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mp The Carroll County Board of Supervisors held a special meeting on Tuesday, January 16, 2007, in the Board Meeting Room of the Carroll County Governmental Center.

Present were: David Hutchins, Chairman
Ralph "Bob" Martin, Jr., Vice-Chairman
Glenna Myers
W. Jeff Evans
L. J. Jones
Joseph H. Early III
Ronald L. Newman, Assistant Administrator
Bradley Dalton, County Attorney

Mr. Hutchins called the meeting to Order at 5:00 p.m. and asked Mr. Jones to lead in prayer and the pledge of allegiance.

Mr. Hutchins stated that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the EMS assessment and addressed that if it was the pleasure of the Board that the meeting conclude at 7:00 p.m. and if there was business undone to set an additional meeting. Mr. Hutchins stated that he thinks Mr. Roma has done an excellent job. He asked that Mr. Roma go over each section and give highlights and discuss and for the public to hold their comments or concerns until after Board discussion.

Mr. Roma stated that he started this assessment about 10 months ago at the request of the Board. He stated that right now the County provides funding for both fire and rescue for equipment and for repairs and maintenance of their equipment.

Mr. Roma told that every department has their own data and that the County does not have data on calls that are run as of right now. He told that the County had no way of tracking the calls at this time and that a central data collection system was needed. He stated that each department is 501-C3.

Mr. Roma explained that the Emergency Services Board includes each fire chief and rescue captain and they basically work on policies for each squad, approval of purchases, and other such items. Mr. Roma stated that his first concern is that a committee is needed that is impartial to each individual squad instead of the captains of each squad making those decisions. He suggested that the Board establish a Fire and Rescue Task Force with citizens who have experience with fire and rescue, County personnel, and representatives from fire and rescue. He stated that this would allow fairness to all departments and that it would be this Task Force that would come to the Board of Supervisors with requests.

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Mr. Hutchins ask if Mr. Roma would go back and touch on the data collection again because it was just briefly mentioned.

Mr. Roma stated that a central data collection system was needed where the County could see what was going on. He told that he had started a system where each department and squad would turn in their monthly reports and he would compile those, but he indicated that the departments have slacked off because there is no enforcement. He told that for this month Dugspur Rescue and none of the fire departments turned in reports.

Mr. Martin told that he had served on the fire board and stated that very few people know what is going on countywide and sometimes people come to you and state that something is needed, but they leave out information. He told that it is hard to get accurate information.

Mr. Evans added that the money is tighter than it has ever been, and that every dollar needed to be stretched and with there needed to be more accountability. He stated that the Board needed to get control of the committee.

Mr. Early stated that it has complicated things with each department having their own 501 C3 and ask if this was under County control.

Mr. Dalton replied that each vehicle is listed in the County's name in order for VACo to cover it for insurance. He stated that each of the 501 C3 agencies should have an agreement with the County regulating the use of those vehicles.

Mr. Early suggested that all stations and equipment be listed in the name of Carroll County and to list each department and squad as substations. He told that this way the County could divide the vehicles out as to where they are needed and that there could be a comprehensive plan as to when the vehicles needed to be replaced and budget accordingly.

Mr. Roma stated that there are strict guidelines especially regarding the fire trucks.

Mr. Early stated that it did say that there was no formal legal structure so in essence it is the County who is providing these services. He stated that this way it would all be run by the County instead of each individual substation.

Mr. Martin commented that it would be easier to get paperwork done if it was run that way.

Mrs. Myers stated that this way all of the stations would have the same set of by-laws.

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Mr. Early stated that it would make it one organization.

Mr. Roma stated that it would take uniform combining of each department.

Mr. Early replied that they would involve the departments but they didn't need their blessing.

Mr. Roma stated that most vehicles are identified as being Carroll County.

Mr. Hutchins asked if there were any comments from the citizens.

Mr. Joseph Goad, Captain Laurel Fork Rescue Squad, stated that he agreed with the Task Force as long as the squads are a part of it.

