



# PIERCE COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION



Established 1985

## February 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes

### 1. Call to Order

President Jim Sharp called the Pierce County Fire Chiefs Association meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. remotely via Zoom and in person at South Sound 911 located at 3580 Pacific Ave, Tacoma. According to the Zoom attendee list (3) and sign in sheet (18), there were a total of 21 people in attendance. President Sharp welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Thanked South Sound for hosting the meeting.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Chief Medford and seconded by Chief Parkinson to approve the January 5, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

### 3. Treasurer's Report – Denise Ross

See Treasurer's Report on the backside of the Agenda. Chief Parkinson moved and Chief Wernet seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

### 4. Correspondence

Nothing at this time.

### 5. Guest Speakers – None

### 6. Executive Board Report

President Sharp reported the E-Board met and will be talked about more later. Since change of format there was some frustration amongst the Commissioners and affiliated agencies. Attended the Commissioners meeting last week. Reemphasized with them that Chiefs needed to focus on operational issues and the changes made were to help that. Encourage you if you have issues with any of your Boards to communicate and update them as you see fit. Keep them engaged.

### 7. Unfinished Business

**Audit Committee** – Chief Morrow hasn't done this yet. Will get with Denise and Chief Parkinson to get this accomplished by the next meeting.

**EMS** – President Sharp stated first meeting with new format talked about priorities and EMS was at the top of the list. Quickly learned know little about structure and operations of PC EMS. Disconnected from where should be. Have had good MSO's that have managed things. At Executive Board meeting invited Jesse Fox and Ryan McGrady to go over EMS. Want all of us on the same page and understanding of the EMS structure. Where do MSO's work and where can the Chiefs step in when needed – policy level, etc.

Distributed handout on the overview of Washington State and Pierce County EMS Systems (copy attached).

Department of Health governs everything. We travel the most in the arena of the blue boxes – PC EMS. Can't find anything in RCW as to how it became to be under DEM. County decides who runs EMS. RCW is very prescriptive, defines who to be involved, not numbers though. Local Council to Regional Council to Department of Health. According to website for Regional Trauma Care Council 1 Fire Chief representative from Pierce County is Calvin Johnson who retired a year or so ago. We have some work to do if we want to be involved and present. Limited opportunities to do so.

Goals and parameters established. Eliminating inconsistencies in OTEP plan. Orting has the exact same plan as CPFR and with one agency passes and with Orting it didn't. Take a step back and look at what little things we can accomplish that will go a long way. Establish a service level. How do we do that? Why MPD works 4 hours per week in a county of 2,000 providers. Is it only funded for 4 hours? Getting policies and procedures in writing. If in writing then held accountable to. Alleviate the different set of rules for different agencies. They should be the same rules for all agencies. Consistency and efficiency. Ascertain a succession plan. Another important thing to tackle as group – physician advisor should have full delegate powers from MPD. What is sent to the MPD should be able to go through our physician advisor instead of going through PC EMS. This would reduce the case load and work load off of MPD that only works 4 hours a week. Necessary and fairly achievable with a unified voice from this room. Discussion followed. Look up WAC language on what an MPD delegate can do. Chief Medford shared issues with Evaluator training, etc.

Need some benchmark information. What are other counties doing – how is EMS managed, how many employees to manage, etc. MSO Dyson stated there is no delegation out. More and more of a problem as agencies have grown, number of providers increased and PC EMS has not grown to keep up with the demands and needs of the County.

Protocol updates – 2 years to get updated. Discussion followed. Part of it was due to COVID and part of it staffing issues. Delay – is it a control issue, staffing issue, a little of both? Sounds fundamentally broken.

Single point failure. Physician Advisors invite in to hear their issues and opportunities, etc. President Sharp suggested changing the reference from single point failure to choke point as it's not so much a failure as it is a bottleneck issue.

What is end state looking for? RCW language is from the 80's and 90's. Where is authority to create the change? Who do we talk to that has authority to make the change? Suspect there is an ordinance somewhere in PC that defines PC EMS, etc. 80% of business we do is done in the EMS space. At some point, need to take a strong position on the end state we are looking for. What are actions we are going to take to get to the end state? PC EMS handles a lot more than just recertifications. There are also hospitals, ambulance licenses, etc. etc. Not sure we want to own all of that.

Need to identify critical problems, challenges, high risks for us and how can we engage change to address? Figure out MPD situation and funding, physician advisor delegate power and clear direction on processes to be held accountable, etc. MPD doesn't know MSO's, no relationship with. Moving forward, long range plan, EMS should be its own, separate thing.

