

**Mountain-Valley
Emergency Medical Services Agency
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2021**

Location: Angels Camp Fire Department
1404 Vallecito Rd.
Angels Camp. CA 95222
and Via Zoom for members of the public

Time: 9:00 AM

Board Members Present: Gary Tofanelli (Chairperson) – Calaveras County; Jeff Brown (Vice-Chairperson) – Amador County; Terry Woodrow – Alpine County; Miles Menetrey – Mariposa County; Buck Condit – Stanislaus County

Guests: Derek Cole – Agency Counsel; Brandon Zeledon – Amwest Ambulance; Dennis Brazil – Westside Healthcare District; Clint Bray – Stanislaus Consolidated Fire Protection District; Pat Burns – Salida Fire Protection District; Richard Murdock – Stanislaus County Fire Warden; Josh Brace – Modesto Fire Department; Megan Zimmerman – Stanislaus Consolidated Fire Protection District; Bhavin Mehta – Falcon Critical Care Transport; Lance Doyle

Staff: Cindy Murdaugh – Interim Executive Director; Susan Watson – Executive Secretary / Financial Services Assistant; Jim Whitworth – QI/Trauma Coordinator; Tom Morton – Communications and Data Systems Coordinator; Marilyn Smith – Response and Transport Coordinator; Justin Murdock – EMS Critical Care Coordinator; Mike Vitro – EMS Education and Disaster Coordinator; Brenda Freese – Certifications and Data Registrar; Amy Diaz – Front Office and Certifications

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Chairperson Tofanelli with a quorum of five members present. Supervisor Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Watson conducted a roll call of the JPA Board members and introduced the guests on the Zoom call. Members of the public attending in person introduced themselves.

C. Correspondence

None.

D. Additions/Deletions, Corrections to Agenda

None.

M/S/C (Woodrow/Brown) To approve the agenda.

Motion Passed 5-0

E. Public Forum

Dennis Brazil pointed out that Westside Health Care District is still considered an urban response zone, but they are not an urban area. He asked if this could be re-evaluated by the Agency.

F. Approval of Consent Calendar

Supervisor Condit asked to pull Item #4, Summary Public Response Compliance Report April 2020 thru March 2021.

M/S/C (Woodrow/Menetrey) To approve the consent calendar except Item #4.

Motion Passed 5-0

Ms. Murdaugh discussed the response compliance reports for the emergency ground ambulance providers in Stanislaus County for the period of April 2020 thru March 2021. She noted some seasonal changes and the impact of staffing challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been an industry issue. AMR has consistently been down 4-6 ambulance units daily due to staffing issues. Back filling for lack of staffing is limited by current union agreements, although AMR is trying to work through this. The hospital districts have maintained compliance throughout the report period except for Oak Valley Hospital District who had one non-compliant zone in January 2021.

Supervisor Condit asked if the hospital districts are being overused in mutual aid rendered to AMR.

Ms. Murdaugh said the Agency is tracking the mutual aid hours and noted a large variance in the aid provided to AMR versus mutual aid received from AMR.

Supervisor Condit said the County had received complaints from fire agencies saying that some engines are waiting on scene for up to 40 minutes for a transporting ambulance to arrive. This has impacted the entire system. He noted the Agency and County were formulating a plan to deal with this problem and asked for a status update.

Ms. Murdaugh stated the Agency is closely monitoring the use of mutual aid and is presently working with FirstWatch to develop a custom report. There was a meeting yesterday with County stakeholders and ambulance providers to discuss the implementation of a two-tiered EMS response. In this first meeting the County Strategic Plan was reviewed to confirm it did include a two-tiered response as part of the vision leading up to the ambulance provider RFP that was issued in 2018. In two weeks, the ambulance providers will each return with a report on what a two-tiered response system would look like in the areas they serve.

Supervisor Condit asked what is being done in the meantime. Will transport delays still be watched?

Ms. Murdaugh said the Agency is evaluating all extended response times and communicating with the providers.

Supervisor Condit asked if there was any indication from AMR to foresee and address the paramedic shortage.

Ms. Murdaugh responded AMR has been reporting the number of units down and had been in communication with the previous Agency Executive Director. The Agency is making current efforts to mitigate the problem.

Chairperson Tofanelli noted the ambulance fines were restructured in the Calaveras RFP, and asked if that same restructuring happened in the Stanislaus RFP. If so, is that playing into this current problem?

Ms. Murdaugh confirmed the ambulance fines had been restructured so the provider is not paying as much because in the system design fire agencies are extending the provider's response times.

Clint Bray asked if AMR is in breach of their contract for response compliance.

Ms. Murdaugh said AMR is not currently in breach but the Agency is closely monitoring the contract.

Josh Brace noted Westside Ambulance was served a letter of closure three years ago for violating the contract three times in a year. The compliance reports show AMR out of compliance sixteen times in a year, but they are not in breach. Ambulances from Newman and Santa Nella are going all the way to Oakdale fifteen to twenty times a month. When Westside could not staff enough units they were forced to go elsewhere to get staffing from SEMSA to maintain enough units to meet compliance. A major concern is whether AMR is being held to the same standard as was set for Westside.

Ms. Murdaugh clarified AMR is not currently in breach. The contract language states there must be three consecutive response periods of non-compliance before action is taken. She further confirmed AMR is being held to the same standard as Westside.

Josh Brace responded he had been hearing that for over a year, but it is very frustrating because Westside units are continually being called out to serve areas up to 45 minutes outside the hospital district. This is a major concern.

Ms. Murdaugh agreed it is a major concern and said that is why the Agency dove into the use of mutual aid and is working to cut the unit hours committed by the health care districts to AMR's response area. She also confirmed there is language in the posting plan that allows the health care districts to refuse response to Code 2 calls in these mutual aid requests.

Josh Brace stated Westside is happy to help with a Code 3 call, but also being toned out for a Code 2 transfer depletes the health care district of both a paramedic and an EMT. This compromises the service being paid for by the citizens of the health care district.

Chairperson Tofanelli stated the JPA Board understands the situation and the concerns.

Dennis Brazil said when Westside was served a letter for not being able to staff ambulances, the health care district had to decide options on how to continue. The company was reorganized and now, two and a half years later, Westside Ambulance is financially fluid. When they were short, they contracted out to be able to staff the ambulance units to cover the health care district. Now it appears AMR is running short staffed and everybody else is picking up the slack for them. However, that is not the responsibility of the health care district. Under mutual aid, the box shows zero every time for AMR providing mutual aid to Westside Ambulance. The posting position for AMR used to be at Crows Landing and 33 and AMR was not coming anywhere close to posting in that position. When Josh and Michael brought this to the former Agency Executive Director's attention, that posting position was moved to Crows Landing and West Main. This was not closer to Westside Ambulance, but farther away. When Westside is fined for being out of position it is because of covering for AMR. The health care district is being covered 100%. It does not appear that AMR is being held to the contract in the same way Westside Ambulance was held to the contract when out of compliance for ambulance staffing.

Supervisor Condit stated this was the point he was trying to make. Is AMR just gaming the system?

Chairperson Tofanelli said the JPA Board will meet with Agency staff and come up with some kind of plan and run it by all of the agencies. The concerns are completely understood.

Dennis Brazil pointed out for a small special district voted in by the voters, those fines add up. The taxpayers ask why they are not seeing Westside ambulances, but are seeing ambulances that belong to other companies when they are paying to support Westside ambulance. They are informed it is because the Westside ambulances are being called into the system to serve in other areas.

Josh Brace also reported that Modesto Fire BLS engines are sitting on scene at ALS calls for long periods. Sometimes they are having to call for an ALS engine to render medical aid based on patient need while they are waiting for an ambulance. Now two fire engines are tied up. This is another system failure.

Chairperson Tofanelli assured the Agency would look into all of this to come up with a remedy that works for everybody.

Richard Murdock echoed the concerns of Josh Brace, Dennis Brazil and Supervisor Condit. He reminded the JPA Board that Cindy Murdaugh has been in the Interim Executive Director position for just a few weeks and has been dealing with a lot of issues she needs to clean up in the Stanislaus County EMS System. The County has been working with the Agency to move toward that transition to a two-tiered response system as well as cleaning up issues that have been created in the past and specifically the Mutual Aid requests. The concerns are valid, and they are actively being addressed.

Supervisor Brown asked when AMR's contract is up for renewal.

Chairperson Tofanelli responded in another two years or so.

Pat Burns asked if the compliance reports are based on the transport unit's arrival on scene or based on AMR's clock stopping options on scene? We see them upstaffing QRVs and understand that decision was made by the previous director. This provides AMR BLS staff on scene, but that is not for patient care. Paramedic transport units are what is needed.

