to the beginning so that they could leave after their portion. There were none. He thanked the majority of those present for coming to the unveiling of the VBRescue unifying brand and said it was a great success.

Treasurer's Report: Bonita Teaford sent her report to the President who provided the following:

- Checking \$20,050.15
- Savings \$13,214.58
- Return Check and fee \$1012.00
- Squads that still owe for dues and/or gap insurance:
 - Ocean Park \$1,800
 - Davis Corner \$1,200
 - Chesapeake Beach \$1,650
 - Sandbridge \$1,650

Mike McCracken asked if we were done talking about Gap insurance policies. David Wheeler said the Handbook and discussions at the last meeting cleared things up, but we could still invite a Chesterfield Insurance rep to talk with us if the members wanted that. Mike said he did and David said he would ask them to come.

VB Rescue Squads Foundation:

- Gina Benefiel introduced our guests Pam and Taylor from Maverick Marketing as a helpful resources to assist Squads, Rescue Council, Dept of EMS and the Foundation with implementation of the unifying VBRescue unifying brand, especially get merchandise to members and the public for awareness, recruiting and fundraising. Rather than requesting and approving grants for the merchandise, Gina will review and approve on a case-by-case basis. Pam and Taylor will help to meet our needs, following brand guidelines, and ensuring a quick turn-around.
- Ellen McBride asked if they could help with adjusting our document headers, files, and web design to incorporate the VBRescue logos. Gina said yes, they are also working on improving the tools for squads. She said they are also working as part of the team, including S&B, Chief Hundley and the ambulance manufacturers, seeking to ensure that our designs, paint schemes and decals are compliant with KKK specifications and VA OEMS policies. Be aware that the S&B document full of painted trucks and uniforms were concepts and prototypes, and didn't imply bypassing of any level of approval processes or that some modifications were not still being identified. That manual will be updated as the actual merchandise and paint schemes become a reality. Gina said "let's think big rolling this brand out to those audiences we are trying to target for the future of the system!"
- Ellen said that Maverick should help us to figure out how to transition from our single squad logo to using the two logos in parallel at the pace squads are willing to accept. Some squads like VBVRS can start with a small VBRescue patch and grow it over the coming year or two. Others can jump right to full VBRescue if that is their desire.
- There will be a big advertising campaign starting in mid-October which will use the VBRescue brand. The primary goal is to fill EMS academy classes in the new year.
- The City Manager is aware and total supports all of this VBRescue brand activity. Chief Brazle said the brand is recognized as a huge step toward doing something to change and save our volunteer-based system.
- The squads were asked how well the brand ideas were being accepted in the squads:
 - R2 – Joyce Mullins said people will want to keep the traditional patch, as in most squads.
 - R4 – Mike McCracking said his squad is open to both ambulance paint schemes and shirts with logos that look more like the VB EMS career staff.
 - R13 - Hasn't talked about it yet.
 - R14 – John Neumayer said most of the newer members are not opposed to greater unity across the system, but a few old guard are concerned about losing their exceptionalism. We've decided to go slow and let the members vote on any changes.
 - R16 – Kyle Musicant said there doesn't seem to be any negative feeling about the brand. The squad commander (Nick Rice) is pushing forward with getting the first VBRescue trucks on the street.

- R17 – Joan Davis said there will be a couple of folks holding out, but generally the members like the brand.
- MRT – Billy Hacskaylo said the VBRescue swag seems to disappear fast so he's assuming folks like it.
- Dept of EMS – already looking at transitioning the ID badges to VBRescue, wrapping the Zone and Supervisor vehicles, and putting up a VBRescue sign on the front of the building parallel to the VB EMS sign.
- Gina announced again the Non-Profit 101 class being provided by the Foundation. It is designed for squad leaders and especially future leaders. The date is Saturday October 30th in the morning. Invitations will be coming.
- She also reminded everyone that the picnic on September 26 will be a cooperative EMS-Foundation event and the VBRescue brand will be presented to all squad and EMS personnel. Everyone will receive a VBRescue hoodie.
- Gina asked if there were any regular grant questions. There were none. She asked which squads were planning to apply for a grant and most said they are.

City of VB Department of EMS: Chief Ed Brazle provided the following update:

- He personally had COVID and was out of the office for two weeks. It is here, more people around us are getting it, and he really encourages everyone to be vaccinated. Vaccinated people are getting it to, but generally with shorter duration and less severe symptoms. If a vaccination mandate comes down to the Dept of EMS from national, state or city leaders, it will also apply to the volunteer squads. Folks should also be getting Flu shots in the coming weeks.
- Paul Kalmus asked if the Chief knew the percentage of EMS providers that are vaccinated.
- There is another round of officer shuffling within the Dept of EMS. Jahmelle Sherman has also moved on.
- Dept of EMS is well aware of the ambulance staffing challenges. EMT Academy classes are still constrained by COVID rules. They are developing an AEMT training program for next year, which will require additional instructors and accreditation.
- The State is taking a closer look at Administrative or Support members in EMS agencies and what they do.
- Observers are still not authorized, and that is partly an Dept of OccHealth decision. We are looking at how VBPD does ride-alongs to ensure appropriate security.
- The City Garage has a new manager and we hope that solving the security and access problems will be an early priority. Parts are still a problem. Joyce Mullins asked about cannibalization of parts. It is already happening with appropriate consideration of the risks and benefits.
- The Medical Operations/Training/Fleet/Supply Committees still haven't met in a while.
- Mike McCracken asked about relying on Fire crews for ALS when we aren't manning Zone cars. Chief Brazle said FD only rides about 1.5% of calls into the hospital. There are more than 100 FD paramedics getting a 10% pay bonus, so they should be doing that, but it is something we need to balance.

