



*Council of Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squads, Inc.*

November 17th, 2021

In-person Meeting At: VB EMS HQ

**Minutes:**

**Members in attendance:** Joyce Mullins and Kay Laws (R02), Mike McCracken (R04), Chris Daly and Andrew Rabideau (R5), Nancy Gregory Paul Kalmus (R09), Bonita Teaford (13), John Neumayer (R14), Kyle Musicant (R16), Joan Davis (R17), Billy Hacskaylo, David Wheeler and Sarah Druy (MRT), Ed Brazle (EMS), Gina Benefiel and Kristen Howard (VBRS Foundation).

**Guests:** Nick Dicaprio and Jason Jones, Dept of EMS Career staff; Kevin Duck of Chesterfield Insurance; and Roy Tydings (R14).

**Meeting commenced** at 18:05 with President David Wheeler presiding.

**The Minutes** of the September 2021 RC Meeting were approved by motion (Paul Kalmus moved, Andrew Rabideau seconded).

**President's Report:** David Wheeler said that we would move business with our guests to the front of the meeting, and he introduced Kevin Duck of Chesterfield Insurance. Kevin distributed the latest 'summary of coverage' packet, talked about the \$50k gap insurance and the possible increases in cost. David Wheeler said that we will replace trucks one-for-one as we receive the new ones, so the policy stays as it is. Kevin offered to answer questions and then he remained in the lobby to speak with Mike McCracken.

Next David Wheeler introduced Nick Dicaprio and Jason Jones who provided a presentation about the state of ambulance staffing, unit-hour utilization and morale. They talked about how many additional career members it would take to get back to the "sweet spot" where crews were not get beat all day. Their recommendation was to get 20 Full-Time Equivalents or 75 Volunteers on the street immediately. Joyce Mullins asked if this was the city's presentation and why Chief Brazle wasn't present. Nick Dicaprio said that right now the system isn't functioning and he and Jason were trying to gain awareness of the problem, build consensus, and influence City Council for a solution.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bonita Teaford provided the following:

- Checking \$19,822.15
- Savings \$13,214.80
- Deposited \$2,550.00

- Domain listing cost \$228.00
- Squads that still owe for dues and/or gap insurance:
  - Ocean Park \$1,800
  - Davis Corner \$1,200
  - Chesapeake Beach \$1,650

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

- He is putting together the next Department of EMS budget request, which will include increased personnel and replacement defibrillators. The City Council is again distributing money they have available for COVID, but it is not nearly as much as last year and the formula (or priorities) for distribution have not been made clear.
- Regarding the resumption of Observers on ambulances, there are both safety and legal concerns. There will most likely be a requirement for finger-printing and background investigation.
- Paul Kalmus asked about Commercial Transports requiring EVOC renewal every four years and whether the Training team has the capacity. Chief Brazle said they may have to contract a training provider.
- Joyce Mullins asked for the latest on AEMT training and would it only be available during the day. Chief Brazle said they intend to offer classes day and night to meet the needs of volunteers, career EMS and Firefighters.

**VB Rescue Squads Foundation:**

- Gina Benefiel reported on the latest media recruiting campaign which began at the beginning of the month. Recent photos and video taken by the Foundation's hired photographers are being used, and this campaign will include billboards.
- The VBRescue Internet launch site (VBRescue.org) is going live by the end of November. It will have links to Dept of EMS and Squad sites for applicants and contributors. Gina again offered to assist squads with upgrading their web sites.
- The Foundation would like any data from EMS or the squads to help evaluate the effectiveness of out-reach, recruiting, and fundraising activities, especially from this on-going media campaign.
- Gina provided an update on the Holiday Lights Boat Parade taking place on the evening of December 11<sup>th</sup> in partnership with the Cavalier Yacht Club. She said there is a website at vbboatparade.com to register, donate or just get information. Tickets are available for the viewing party at Chicks.
- Kristen Howard provided a more specific Recruiting and Retention report and the status of the January 2022 BLS Academy classes.
- Kristen said she will support an R&R Working Group if the Rescue Council sanctions one. Mike McCracken said he will ask squads to provide the names of at least one representative each to the Working Group. Chief Brazle said that he has a policy which says Department of EMS must have an R&R task Force, so he will speak with his Deputy and Division Chiefs about re-establishing that to work with our Working Group. Kristen said she has an appointment with Chief Bianco to speak about related topics next week and John Neumayer said he will join them for that meeting.