Ms. Murdaugh said response time is calculated from time assigned to the time the transport unit arrives on scene. QRVs or fire agencies do not stop the clock, but they do extend the response time.

Clint Bray asked when the fine structure will be brought back to enforce compliance?

Chairperson Tofanelli noted the contract needs to be reevaluated to see what can be done.

Ms. Murdaugh affirmed the fine structure in the current contract is in play. The waiver period ended in September 2020.

M/S/C (Condit/Brown) To approve Consent Calendar Item #4.

Motion Passed 5-0

R. Further Report from May 14, 2021 Special Board of Directors Meeting

Derek Cole reported the JPA Board of Directors voted unanimously to offer the outgoing Executive Director two months of severance in exchange for a release of any potential claims. That was in addition to the accruals the Agency was required by law to give. Derek was directed to prepare the agreement as the District Counsel. This was done and coordinated with the former Executive Director. He was amenable to the agreement. The parties have executed the separation agreement and the severance payment has been made. The agreement is available to anyone upon a proper request for public records.

G. Agreement with Citizens Medical Response LLC

Ms. Murdaugh explained Citizens Medical Response was previously approved, but the dispatch component of their contract was not in compliance. A cease and desist letter was sent to them and since that time they corrected the issues. The Agency is entering into another one year contract for BLS non-emergency ground ambulance service for inter-facility transfers in and out of Stanislaus County. Typically these type of agreements are for an initial one year period and if performance is satisfactory then renewals are for three years. The Board was asked to approve this agreement for the period of July 1, 2021 thru June 20, 2022.

Supervisor Condit said the provider appears to be in compliance and this is a probationary year to see how they perform.

M/S/C (Condit/Brown) To approve the agreement with Citizens Medical Response LLC and authorize the Interim Executive Director to sign the contract.

Motion Passed 5-0

H. Agreement with Falcon Critical Care Transport LLC

Ms. Murdaugh said this is the initial agreement for both BLS and CCT non-emergency ground ambulance service for inter-facility transfers in and out of Stanislaus County. The contract period will be from July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022.

Supervisor Condit observed the CCT portion of this agreement does not take a paramedic unit out of the EMS system.

M/S/C (Condit/Brown) To approve the agreement with Falcon Critical Care Transport LLC and authorize the Interim Executive Director to sign the contract.

Motion Passed 5-0

I. Amendment to Agreement with The Permanente Medical Group

Ms. Murdaugh explained this is the renewal of the agreement for Dr. Kann to be the Agency Medical Director. It exercises the option in the agreement to extend the contract for another twelve months from July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022.

Chairperson Tofanelli thanked Dr. Kann for his service to the Agency.

M/S/C (Brown/Woodrow) To approve the amendment to the agreement with The Permanente Medical Group and authorize the Interim Executive Director to sign the contractual document.

Motion Passed 5-0

J. Update on the Status of Stanislaus County's Membership in the JPA

Supervisor Condit said the County is still working on bringing everyone in whose involved and seems to be working well with the mountain counties.

Richard Murdock reported on May 25, 2021 the Stanislaus Board of Supervisors approved the County CEO or his designee to issue a revised notice of withdrawal from the Mountain-Valley EMS Agency Joint Powers Authority to be effective June 30, 2022. They also authorized the Managing Director of the Health Services Agency to negotiate and execute an agreement with Mountain-Valley EMS Agency to administer the local emergency medical services for FY 2021/2022. Further, the Board of Supervisors directed County staff to develop a financial forecast and staffing plan to administer local emergency medical services for Stanislaus County as a single county administrator

effective July 1, 2022. There is also to be an alternative financial forecast and staffing plan for multi-county capability and then return to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation by August 31, 2021.

There has been a meeting with the JPA Work Group and these recommendations emerged from that group. Supervisor Tofanelli will schedule another work group meeting for further discussion.

Chairperson Tofanelli will look to schedule another meeting in the next couple of weeks.

K. Review JPA Work Group Membership

Chairperson Tofanelli shared that Jesse Figueroa of Mercy Medical Transport has requested to be a part of the work group that currently includes Supervisor Menetrey, Supervisor Brown and Alan McNany.

Supervisor Menetrey welcomes Jesse's participation. The discussion with Tuolumne was held but they will not join the JPA if Stanislaus County will still be involved. This can be revisited in 2022 if Stanislaus is withdrawing at the end of the next fiscal year.

Chairperson Tofanelli said the work group should stay intact to identify options for moving forward and at least start meeting by January 2022.

