



Snohomish County Chiefs' Association
Board Meeting
1:00 p.m.
January 25th, 2023

PRESENT:

Thad Hovis	President South County Fire
Dave Kraski	Vice-President North County Fire
Jim Haverfield	Secretary/Treasurer Snohomish County FPD 17
Keith Strotz - absent	Medium Zone Representative Snohomish County FPD 19
Travis Hots	Immediate Past President SCFD 22
Eric Andrews	Sky Valley Fire
Darryl Neuhoff	Marysville Fire
Dave Demarco	Everett Fire
Roger Vares	Everett Fire
Don Waller	SCFD4
Kevin O'Brien	SRFR
Shaughn Maxwell	South County Fire
Kurt Mills	SNO911
Terry Peterson	SNO911
Susan Bjorling	South County Fire

A. Call to Order Meeting called to order at 1301 hours.

B. Adopt/Adjust Agenda No adjustments to the agenda.

C. Minutes

Action: A motion was made by Chief Kraski. to approve the minutes from November 2022. Chief Hots seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved.

D. Old Business

1. Dr. Cooper's (current MPD) status

Two candidates will be interviewed for the position of MPD. Dr. Ryan Keay and Dr. Josh Corsa will be interviewed on January 26th.

The DOH pushed back on the names submitted for the Board positions. Roger Vares recused himself from the panel and Shaughn Maxwell has stepped up to take his place. Unfortunately, Chief Waller was not allowed to be a representative on the interview panel due to the DOH expressing concerns about Chiefs having such a strong presence.

Chief Hovis questioned whether this recommendation will be made by SCEMS or SCFCA General members. The recommendation will be made by SCEMS, and the final decision will be made by DOH.

Chief Hots inquired about the hiring process and how much weight is given to interview versus any other factors. Roger shared that the DOH has laid out the entire process, providing the interview group with fourteen questions. He feels the questions are appropriate.

Roger had expected to see other well-regarded physicians applying for this position, but the list was narrowed down to these two candidates. The application was sent out to the ER Physicians distribution group.

Should SCEMS not fully support either candidate, the DOH would appoint a neighboring county's MPD. There is also a State MPD that could step in, if necessary.

2. Wall Wait Times

Roger Vares shared that the last five days have been considerably better, due to area facilities having made significant adjustments and adding traveling nursing staff.

Providence will implement a new back-door triage system within the next week. It will not require any change in practice for our crews. Some patients will be sent to wait in the waiting area (700 pod). This will still allow necessary testing, but lower acuity patients will be sitting in the waiting area when appropriate. The goal is to have a STAT triage nurse available 24-hours a day. There are internal discussions as to how to further enhance this system.

Chief DeMarco feels as though the bi-weekly meetings with Providence have been very helpful in determining the accuracy of data and staffing. Dramatic improvements have been noted since January 14th due to the addition of the traveling nurses at Providence. This has relieved some of the pressure. The ongoing conversation with the hospital will be about staffing and through rate of patients at the hospital. The DMCC has been turned off recently and this seems to have increased the patient load at Swedish Edmonds. Some firefighters have been self-selecting as to where they feel the wait times will be more efficient. There are other conversations being held surrounding only using a DMCC system during a major event.

There has been a discussion about adding an ED Administrator that would help to standardize models that are working well amongst the hospitals in our area.

Chief Hovis shared that the County Executive's staff invited a group of Snohomish County Chiefs to meet to discuss wall wait times. Chief Maxwell felt it was set up as a listening session. The Chiefs in attendance shared their perspectives on the current situation. They shared with the executive's office that, while traveling nurses are a good quick fix, when funding runs out, the issue will arise again. Seattle has had great success with their nurse line. It's run by AMR's parent company. Snohomish County may well benefit from promoting wider utilization of a robust nurse line. The State needs a standardized diversion process throughout the state. Standardized metrics would also be helpful. There are several things that can be explored that could result in lasting improvements to the systems.

Chief Kraski sought some clarification as to how the nurse lines are set up. Chief Maxwell shared a few different scenarios from nurse lines being used across the country. Kurt Mills with SNO911 shared a graphic (attached) that outlined the various ways some communities have established their nurse lines. He offered to gather more information and will share any intel he acquires. He will provide a brief update to SCFCA members at the general meeting on February 6th. 2023.