Choke point, has to funnel through one place, one desk. What can our role be to help change that? Does it need more support? Desire or funding? Norma has an extreme amount of knowledge. Need depth in office, transition plan, etc. Appropriate staffing levels, address inconsistencies, etc. May be an issue of where the EMS Office resides – DEM. The culture that Norma works in. Inconsistent application of nonexistent rules. Our approach has to be collaboration and how can we fix what is broken. Need to understand we are one of stakeholders.

Start with Waffle, Pancake and possibly Jody. Next step would be to go to PC Council. Also need to define and look at long term plans, state law changes needed, etc. Boise – took middle person out, went from State EMS to County Regional EMS and reported directly to the State DOH. Need to change dysfunctional, outdated system. Cares and concerns aired. Circling back to same issues, core concerns and challenges to address.

Suggest next step is to invite Physician Advisors to the next meeting to have them explain from their viewpoint and perspective for first half of meeting and second half the Chiefs discuss further steps. Maybe invite Quinn or Snure on laws pertaining to, etc. **ACTION ITEM:** Invite Physician Advisors to the next meeting.

Who is currently on local council, sub committees? Are we represented appropriately? Also at regional council.

Where do we have staff engaged currently and are there any vacancies needing to be filled? **ACTION ITEM:** Dyson will research on all of the different meetings and members. Kira to contact Norma to get a current list of members, etc.

Benchmarking on other EMS Offices in the State. What look like for counties similar size as us, etc. **ACTION ITEM:** Bouchard will research what other EMS Offices in the State look like, etc.

Service level expectations, inconsistencies, delays in process and procedure/symptoms of low staffing, etc. How much can be delegated to Physician Advisors?

A lot of different things going on and some overlap. Policy level discussions that PCFCA want to have with the right audience.

President Sharp thanked EMS people in attendance.

**8. New Business**

**A. Pierce County Code Revisions**

President Sharp reported Kevin Berdan and Michael Dobbs will be working with Ken Rice on this.

**9. Good of the Order**

President Sharp stated can talk about other work priorities as well. SS911 Dispatch was another priority. Call processing times. Put on the agenda for next meeting: Dispatch SS911

Where is the right place to talk about? PSCOC (?) place to make the change.

President Sharp stated call from Tory, meeting put on calendar that conflicts with this meeting. Going to try to stay engaged as much as he can. Will try to keep him up to speed on what is going on, etc. Discussion on move the meeting so he can attend or look at allowing his Deputy to attend. No opposition to moving the meeting. Doodle poll to see what works?

President Sharp recommends permanently moving the E-Board meeting to the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month (21<sup>st</sup>). Will send out formally in email to allow for double check of emails. Once regular meetings figured out E-Board meetings will be figured out accordingly.

**10. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Submitted by:

Denise Ross  
Recording Secretary

**2023 Meeting Schedule:**

Jan 5, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911  
Feb 2, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911  
Mar 2, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911  
Apr 6, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911  
May 4, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911  
Jun 1, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911  
Jul 6, 2023 – NO MEETING  
Aug 3, 2023 – NO MEETING  
Aug ?, 2023 – Joint Meeting with Police Chiefs - TBD  
Sep 7, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911  
Oct 5, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911  
Nov 2, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911  
Dec 7, 2023 – NO MEETING – AWARDS BANQUET

**Overview of Washington State and Pierce County EMS Systems**

**Department of Health**  
 Secretary of DOH is appointed by the Governor  
 Duties listed in RCW 18-73

**West Region EMS & Trauma Care Council**

- Regional council established per RCW 70-168
- Participating counties are Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pierce, Thurston
- Per WAC 246-976-920 the Council makes recommendation on the MPD
- Membership is defined by RCW and members must be recommended by the local EMS/TC for appointment by the DOH
  - Currently 49 members
  - 6 members represent pre-hospital providers, 2 from PC (Yvonne Sparacio, Patti Bosman)
  - 4 fire chiefs, 1 from PC (Calvin Johnson)
- E-board meets monthly, entire council meets every quarter
- Norma Pancake is the 2023 Chair of the E-board

**Pierce County EMS Office**  
 The Pierce County EMS Office is a branch of DEM.

**MPD**

- Clark Waffle
- Appointed by the DOH per WAC 246-976-920
- Must be recommended by the regional trauma council
- Approves certifications and recertifications
- Part-time employee

**EMS Program Coordinator**

- Norma Pancake
- Works with MPD to carry out all statutory obligations of the MPD
- Full-time employee

**Pierce County EMS Council**

- Local council established per RCW 70-168
- Council meets quarterly and committees meet every other month

**Key Governing legislation**

- RCW 18-73 Emergency Medical Care and Transportation services
- RCW 70-168 Statewide Trauma Care Systems
- WAC 246-976 Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Care Systems

**EMS Council Committees**

- Base Station
- CQI
- Protocol
- Operations
- Training and Development