- Mike McCracken thanked the Foundation for the photography in support of the squad's cooperative fundraising campaign.

**Sustainability Committee:** Mike McCracken speaking for Ellen McBride said that most folks here at Rescue Council are aware of the issues being discussed in the Sustainability Committee with nothing additional to report at this time.

### **Rescue Council Coordinator Reports**

- Mike McCracken (At-Large Member of the Executive Committee) provided the squads with copies of the "Check the Pulse Survey" results. He said that we didn't have time go into the details tonight, but recommended that they be reviewed and we talk later about what we can do as Rescue Council to make the best use of the information.

### **Unfinished Business**

- David Wheeler reported that there have been additional cases of squads "dropping the ball" on a standby or special event commitment since Chief Brazle mentioned it in a previous meeting. We has a Council have to insist that this stops. Probably the best way is to share information and help each other out if there appears to be a risk.
- John Neumayer reminded the Council that squads were supposed to go back to their members to see if there was broad volunteer support for a "West-Side Volunteer Building" as proposed in the previously distributed concept paper. Hearing that there was support from all squads, David Wheeler made a motion, seconded by Paul Kalmus, to send a letter from the President of the Rescue Council to the President of the VBRS Foundation and to Chief Brazle requesting that they support exploratory activities to determine what would be necessary and what is the feasibility of beginning such a project. The motion was agreed.
  - Gina said that some Foundation directors had already expressed interest in the idea of a West-Side Volunteer Building, and they would like to visit and better understand the current squad facilities to help them have better informed discussions and ultimately decisions. Gina said she would look for dates to have a tour. Chief Brazle said the City could make a passenger van available.
- Mike McCracken raised a point about the BLS Release Processes and how "we must keep interns who shouldn't be released from getting released." He said that the Rescue Council had sent a proposed AIC qualification packet to Eric DeForest back in March. Chief Brazle said please send it again to Chief Meyer this time. The new Training Chief is doing a "deep-dive" into the process and also trying to arrange meetings with squad training officers.

### **New Business**

- A letter from Branan Roughgarden (VPres of Ocean Park VRS) to David Wheeler (Pres of the RC) was distributed for awareness and discussion. The letter expressed concern about three City Garage actions involving Ocean Park ambulances and seeks RC involvement to get answers before Christmas.

- Chief Brazle said he just became aware of the complaints but hadn't yet had an opportunity to investigate or verify anything. However, he explained that there is a time when cost of maintenance exceeds cost of replacing a vehicle and the garage would declare it no-longer repairable. He believes there probably was some miscommunication with an under-managed and understaffed garage. The Public Works Director and City Garage Manager are both new to the job and these were probably not decisions made on their watch.
- David Wheeler brought to the Council's attention the Foundation's intention to stop trying to produce the Rescue Lines newsletter together with the Rescue Council and instead just produce a Foundation Newsletter with their activities and information. This seems necessary because the RC and Squads don't provide any input (stories, photos, or information) to Kristen. Not ready to give up, President Wheeler encouraged the squads to send "VBRescue" content to Kristen. Chief Brazle said he would task Ricky Lablue to also send EMS content to Kristen.

### **Squad Reports**

- **R1-** Nothing to Report
- **R2-** Joyce Mullin and Kay Laws reported email and circuit breaker problems making things difficult.
- **R4-** Mike McCracken said they are preparing for squad elections.
- **R14-** John Neumayer said Matt Chiaradia was elected to the 1450 and Matt Vest to the 1451 positions. He also said that VBVRS has four new trucks coming starting with two at the end of the year, and then two more a couple months later.
- **R16-** Kyle Musicant said Plaza will be receiving their two new tracks in December. Chuck Crews was elected as the new President with Nick Rice as 1650 and Kyle as 1651.
- **R17-** Nothing to Report
- **MRT-** Sarah Druy said they are supporting the 'Panda Plunge' on Dec 4<sup>th</sup> and the Boat Parade on Dec 11<sup>th</sup>. MRT is borrowing the EMS17 vehicle because of their truck challenges.

### **Other Announcements and Dates to Remember**

- **Next regular meeting:** January 19, 2022 at EMS HQ.

**Meeting adjourned** at 20:39