

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Klickitat County Emergency Medical Services District No. 1

January 25, 2023 – 3:00 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Klickitat County Emergency Medical Services District No. 1 (KCEMSD1) Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, January 25, 2023, at 3:00 pm at the White Salmon Fire Station at 119 NE Church Ave in White Salmon, Washington with Zoom option. Director Charles Virts was the presiding officer. A quorum was present including Director JJ McCray, Director Leslie Hiebert and Director Heiko Stopsack. Director Tony Gilmer was absent. All Directors noted they were able to hear and be heard over Zoom conferencing.

Also present, William Harryman, EMS Chief, Erika Cooper, Finance Administrator. Katharina Larson and Wally Walsborn, EMS Services. Chief Bill Hunsaker, KCIFA and EMS Ex-Officio.

CALL TO ORDER

Director Virts called the meeting to order at 3:06 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

Director Stopsack made a motion to approve the agenda as written. The motion was seconded by Director Hiebert. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Virts continued by requesting disclosure from the Directors of any conflict of interest with items on the agenda. No one expressed a conflict.

BUSINESS FROM AUDIENCE

None noted.

CORRESPONDENCE

None noted.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Director Hiebert moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from December 22, 2022. The motion was seconded by Director Stopsack. The motion carried unanimously. The Finance Committee did not meet so the Consent Agenda has been tabled until next month.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Financial Report

Erika reviewed the December financials. The district received \$380k in ambulance revenue, \$8900 in Life Flight income and \$5300 in timber tax. Salaries were a little over budget but that's

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due to the approved increase in October. Purchased services was over due to the state audit. Fuel was over \$1500. All other operating expenses were over due to WFCA membership dues.

Chief of EMS Operations Report

COVID: Comparison of January 2022 vs January 2023, we had 138 new cases in 2022 whereas in 2023, we've had 0.

Staffing: Unfortunately, one of the paramedic hires, Mark Albus, is moving out of the area. He did write a positive assessment of the organization in his exit interview. Fortunately, Thomas Crumpacker is ready to move to his own shift. Chief Harryman said he has an ad on the website and is considering rerunning the ad on Facebook. LinkedIn, Indeed and Zip Recruiter were all suggested as well. Director Hiebert (KVH) suggested having employees complete a Google review on the district as an employer to lure potential employees.

Vehicles: Chief Harryman is still working with Braun NW on specs for the new rig.

Communication: The staff updated their communication devices through First Net (a network dedicated to first responders) which also provided the district with savings.

Vehicle Report

The vehicle report was provided.

Data/Run Report

The run report was provided. We had a total of 254 calls in December, 33 of them were transfer requests, six of them were able to be handled by our off duty on call program. Most were due to Life Flight not being able to fly.

There was a discussion on mental health transfers and training.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- **KCIFA Report** – No meeting update since they meet every other month now. Chief Hunsaker asked if there was anything the board wanted him to take back to KCIFA. Director Hiebert (KVH) said CGCC would like to see if there was any interest in starting a paramedic program to establish a connection with the fire district.
- **Union Local Report** – No update currently
- **Fourth Car** – Director Hiebert (KVH) said Robb Kimmes (Skyline) is gathering his transfer information and he will send it to her once he has it. Chief Harryman said Director Virts formed a committee without clear objectives. He would like clarification of the issues the committee needs to report back to the board on. He wanted to know what we are trying to accomplish. Is it just to be more organized? Director Hiebert (KVH) said from her perspective, she wanted to look at the data to see if it could help us develop a recommendation where the volume would make the most sense to have that coverage. She said she'd like to know if there was any additional potential revenue that could be generated. She said when KVH calls AMR and they have people leave by private vehicle

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because they don't want to wait so their family takes them. Director Hiebert (KVH) said she would tell the committee to look at the data and see if there's any recommendation on how it could be financially viable to staff it on a more regular basis but that's her perspective.

Director Stopsack asked if it was hospital centric data or community centric data for response times for emergency medical calls. Director Hiebert (KVH) said it was hospital centric because when we first started talking about the fourth car, it was to be utilized more for facility transfers. The bulk of the need was because of level 0 times where there was the potential of not having more than one ambulance out of the area. When we are at level 0, we'd call AMR or patients leave by private vehicle or we have Life Flight come. She said not very often will you have the data where a fourth car would be used for mass casualty incident. Director Stopsack said he didn't agree with that logic.

Director Stopsack said hospital transfers are not the district's mandate, that is not the promise the district made to the community of being there for them or the Fire Department Chief for its reducing response times to critical calls. He said the district needs to put that first and worry about the hospital transfers at some other point when we have more units in the district. Director Stopsack said no disrespect to Director Hiebert (KVH) but the district is not here to serve the hospitals. The placement of our vehicles needs to be based on cardiac arrests, strokes, critical response times. He said that is the whole purpose of the district, anything after that comes secondary.

Director Stopsack said the district needs to focus on critical response times, and how to reduce response times to Glenwood while an EMT is out there doing compressions while waiting for an ambulance to arrive. He added it has not been brought up in any of these board meetings in his tenure and it's a bit frustrating but he said it with respect. Director Hiebert (KVH) said respectfully the hospital is aware of that and said KVH waits for responses knowing ambulances are out. She said they want ambulances available for 911 but KVH is not an urban hospital or a level 3, level 2, or level 1 hospital so these patients that don't get transferred out die too. She said there needs to be a balance. We are at a point where we agree to disagree because we have different perspectives. She said patients in the hospital that need a higher level of care could die at KVH because it doesn't have an ICU, a trauma team, or a cardiologist. She said KVH has patients that walk in having heart attacks, strokes, and people who have been in accidents. She said they appreciate the pre-hospital care, it's an essential part of the system. However, many of the patients need a higher level of care. She said if the EMS District takes the position that the hospitals are not their priority and 911 is, then the hospitals need to look at getting an interfacility transfer car or call AMR to contract them for all our interfacility transfers. Director Stopsack said our ambulances are also responding to people who have acute issues at home. Director Hiebert (KVH) said if you speak to community members who have been in the hospital and need a higher level of care, they will say they need an ambulance to take them to another facility. Director Stopsack said since he's been on the board, we have never driven the district's purpose by acute care based on response times. Rarely do we discuss how to reduce our

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response times, it's always what can we do for the hospitals. Director Hiebert (KVH) said she disagreed with that statement. She said KVH tracks their response times every month and they were doing that before the EMS District was formed. Director Virts said in our rural setting, time is of the essence and we are here to deliver an emergency service. He said he didn't want to offend Director Hiebert (KVH) but he had a little heartburn feeling like we need to fill the void for something the hospital can't deliver on their own.

Katharina said there are good points on both sides but Director Stopsack is right. We have not really discussed our ability to respond to those calls that are further away. Sometimes that has happened, and we do have those on record to where we had somebody respond from Dallesport to White Salmon on a cardiac arrest and that patient did not make it because of the delayed response. Katharina said she does the charting. We must record all cardiac arrest data to the state and our stats do not look good. She said most often it is because of the delayed response. However, in Goldendale if you look at the stats for those calls, that's where we get lost more than any other response area. Therefore, there's a valid point if we had another resource in a fourth car, we could reduce response times to cardiac arrest and trauma calls. It was pointed out in the meeting before last that we try very hard to take out every emergent transfer from the hospitals where we are talking about a patient's life and death. Looking at the data, the fourth car would be an added resource that would help a lot with the problems we are discussing. However, we absolutely cannot consider the fourth car as merely an interfacility transfer car that's dedicated primarily to the hospital's needs.

Director Hiebert (KVH) said she wasn't saying the fourth car would only be for interfacility transfers. She said the fourth car discussion has been going on for 10 years. She wanted to point out there's a portion in the bylaws where there's a definition of emergency medical services which includes transporting between medical facilities. She said if the district wants to change the bylaws and not include transferring between medical facilities that will need to be part of the review.

Director Virts said there's a key component that is being left out, when Kayla first calculated the costs of the fourth car, it wasn't financially feasible. Getting back to the community, we need a committee to evaluate all aspects of the situation. We could make a little money that'd be useful but if it's not financially feasible, we need to look at it more. Director Virts said the current version seems to be working and people are getting transferred. Director Hiebert (KVH) said but people are dying. She said she thought Dr Smith said those exact words. She said if you go back to the recording of the meeting, he made it very clear he was adamantly opposed to the transfer policy as presented and he gave clinical examples of why he was opposed to it. Director Virts said his statistics didn't agree with ours. Director Virts said he thought Dr Smith said people would die and he agrees with that. People will die, no matter what you do. Something is going to go wrong somewhere but we need to take a broad view of how to operate a fourth car and how to make it financially feasible and not lose money on it. Director Stopsack said the priority of the committee should be where to

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place the fourth car where it's going to do the best and reduce response times to critical 911 calls. We need to be thinking about our response times and our outcomes. Katharina said at the end of the month a report will be sent out with all the data for last year. She said she'd be glad to share it with anyone that was interested. Director McCray said she'd like to add that to the agenda for next month. She said it was a valid point that needs to be discussed. Director Hiebert (KVH) said we currently track responses by zone.