Mr. Evans added that if it was loaded too heavy one way or another that it wouldn't work so equal representation was needed.

Mr. Hutchins stated that he believed an informative decision could not be made without having data to support it and asked what would be required to get that.

Mr. Roma stated that he thought we were going in the right direction with the monthly reports, it just needs to be enforced.

Mr. Hutchins ask if the Board empowers Mr. Roma as the EMS Coordinator to collect the data, he writes a letter stating that a report be sent, and the departments don't send the report, what can the Board do then.

Mr. Evans replied that the only control would be to withhold money, but that would affect the citizens.

Mr. Jeff Sexton stated that the Board could get reports from 911.

Mr. Roma replied that those reports cover all three localities.

Mr. Hutchins asked what it would take to get the departments to turn in the report.

Mr. Joseph Goad agreed that if they don't turn in reports then they don't get funds.

Mr. Mac Tolbert stated that each squad needs to hold the administration within the squad responsible and if they are not turned in Mr. Roma needs to go to the high ranking officer and address the situation.

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Mr. Hutchins asked if Mr. Roma had the power to do that and if he doesn't should he.

Mr. Evans replied that he thinks that Mr. Roma should have the power to do that and if he doesn't then why do they need him because he has to have power to do his job.

Mr. Early ask if there was a job description for Mr. Roma's job.

Mr. Roma replied that he did not have a job description because he was hired on a part-time basis to write the emergency operations plan.

Mr. Early stated that he thought this was within in job and that there needs to be a central person who would monitor everything that goes on with squads.

Mr. Hutchins suggested that Mr. Roma write a job description and turn it into the Board.

Mr. Evans suggested that sample descriptions be obtained from different counties.

Mr. Dalton stated that a job description is a wonderful idea, but the question still needed to be answered as to what does Mr. Roma do if the report is not turned in.

Mr. Early stated that the Board could take the vehicle.

Mr. Jones asked who would cover the area.

Mr. Hutchins asked if the County could just take the insurance off the vehicle.

Mr. Early stated that has not kept them from being used before.

Mr. Kim Shropshire stated that he did not mind doing the reports because it helps to show what they have done because 911 does not tell them when the have missed calls. He told that he would like to get a report back showing the calls they had run and the ones they had missed.

Mr. Evans stated that he was on the 911 committee and that he understands what is being said. He stated that there is a meeting on Friday and this will be brought up again.

Mr. Jones asked if the grant for the rescue come through Brenda or did they get it on their own.

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Mr. Roma stated that the squads write a letter to him and he brings that in front of the Board for approval to apply for grants and then it is given to Brenda who helps them write the grant.

Mr. Evans stated that the Board can't pull the vehicles off the road because it just hurts the citizens. He stated that if it is the County employees who do wrong the Board goes back and corrects that employee. He stated that it should be part of the rules in Carroll County that the Board could remove members who are not doing their job.

Mr. Hutchins stated that not one of the Board members want to see any changes that would be detrimental to the citizens. He told that the intent is to collect data that help with providing better services to the citizens.

Mr. Evans stated that the County would be responsible and accountable.

Mrs. Myers stated that she felt that the Captain's should be held responsible and if they don't do their job then they come before the Board.

Mr. Early stated that maybe the Fire & Rescue Task Force be empowered to work with the Captains.

Mr. Roma stated that the County needed to start with forming a new committee.

Mr. Hutchins asked Mr. Roma to put together an organizational chart for the Task Force along with duties and responsibilities.

Mr. Evans commented that it would need to include an appeals process because the Board is ultimately responsible.

Mr. Hutchins encouraged getting maximum participation from the squads. He then asked if Mr. Roma was going to get the job descriptions from other localities.

Mr. Roma replied this would be worked on.

Mr. Kim Shropshire stated that with the Task Force every body would still be afraid to vote against a captain.

Mr. Roma stated that was the reason we wanted to form a new committee.

Mr. Dalton stated that one or more citizens could be added to the committee to have a balanced system so that if the fire or rescue representative did not vote for or against something the citizens could state that they did not feel it was the right thing for the County and could over ride the fire and rescue vote.