M/S/C (Menetrey/Woodrow) To appoint Jesse Figueroa to the JPA Work Group.
Motion Passed 5-0

L. FY 21/22 Member County Contribution Letters

Ms. Murdaugh presented the FY 21-22 member county contribution letters noting the calculation remains at \$0.44 per capita as approved by the JPA Board in December 2008 and is based on the population figures published by the California Department of Finance.

Supervisor Brown noted the letter for Amador County should be directed to Ann Watts who replaced the retired James Foley as Director of the Health and Human Services Agency.

M/S/C (Condit/Brown) To approve the FY 21/22 Member County Contribution Letters.
Motion Passed 5-0

M. FY 21/22 Member County Contracts

Ms. Murdaugh presented the FY 21/22 member county contract renewals. The new term will be July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022. The fees reflect the calculation in the member county contribution letters and any county wishing to opt out of the JPA for FY 22/23 must give written notice by January 1, 2022.

M/S/C (Woodrow/Menetrey) To approve the FY 21/22 Member County Contracts.
Motion Passed 5-0

N. Compensation for the Interim Executive Director

Chairperson Tofanelli recommended setting compensation at Step 4 on the Executive Director salary schedule citing this as the second time Ms. Murdaugh has stepped up to fill in as Interim Executive Director and noting her level of experience and knowledge of the EMS system.

M/S/C (Woodrow/Menetrey) To set the Interim Executive Director compensation at Step 4 on the Executive Director salary schedule.
Motion Passed 5-0

O. FY 21-22 Proposed Preliminary Budget

Chairperson Tofanelli requested the budget be adjusted to reflect the compensation just set for the Interim Executive Director. The revised budget should be brought to the August 2021 JPA Board meeting.

M/S/C (Brown/Condit) To approve the proposed preliminary budget.
Motion Passed 5-0

P. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Supervisor Woodrow observed there has been a history of two year terms for the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson and recommended the existing officers remain for another year.

Supervisors Condit, Menetrey and Brown agreed in order to maintain continuity for the Board.

M/S/C (Woodrow/Menetrey) To elect Supervisor Gary Tofanelli as Chairperson and Supervisor Jeff Brown as Vice-Chairperson.
Motion Passed 5-0

Q. Agency and County Reports

Agency – Ms. Murdaugh reported the following:

- In Alpine County the Agency is currently finishing a tabletop exercise designed for a remote MCI scenario to evaluate responses with limited resources, limited access to the incident and to test communications as well as a Casualty Collection Point. This project is being worked on in collaboration with the County as part of the HPP Grant.
- In Amador County the Agency is working with the Sheriff's Office dispatch to establish data integration with FirstWatch to measure response compliance and calculating reports. The FirstWatch piece was originally funded in 2013. Now that the project is moving forward, the CAD vendor, Sunridge is charging a fee of \$8,950. The Agency submitted a request for MADDY funds to the EMCC and it is on the agenda for the July 28, 2021 meeting.
- In Calaveras County the FRALS Agreement with Copperopolis Fire Protection District is under review to address concerns from the fire agency and ensure it meshes with the language in the Calaveras RFP. The Agency committed to having this agreement review completed by the end of June 2021.
- In Mariposa County the data integration with FirstWatch is in place. Data collection on mutual aid is being finalized and then report building will begin.
- In Stanislaus County the Agency is working with AMR to develop fire first responder agreements to be in compliance with the RFP. AMR committed to completing those drafts by June 30, 2021.
- Ms. Murdaugh recognized the Agency staff for the valuable expertise each one brings to the Agency's work.

Stanislaus County – The County is watching the EMS system carefully and appreciates Ms. Murdaugh's efforts to address constituent concerns. The County is in the orange tier and concentrating on pop-up vaccination sites. Fire season has started so having the extended stays on medical calls is affecting availability for fire response.

Amador County – No report

Calaveras County – The Board of Supervisors banned fireworks until November 2021. Public displays have to meet the approval of the fire chief in that district.

Alpine County – No report

Mariposa County – No report

S. Next Scheduled Regular Meeting

Supervisor Menetrey asked if the meeting date for the regular JPA Board meeting could be moved to a different day as it currently conflicts with the Rural Counties meeting.

Chairperson Tofanelli said this topic will be added to the next meeting agenda.

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, August 12, 2021 at 9:00 AM at Copperopolis Fire Station Training Room.

T. Adjournment

Chairperson Tofanelli adjourned the meeting at 10:18 AM.