- Mike also asked about RSI classes and the Chief said they are scheduled throughout the autumn.

Sustainability Committee: Ellen McBride provide the following update and announcements:

- The creative minds in the Sustainability Committee are thinking up ways to engage potential academy students before they get to start classes, so that we don't lose them. Ideas include scavenger hunts and passport books that earn incentives for learning about the squads' heritage.
- They are looking at the possibility of allowing people whose jobs require flexibility to start the month with a schedule reduced to two shifts and then they pick up two more during the month. There was some discussion about people taking a lot of leave for personal business but being able to pick up a shift during that period. Ellen said everyone should be aware that they can call an EMS supervisor and get added to the schedule at any time.
- Mike McCracken asked about daytime EMT classes and using TCC. Chief Brazle said they have tried and reconsidered these options. We're not opposed to trying again. We might have classes at the Fire Training Center again to have more spaces.

Rescue Council Coordinator Reports

- Ellen McBride started off with her concerns about dropping the ball on the Cooperative Fundraising Campaign and said that squads who want to do it need to get busy, especially with the photos they want on the brochures or letters. Gina said that she has a photo crew ready to work on the Marketing campaign and they can support the squads getting the photographs they need.
- John Neumayer said we need to have a Fundraising Working Group that includes squads, Council and Foundation representative for the purpose of cooperating and deconflicting. He will ask squads for the name of their representative.

Unfinished Business

- None

New Business

- John Neumayer introduced a concept and proposal for a west-side volunteer squad(s) owned building. The purpose would be to have better working and bunking spaces, to increase the attraction of west-side squads for new recruits and to improve morale as it has done for VBVRS over the years. The building would logically be near the high call volume area that is Lake Edwards – Diamond Springs, and currently collocated between three squads running out of cramped firehouse spaces (9, 2, and 4). The idea is not new, but the Foundation leadership has now heard it and willing to explore the possibility.
- John Neumayer said he wanted a motion for the squads to agree that they are willing to pursue this. Kay Laws made the motion and Mike McCracken seconded which started the discussion. Joyce Mullin said she already talked to Eric Hoyt

about it and Davis Corner was very interested. Kay Laws said ‘one team, one mission’ she could see three squads working out of one building retaining their traditions and still sending trucks to man satellite stations (firehouses). Chief Brazle said he would also look seriously into the options if there is a willingness from the squads and Foundations to lead the effort. He said he really likes the idea of a multi-squad multi-purpose facility that serves the community as well. He said the Dept of EMS might even want to rent some of the “upstairs spaces” for training. The squads that were present said they would have to go back and talk to their executive committees and members. President Wheeler asked the squads to please do that and we will follow up with this motion at the next meeting.

- There was a discussion about the size and legal constraints on signs outside the Firehouses where volunteer squads operate. The Chief said he would check into it. Gina said the Foundation could probably pay for it assuming that VBRescue logo is used and it is for awareness, recruiting, and fundraising.
- Mike McCracken presented his “Check the Pulse” Survey. Final comments were still welcome up until October 4th so that this survey asks members the questions that everyone needs answers to. There was discussion about the ways to break out the results among certifications levels, years of experience, operational and support members. The Foundations is providing gift card incentives because they expect the data to be useful for focusing future recruiting and retention activities.

Squad Reports

- **R1-** David Wheeler said the Haunted House preps are underway for October 28-30. They’ve been fixing benches and things around the outside of the OPVRS building.
- **R2-** Joyce Mullin said they are leaving the asbestos floors as they are. She said that they met with the Junior Rescue Squad and supporting two meetings per month near the Bayside Medical Academy. She asked Chief Brazle a couple of questions from Eric Hoyt. To the question about whether all squads got money that was not spent on ambulance purchase grants, the Chief said it was distributed to the squads, but he would check to see if possibly DCVRS was overlooked. Second, if EMS takes care of purchasing Lifepak batteries, why not all the consumables? Chief Brazle said it is traditional but if the squad needs help with that they should ask. Joyce said the squad isn’t broke, just interested in the best management of their resources. David Wheeler said it’s good for there to be transparency to avoid suspicion and rumor.
- **R4-** Mike McCracken said the squad is selling their property on Pleasure House Road. They want to put up a marquee at the firehouse. They are doing a lot of member recognition activities.
- **R14-** John Neumayer said they have established a Recruiting Recognition and Retention Task Force; are back to more special event standbys; and Ellen McBride said we are expanding our Butterfly mural.

- **R16-** Kyle Musicant said they are preparing for their Safehaven Halloween event; back to standbys at football games; have two new ambulances ready for inspection; and the squad is growing.
- **R17-** Joan Davis said the Pig-Pickin' fundraising event was a great success.
- **MRT-** Billy HacsKaylo said still have 2 of 3 boats out of service, and the pickup truck is also down. They have had an increase in MRT interns and still doing training events with squads like OPVRS.

Other Announcements and Dates to Remember

- **Next regular meeting:** November 17, 2021 at EMS HQ.

Meeting adjourned at 21:00