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Mr. Early stated that the Board needed to get control within the squads. He suggested that a list of potential candidates for captain be presented to the committee who would then review and determine a recommendation of the candidates that should be considered. He told that if someone had held the position before and did not do their job the committee would not recommend them.

Mr. Evans stated that the Emergency Coordinator needs to have control.

Mr. Hutchins stated that the Supervisors did not need to be on the committee.

Mr. Roma suggested that the committee have 1 fire chief, 1 rescue captain, 2 citizens, himself and Mr. Newman.

Mr. Early asked how to ensure fair representation throughout the County. He commented that even though the committee would have one from fire and one from rescue that was only one vote.

Mr. Roma told that the committee would work for the good of the County and this make-up would be fair. He told that the ones from fire and rescue were the professionals and there might be things they saw that the citizens did not so after the discussion and the item was brought to the Board, the Board would know it was a good thing.

Mr. Jones suggested that there be one citizen from each district.

Mr. Early suggested that it could be like PSA without the Board members and without the At-Large member. He told that big committees did not work but he did favor equal representation throughout the County.

Mr. Hutchins asked if three fire departments vote on the one who represented the fire departments and the same hold true for the rescue squads.

Mr. Roma replied that this would be the way those representatives would be chosen.

Mr. Evans stated that the terms need to be listed.

Mr. Hutchins suggested that the terms be staggered and during the next workshop they would make the task force the first order of business.

Mr. Early commented that the fire departments and rescue squads don't mirror the districts and that there could be 3 representatives for fire and rescue.

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Mr. Hutchins asked about performance goals.

Mr. Roma replied that the committee should set goals for the entire County for items such as equipment and training.

Mr. Hutchins asked if it would be a good idea for each rescue member to be ALS.

Mr. Joe Goad stated that if the goal was for all members to be ALS then some departments would fall apart. He told that a more realistic goal would be that all members had at least an EMT.

Mr. Roma stated that there had to be a minimum standard. He told that there were squads that had members that were not EMT's nor did they have EVOC and they carry radios.

Mr. Hutchins commented that these needed to be obtainable goals.

Mr. Shropshire stated that Laurel Fork did not accept applications unless the person had EMT and asked if the fire departments required that each member had to be a firefighter I.

Mr. Roma stated that each department had different rules. Mr. Roma then stated that the County needed to find a new way to recruit volunteers and stated that right now the county offers one free county sticker.

Mr. Evans stated that it should be at least two because most of the volunteers are married.

Mr. Roma stated that this is something that the committee should discuss.

Mr. Evans stated that the General Assembly had passed a pension plan without funds and the County had discussed it, but it was dropped due to lack of funds. He stated that the County needed to look at a new way to say Thank You.

Mr. Roma replied that the committee could discuss this and possibly use fire funds.

Mr. Hutchins stated that data needed to be kept on qualifications and who is active.

Mr. Shropshire stated that it would be easy to get these records from the departments.

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Mr. Early stated that in addition to a retirement fund there might be other ways such as free entrance to the fair, usage of the cannery, and reduced fees at the Wellness Center.

Mr. Hutchins asked if the tone system was working.

Mr. Roma told that there was no uniform response time and that was hard to have in a rural community. He discussed the protocol of toning, waiting 2 minutes and toning, and then waiting 2 minutes to tone EMS.

Mr. Early asked what EMS was doing while waiting for the tones. He asked if they were getting in the vehicle and getting ready.

Mr. Roma told that if they know it is a difficult call they are getting ready.

Mr. Shropshire stated that ALS1000 should be used to make a second truck and gave the example of Laurel Fork having one person, and the person on 1000 being able to make the 2nd person on the crew rather than having to wait for another squad to come answer the call.

Mr. Roma stated that the person on ALS1000 was ALS and they couldn't bill for EMS if the departments transport and they bill.

Mr. Early commented that it came down to money rather than saving a life. He stated that the policy needed to be changed back to allow the person on ALS1000 to help make up a crew.