Director Hiebert (KVH) said we are the only county who has formed an EMS district so we are in a unique position and we're working through this challenging situation. Usually, hospitals run the EMS service. There are EMS levies that the hospitals collect to help them run the EMS service but there are not separate EMS districts. We want to be there for 911 response, we don't want to have level 0 times. Director Stopsack said we're not a hospital service anymore so let the hospitals know that and let us run our business now. Director Hiebert (KVH) said right so maybe KVH needs to get our own ambulance. Director Stopsack said if that was something they felt they needed to do then do it. He said this EMS District is not here to support and assist the hospital, it is to be there for the person that has a catastrophic event at home. That is our priority. Director Virts said he agreed with Director Stopsack. Director Virts said the committee should focus on that priority and after that look into how to be more of a system for the hospital.

Director Stopsack said we never discussed reducing response time. Director Virts said he thought that was one of the reasons we focused on the fourth car initially. He said it was a dual-purpose vehicle, to help increase response times while at the same time, providing the ability to do interfacility transfers.

Chief Harryman said our primary mission is to provide emergency services and if we could do that with the fourth car and it's economically feasible that could still be our number one mission. Director Stopsack said everything will fall into place. The hospitals will be satisfied but we again owe it to the public to talk about reducing morbidity and mortality through response times and having a closer paramedic and EMT.

Director Hiebert (KVH) said she heard throughout the meetings that we cannot afford to do it financially. She wants to know how we can do it financially. She wants to look at what additional revenue can be generated from that. She said maybe some of it is from interfacility transfers. Maybe some of it can come from mental health transfers, there's a need for it.

Chief Harryman said we need to think of EMS as a system. It can't be overloaded on any one point. The discussion today was helpful, the members have discussed what our primary objectives are. Obviously, Director Hiebert (KVH) is coming from the hospital perspective. He said he didn't think someone needed to go to Portland because they have a stroke or something like that any differently. They just need to be in the hospital so those are not emergency transfers. They are not even in this discussion. Community members are going

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to get EMS response to their houses. If we have an ambulance, they are going to get the last one. The purpose of the interfacility transfer policy was to discuss the non-emergent cases in a reasonable manner and how to deal with those in a way that does not negatively impact 911. Chief Harryman said his frustration with the fourth car is its overload towards transfers and he wants to think about how to improve the overall system. We've spent a lot of time talking about it. We've had people show up to our meetings to tell us we're not serving the hospitals correctly. We understand that and appreciate the feedback but it doesn't change the overall goal of treating the whole service area as a system. We need to keep working on the partnership, not be dictating how the EMS district should create policies or staffing or be told that it must take a transfer because the hospital doesn't like the policy of having to wait until morning for non-emergent transfers. The district isn't telling the hospital how it should run. The more we work within what we're trying to accomplish, the sooner we find what works and what doesn't. We recently had a doctor call us three times during the night where he ultimately admitted the patient. Once it was made clear to him, we were not going to do it until 9 am unless it was life threatening, he finally accepted it. The patient did well and was discharged from the hospital but the doctor couldn't move past how he wanted to transfer the patient out of the hospital.

- **Strategic Planning** – No update currently
- **Newsletter** – No update currently

NEW BUSINESS

- **Bylaws Revision** – Director Virts asked for suggestions on how the board would like to proceed with the review. Director Stopsack suggested that everyone review the bylaws and highlight any changes they'd like made. Director Virts said the union has proposed to remove the hospital representative from the board as a voting member. Director Virts said at this time that was the only proposed change. He urged all board members to look at the board makeup and review the letter from the union that expressed their concerns. Director Virts said he would like to incorporate Director Jeff King as a voting member. He said Jeff brings a lot to the table. Director Virts also said we should consider a stipend for the directors. A way of providing some financial recuperation for all the board members for mileage and time. Director Hiebert (KVH) suggested looking at other school districts, hospital districts, etc., that are set by RCWs. Director Stopsack said he thought it was the same as the Fire Commissioners up north which is tapped out at \$160/month. Director Virts said we will need to develop a policy if we plan to implement a stipend. He said he thought the conference this year said the current stipend was \$128/month. Director Virts asked all members to review the bylaws and bring it back to the next meeting for discussion.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Grant Committee (Gilmer)

No report.

Bond Committee (Gilmer)

No report.

Executive Session

None needed.

Good of the Order

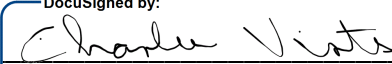
Nothing noted.

Future Meeting Dates

The next regular meeting will be February 22, 2023, at 3:00 pm at White Salmon Fire Station at 119 NE Church Avenue in White Salmon, WA with Zoom option.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board of Directors, Director McCray moved that the meeting be adjourned at 5:13 pm. Director Stopsack seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

DocuSigned by:

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Chair of the Board of Directors

Secretary of the Board of Directors