



PIERCE COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION



Established 1985

March 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

President Jim Sharp called the Pierce County Fire Chiefs Association meeting to order at 9:05a.m. remotely via Zoom and in person at South Sound 911 located at 3580 Pacific Ave, Tacoma. According to the Zoom attendee list (5) and sign in sheet (17), there were a total of 22 people in attendance. President Sharp welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

2. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Chief Parkinson and seconded by Chief Thirkield to approve the February 2, 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 Thirkield 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 most of it is on the agenda today. State Chiefs Conference is May 22-25th and is open for registration now.

7. Committees and Workgroups

Audit Committee – Chief Parkinson stated no report.

PC Code Revision Workgroup – No report.

Radio Replacement System – Sharp and Morrow.

President Sharp reported there has been a bit of a set-back. Group has decided to focus on technology side of implementation. Pin in governance for now. Complex issue, money and politics involved. Last meeting was cancelled.

8. Unfinished Business

A. EMS

- **Research different meetings and members – AC Dyson**
- **Current list of members from Norma – FC Thirkield**
- **Research other EMS Offices in the State – AC Bouchard**

President Sharp asked the Physician Advisors to introduce themselves and departments they work with. Gave a brief background of what the Association has been doing. Recognize more proactive role of being involved and figure out where can be involved to make improvements in EMS in the County. Getting educated and smarter in the process. Beginning to understand how it all interacts and interfaces. Viewpoints of challenges, problems and roadblocks with getting work done. Would also like the perspective from the Physician Advisors. Handouts distributed (copy attached): EMS County Council Roster; Workflow of EMS in the County.

Incredible amount of work that goes through the EMS Office and only has 1 employee. That is part of the problem with long delays in getting stuff done. Bit of a concern. Another concern is inconsistencies in expectations with recertification process. "Inconsistent application of nonexistent rules." Not trying to knock down anyone. Where can we be involved to make some improvements – more staffing in the office? Clearer and consistent expectations. Constructive conversation that all of MSO's are facing on a pretty consistent basis.

Freidrick – looking for years have reached out to see what we can do to make the process easier. Have tried to come up with solutions for their office and continually get resistance. IE protocols, recerts reviewed by Physician Advisors and present to EMS Office for final approval, etc. RCW allows for training physician as a delegate of MPD can sign off on recertifications. Dumas reached out to Dept of Health – all it takes is a phone call or email from EMS Office to certify individuals with #'s – they don't get any paperwork, etc. Gates stated King County has 4 or 5 full time staff and a smaller population than Pierce County. 2 people that are part-time – MPD that works 2 days, 2 hours each and Norma who is also an employee of DEM. 930,000 people – we need a more robust system and resources to support. Problem with 1 single funnel point which can cause a system failure. Have offered to augment the system. 1 hour every 3 months to run through protocols. Have offered to take on and present for approval. Hierarchy of decision making? Doesn't sound like there is direct reporting between Clark and Norma. Friedrich stated another example is the blood program. Chief Doan stated he is new here to the County, elephant in room is it all boils down to 1 person choke point. Go directly to person either individually or along with Waffle and Jody and address the issues and concerns.

Clear list of what needs are, documented process of recertification or Dr's take over for agencies. Expectation that protocol is updated annually, etc. This is what we need for the County. May not go well. Structure of the office has to change. Symptom of the structure of DEM – built on a very old model that has not adapted and they don't seem to want to adapt. More of a cultural thing at DEM.

Run a very big risk of jeopardizing people. Life safety risk if certification process is held up and have providers that don't get recertified. Another risk, what happens to system if anything were to happen to either Clark or Norma? Is there any succession plan?

DEM was strained when COVID happened. What happens if/when we have a big earthquake and they are completely overwhelmed?

Any input from private ambulances and their experience? President Sharp stated have not reached out to them yet. Trying to get educated and understand the issues first.

A lot of models – requires funding. Can provide some examples of models that would be productive. Thoughtful about and good strategy behind making the long term fixes. Two fold issues to address. Norma does not work for Dr. Waffle. She works for DEM.

Solutions – 1st ask what would solve the workload of Norma and Clark and decrease frustrations – should have a way of doing in-house recertifications, Physician Advisors sign off on as delegates and submit directly to State. Those that choose to go through PCEMS office can do so. Would be an easy ask and not unreasonable. 2nd ask would be Protocol Updates and Training program are just as important and vital a problem.

Oversight of Training from top down – standardized and consistent versus each agency developing and creating their own training.

Also, no way to hold anyone accountable or recourse. Defined process of when there is a concern, what is the process to address the concern.

Friedrick suggested also invite Dawn and Katie Felt from DOH to the meeting with Clark, Norma and Jody as well.

Discussion on retaliation since last meeting. Consistency in asking for something new – wants task sheets, which haven't asked for in the past. No more than 10% to audit in plans.

President Sharp stated our role and job is to understand the systems. We need to do the work we need to do. Not attacking or undermining anyone. Not our goal. Goal is to lift them up, give them resources and make successful.

Conversation with Norma, Clark, Jody, Dawn and Katie would be optimum audience. Issues of: ability to do certifications in house, delegate authority to physician advisors, protocol updates and training. Overarching concepts of inconsistent rules.

COVID has shown only operating under DEM and lack of resources if a large emergency happens, the EMS Office is directly impacted.

Treating symptom that not's going to work and need to be ready for Plan B.

Some degree of cross training versus succession planning. Nice if someone else knew how to do the job. Expansion plan. Would think it would already be defined in DEM's plan.

Other DEM challenges dealing with that adds to. Another reason to be thoughtful in how approach. Trying to bring in solutions.

President Sharp thanked the doc's for being here for their insight and input has been helpful.

EMS Council list. Not a clear process for getting people in the positions. Chief Parkinson forwarded a list to Denise from Dyson on representatives. Denise to send out for everyone to look through and let know if their employee's are current or not. Elections used to be held when meetings were in person. Russ McCallion retires the end of March. Jeff Moore

will be replacing him as the ALS Agency representative to represent PC Fire Chiefs Association. Medford moved that Brennan Helmers from Orting be the ALS representative to the PC EMS Council, Chief Parkinson seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

Joe Worley, Paramedic-At-Large is no longer a Paramedic. He's still attending meetings, but not sure that is our position or not. Worthwhile to have Joe state that at the meeting and see how the Council works that out. Suggested to have Joe have a replacement lined up for the Council. Council meets Quarterly and Committees meet every other month, 4th Thursday. If you have someone from your agency to fill that position, email that to Denise. Mary Hallman would like to volunteer Erin Richardson, new training paramedic. Executive Board will discuss.

Dumas reported West Region EMS – Calvin Johnson is listed representative, retired last March. Reached out to Chair and asked what positions are open? Willing to take that spot on the Board. Chief Thirkield moved and Chief Medford seconded to have Dumas be the representative on the West Region Council. MOTION CARRIED.

9. New Business

A. PAM Classes funding

President Sharp reported that Denise recently sent out the PAMS Dues Invoice. In looking into this, it happened in the EMS Committee meeting which they don't have the authority to do, etc. Overview of the history. If going to do this, need to codify this. Before we do that though, he has heard mixed stories on if the funding is needed, etc. Doesn't want to undermine the program. If the funding is needed, then let's go through the proper process. The flat fee charged once per year came about to simplify the process as agencies were not remembering to submit payment when they held a class. There was no tracking or accountability in place. Value to having the funds available for purchasing equipment. Discussion at the last meeting decided to get rid of the vehicle and centrally locate the equipment and disposables. Training for PAM instructors as well. Discussion followed. Chief Medford moved and Chief Parkinson seconded to adopt the PAM class funding methodology of a flat rate per agency per year (50 or more paramedic providers \$1,000.00; less than 50 paramedic providers \$500.00). MOTION CARRIED.

B. By-Laws Update

President Sharp reported he sent out a poll to everyone. Meeting Date change to the 4th Thursday. Distributed copies of By Laws Change and Denise will email out to everyone:

ARTICLE IX: MEETINGS

1. The Association's meetings shall be held on the **first fourth** Thursday of each month. If a conflict exists with this day, the President shall reschedule or cancel the meeting. Meetings shall be conducted during the day. The annual meeting (banquet) shall be held in December and conducted in the evening.

Denise already checked with SouthSound and the meeting room is available.

When would this start? Vote on at April Meeting. Wouldn't take effect officially until May. By Laws do allow for the President to change the meeting. Recommend moving the April meeting to the 4th Thursday. May have to cancel the May meeting as it's the same time as the State Chiefs Conference. Also, look at no longer cancelling the July and August meetings.

April meeting moved to the 4th Thursday.

C. Call Prioritization Report

Chief Parkinson reported 2 things rose to the top – EMS which is being worked on. The other revolve around SouthSound911. Next PCSCO meeting asked if can talk specifically about call processing times. How performing on. Want certain types of calls to be dispatched rapidly. Initial report back from Matt Clark with breakout of things. What is call processing time and how do we get it? Discussion followed. Need clear defined definitions and way to get information. PCSCO would be appropriate place to start and then determine where it goes from there - sub-committee or OPC, etc. Chiefs Parkinson, Doan and Morrow to come up with the asks. 911 Call Processing be put on the agenda under Committees and Workgroups.

President Sharp – Chief Wilsie from Gig Harbor, employee of TFD as medic – ask between TG and Good Sam there is no analysis of Trauma Tracking. Would like to have some more understanding of trauma tracking. Housed in I-Net viewing in SS911. Asking for ability to look at all data in the County, routed this through the Chiefs Association to give authorization to SS911 to release trauma information. Suggest having some kind of reporting back. Just call data, no patient information would be shared. Chief Thirkield moved and Chief Parkinson seconded to support allowing all trauma data be shared. MOTION CARRIED. President Sharp to send a letter to SS911.

10. Good of the Order

Chief Medford reported he received a letter from Jody, PCDEM reached out to him, Anderson Island and Sheriff's Office for letter of support to send Patty Murray to earmark money for mobile unit. Felt it was odd that only went to small agencies to ask for support. Want everyone else to be aware of. President Sharp suggested offering the Chiefs Association to write a letter of support for as well. President Sharp to reach out to Jody.

Chief Doan reported March 13th DEM is doing a presentation for County Council.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

Submitted by:

Denise Ross

Recording Secretary

2023 Meeting Schedule:

January 5, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
February 2, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
March 2, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
April 27, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
May 25, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
June 22, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
July 27, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
August 24, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
August ?, 2023 – Joint Meeting with Police Chiefs - TBD
September 28, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
October 26, 2023 – Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
November 16, 2023 – (3rd Thursday due to 4th Thursday being Thanksgiving) - Hybrid remotely via Zoom and in person at SS911
December 7, 2023 – NO MEETING – AWARDS BANQUET

PIERCE COUNTY EMS COUNCIL

ATTENDANCE ROSTER

26 January 2023

Held via Zoom Meeting

Member/Alternate	Affiliation	Signature
Harold Heindel, AMR/RM Vice-Chair Jordan Stopsen,NW Ambulance-alternate	Pierce County Ambulance Assoc.	
Russ McCallion, Kira Thirkield, alternate	Pierce County Fire Chiefs Assoc.	
Barb Carrier	Citizen-At-Large, Position 1	
vacant	Citizen-At-Large, Position 2	
Joe Worley	Paramedic-At-Large	
Mary Hallman Jeff Bambrick, alternate	Tacoma Fire Department	
vacant	Cities & Towns Assoc.	
Kelsey Peterson, RN, Chair	Emergency Nurses Association	
Tom Ferrer, MD	Physician-At-Large	
Karmela Palmer, Franciscan HS, Sec/Treas vacant, Multicare HS alternate	PC Hospital Council	
Natasha Holbert Gabrielle Hubbard, alternate	TPCHD	
Jody Ferguson Amy Gillespie, alternate	Pierce County Emergency Management	
Clark Waffle, MD	PC EMS MPD, (permanent guest)	
Guests/Affiliation	Print e-mail address (neatly) if minutes requested	
Norma Pancake/ PCEMS Office		
Donna Vitale/ PCEMS Office		

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

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

EMS Council Committees

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

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

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