Mr. Evans stated that the Board has acted like they had to make a profit, but this is a service.

Mrs. Myers commented that she has had several complaints about ALS1000 not being able to make a crew and suggested possibly EMS and the squad sharing the money.

Mr. Hutchins stated that by the end of the week Mr. Roma should be working with someone from the squads on protocols that meet the legal requirements.

Mr. Early commented that the County should look down the road at the goals.

Mr. Hutchins stated that what was best for the entire County needed to be looked at.

Mr. Shropshire then asked for an EMS & Fire Department website so things like training schedules could be posted.

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Mr. Newman stated that this could be done but the departments would need to provide Teresa Sharp with the information so it could be posted.

Mr. Early suggested giving key personnel a code so they could be able to input data.

Mr. Roma then stated that Lambsburg has their own squad and they do not get funding.

Mr. Evans stated that he did not want to shut them out if they will do things right.

Mr. Newman told that when all the squads were formed each one of them were given a letter of need from the County in order for the squads to operate.

Mr. Hutchins asked if the Board should make them participate and tell them in letter form that if they do not then the Board wants to discuss their letter of need.

Responding to the issue of liability concerning Lambsburg Rescue Squad, Mr. Dalton stated that the County could be sued but the question is about liability.

Mr. Evans stated that it was not fair if the Board did not hold everyone to the same standards.

Mr. Roma then discussed incident command and stated that more training needed to be done.

Mr. Hutchins asked if countywide training is what was needed.

Mr. Roma stated that there should be combined training with other squads.

Mr. Hutchins asked if all of the trucks were equipped the same.

Mr. Roma replied that they are not, but they could start ordering the same type of vehicles or do a long term bid contract.

Mr. Early again stated that the Board needs to appoint a Task Force.

Mr. Roma stated that the Task Force should look at the report and come up with recommendations to take to the Board.

Mr. Martin asked if there were State standards to go by.

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Mr. Roma stated that there were standards of what equipment is to be on the vehicles but not how many vehicles are needed and stated that fire is governed by ISO & NFPA.

Mr. Jones asked the rescue squad members present if they needed a Crash Truck.

Mr. Shropshire responded that they did not because the fire department done the extrications.

Mr. Tolbert replied that Pipers Gap does extrications.

Mr. Roma stated that Pipers Gap runs with Galax and Galax can not guarantee to bring the crash truck.

Mr. Jones asked what is different with Cana.

Mr. Roma replied that Cana Fire has three trucks with crash equipment and that manpower also had to be considered.

Mr. Jones suggested that before equipment is taken away from squads it should have to come before the Board.

Mr. Early stated that the Task Force should handle this.

Mr. Hutchins agreed.

Mr. Jones stated that the money that the community has raised for the equipment needs to be considered.

Mr. Early stated that there should be a goal of obtaining a lower ISA rating in the County.

Mr. Roma again stated that the County was expecting a lot from volunteers so there should be some way of rewarding them.

Mr. Early commented that the Board would have a hard task of developing the Task Force.

Mr. Hutchins asked if Mr. Roma could have the structure and a basic charter ready for the Board to discuss on February 20. He asked for the Board to have this about a week ahead of the meeting and also that it be published on the website.

Mr. Roma stated that he will have a meeting with the squads.

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Mr. Hutchins stated that the goal is to do what is best for the County.

RESIGNATION FROM PSA

Mr. Martin announced that he was resigning from the Public Service Authority effective January 31, 2007.

(Order)

APPOINT AT-LARGE PUBLIC SERVICE AUTHORITY MEMBER

Upon motion by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Early, and passed unanimously, the Board appointed Mr. Keith Meredith to fulfill the unexpired term of Mr. Martin as the At-Large member of the Public Service Authority with said term beginning February 1, 2007 and ending December 31, 2007.

(Order)

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Mr. Early, seconded by Mrs. Myers, and passed unanimously, the Board adjourned until February 6, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

David V. Hutchins, Chairman

Ronald L. Newman, Assistant Clerk