



Emergency Medical Services EMS Oversight Board

800 Chestnut Street
Virtual Meeting
June 12, 2024
2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

EOB Members:

Executive Satpal Sidhu (Chair)
Barry Buchanan WC County Council
Jim Hallet; Finance/Budget Citizen Rep.
RobRoy Graham Fire Commissioners Assoc.
Scott Korthuis, City of Lynden Mayor

Rick Kowsky, Cascade Amb. Citizen at Large
Kim Lund, City of Bellingham Mayor (Joint Chair)
Robert Rush Jr. MD, Medical Community Rep.
Michael Lilliquist, Bellingham City Council
Liz Baxter, Accountable Communities of Health

Members Not Present:

Rick Kowsky, Cascade Amb. Citizen at Large

Also Present:

Mike Hilley, WCEMS Manager
Diana Clinch, WCEMS Data Analyst
Steven Cohen, WCEMS Training Specialist
Annie Todd, Reporter Cascadia Daily News
Jerry DeBruin, WCEMS&TC
Mitch Nolze, South WCFD Chief
Ben Elenbaas, County Council Dist 5

Melissa Rodriguez, WCEMS office coordinator
Hank Maleng, WCF Chiefs Assoc.
Bill Hewitt, Fire Chief BFD
Brittany Nick, South Whatcom FD
Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy Exec.
Dave Pethick, Asst. Chief BFD
Dr. Marvin Wayne, WCEMS MD

1. Welcome & Introductions Chair Sidhu
2. Confirmation March 13, 2024 Minutes Chair Sidhu
Lilliquist motioned to approve meeting minutes, Korthuis seconded, no objections meeting minutes approved unanimously.
3. Joint Chair EOB Position Confirmation Brittany Nick Chair Sidhu
Hilley introduced Brittany Nick as a nominee to the EOB. Nick introduced herself to the group and spoke about what she currently does and what she will bring to the group. Satpal Sidhu and Major Lund appointed Brittany Nick to the Joint Chair EOB position.

4. TAB Report Hilley
Hilley updated the group about what was discussed at the last TAB meeting on May 1, 2024.
5. Finance Review 2024 Overview Korthuis (Finance Chair)
 - Finance UpdateKorthuis went over the Finance Report. Korthuis explained the 1.3million shortage due to the GEMT payments. If we get that GEMT money then the shortage will straighten itself out if not then by the next EOB meeting there will have to be a recommendation to review the mill rate that is currently being collected and maybe up the mill rate to maintain the cash balances that are needed. Korthuis said that finance also discussed maybe lowering the 70% reserve target if the GEMT payments come in as the 70% target was put in place before they had GEMT. BLS contract on line 43 has not been paid out yet because that contract is not yet complete.
6. BLS/First Response Contract Update Hilley/Maleng
 - 2024 BLS Allocation
 - 2024 to 2029 ContractHilley stated they are still negotiating the language change for the BLS contract, substitute language was sent last Thursday to the Fire dept. legal side and we are waiting to hear back from the attorneys for the fire dept. Maleng stated Fire dept. legal side got back to county's legal dept. and he is on vacation this week and we hope to hear about this by next week.
7. PFAS/Personal Protective Equipment Request Pethick
Pethick spoke to the group about purchasing Personal Protective Equipment for fire fighters and paramedics for about \$109,000 currently. Lilliquist asked what percentage of calls will this gear be used for, Pethick said it would be about 25 to 30 percent of the calls. Hewitt said they are looking at this gear for all non-fire calls every automobile accident for the medics they will use this gear more than the bunker gear. Hallett supports this but wanted to ask Hilley about the budget process piece. Hilley explained what we would have to do in regards to the budget process. Sidhu asked how long has this gear been on the market, Hewett said this gear has been out for a while but the discussion about this new bunker gear did not start until end of 2022. Hilley asked COB when will this be needed as we will need to recommend this to council. Pethick said it is fine if we make this as a contract for 2025. Sidhu asked Hilley to bring this to the budget process for 2025. Lilliquist moves the EOB request the EMS Administration to include the response gear in the 2025 budget, Lund seconded, no objections carried unanimously.
8. Lummi Tribal Business Council Letter Chair Sidhu/Lund
 - Transport Non-Transport Rates Comparison (data)Satpal Sidhu and Mayor Lund updated the group about the meeting they had with Lummi and their council regarding the incident at Lummi Nation. Hewitt stated they have an open dialog with Lummi and they are continuing to build that relationship and with the open investigation he will wait until after this is all investigated before talking about this in an open public meeting. Lilliquist asked when does the EOB get involved and what is the plan for that. Satpal Sidhu stated that we should bring this item to our EOB meeting or even before that and have a discussion for some sort of process that we can follow to bring this to a larger body and hear

suggestions and see what kind of improvements we can make so that things like this don't happen again. Hilley went over the transport and non-transport rate comparisons with the group.

9. Executive Order/Opioid Emergency

Chair Sidhu

Kayla Schott-Bresler spoke about the executive order regarding the opioid emergency and the highlights of the order. She said the Health Dept. director will be briefing the County Council on Tuesday as well about the operational plan, she asked Hilley to send out the link to the group once it gets posted. Hewett stated they have been working on overdose response here in the city since the Mayor's executive order went into effect a few months ago and are having some successes. Hewett said they are ready to have a conversation about how they can support this on a long-term basis and county wide.

10. Round Table/Good of the Order

Chair Sidhu

Hallett asked about the county's study about the Fire system EMS in the county and wanted to know if that had been awarded and to whom. Ben Elenbaas stated he was on the team that was selected the group that is going to do the study but he could not recall the name of the group that was chosen. Elenbaas said the objective of the study is where can we save money and get better service to the community. Hilley stated that on June 18th it will be heard at the council meeting. Hilley spoke about how well the Narcan and CPR training is going and there were a few citizens who saved lives in the last few weeks, two of them were county employees. He also spoke about the life saved out at the soccer fields and how great it is to see more AED's out in our community.

11. Public Comment

Chair Sidhu

Mitch Nolze spoke about the BLS contract with the group and wanted everyone to know the importance of this agreement and hopes it gets pushed forward. Hewett stated they had anticipated an additional BLS unit this year and were counting on the money from the EMS Levy being part of the solution but right now they are contemplating the need to hold off on getting that unit but is looking forward to some sort of resolution on the BLS contract. Kayla wanted the group to know the county's commitment to getting to a resolution on the contract language. Korthuis stated that from the finance committees' side they did discuss options and maybe raising the rate from 22 cents to the 29.5 cents capacity rate but that would be a County Council decision. Boyko let the group know that Chief Hoffman is retiring and they will be having an open house on June 28, 2024 at Station 41, on Washington St. in Ferndale between 1:00-3:00. Hilley let the group know that Chief Boyko will be taking Hoffman's spot on the EOB in the interim.