Kevin O'Brien mentioned that one of his takeaways from the meeting with the County Executive's staff was that no one agency is alone in this situation. He expressed appreciation for both Chief Hovis and AC Maxwell and their communication during the meeting.

Chief Hovis asked the Executive Board what direction they'd like to pursue regarding working with the County Executive's staff moving forward. Should another opportunity to meet with that group present itself, Chief Hovis will reach out.

E. New Business

1. Snohomish County Fire Training Academy Further Development for Discussion
In 2018 a group of Chiefs expressed interest in forming a regional training consortium. They reached an agreement that four or five initial agencies would participate. The Academy would be just one part of the consortium and over time EMS, Training, etc. would be added. Plans have been delayed due to the pandemic. The Academy was maintained throughout the pandemic, which was critical in keeping the county staffed with firefighters.

North County and FD4 have recently joined the consortium. Paine Field and Mukilteo have also expressed interest. The original agencies have again started to meet to brainstorm as to what may be possible and what direction to take with member agencies. Chief DeMarco shared a graphic (attached) depicting existing functions, unrealized functions, and external functions.

It has been discussed that it's time to reimagine SCEMS and the big picture. The Consortium would like to propose that SCFCA seek a consultant and look at completing a funded organizational chart. The model that has gotten us here today does not have the capability to continue to meet the needs of our communities. We have seen resources drained and we now need to look to find efficiencies and find ways to do things better.

Chief Hovis shared that everyone working together, not just the agencies participating in the Consortium, would benefit in serving their communities more efficiently. All the agencies should look not just within their borders, but in their surrounding areas as well.

Chief Neuhoff reminded the group that they used to take care of EMT certifications, etc., years ago and it was all handled. There were multiple dispatch centers and separate radio

systems. It was all joined together for the good of the public. Coming together under one umbrella benefits the community. He feels that this is a golden opportunity to discontinue creating multiple groups of people who are working on things that have a lot of overlap. If his three legacy agencies had remained separated, they would likely not be able to provide the service levels that they currently do. Combining services in a singular fashion will help to minimize competition for resources. He suggested looking for the low-hanging fruit. Start looking at things that certain agencies are doing that could be standardized amongst more agencies in the area. Searching for and creating common threads will be beneficial and positive. His opinion is that this is long overdue. He fully supports the idea of agencies working more closely in alignment with each other.

Chief Waller is in support of reducing inefficiencies and the duplication of work. He would like the group to explore how we can make the product provided cheaper and better.

Chief O'Brien is in favor of bringing in a third party to help investigate and share perspectives on the best way to help this plan proceed.

Chief DeMarco has asked that the Executive Board consider SNO911 as a neutral third party in this. He suggested using SNO911 to search for a consultant.

Chief Hovis would like to bring this back on the agenda for the next general membership meeting.

Chief Maxwell would like to see a consultant come in and provide a leader's intent. Some things may need to be simplified and de-implemented.

Chief DeMarco shared that the bubble chart illustrates how much more simplified things could become. He would like the County Chiefs to gather and prepare a scope of work for a proposal to find a consultant.

Chief Haverfield does agree that there are some functions that could be handled better together, but he also reminded the group that smaller agencies have different needs. He feels that cost is an important factor. Smaller agencies do not always have the financial capability to jump in with the plans of the bigger agencies.

Chief Andrews would like to be involved in the study and work with the consultant to determine what may work to help the various agencies involved. Cost/affordability does always need to be considered, but he is in favor of looking at the options.

Chief Hots has a favorable opinion on having a neutral third-party consultant look at everything and provide input and recommendations. Small agencies don't have the budget to participate in all the things that larger agencies do, but the area is growing rapidly, and he'd like to see what can be improved. The entire county used to be made up of volunteer departments, but those are going away. Looking at the duplication of work and forecasting what can be done better in the future would be beneficial.

Kurt Mills with SNO911 stated that his agency has no issue with helping move this along, as appropriate.

Chief Hots made a motion to bring the issue forward to the general members. Chief Hovis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

F. Committee Updates

None

G. Announcements/Good of the Order

Marysville is anticipating mutual acceptance of an offered contract for the position of Marysville Fire Chief. Darryl Neuhoff expects to retire in mid-March.

H. Adjournment

Chief Kraski made a motion to adjourn at 1422. It was seconded by Chief Neuhoff.

**Minutes prepared and submitted by: Susan Bjorling
Executive Assistant, Office of the Fire Chief
South County Fire**

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 22, 2023
1:00 pm**

Attachments: