



# Garrett County Emergency Services Board

## September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Meeting Minutes

### **ESB Members in Attendance**

- Lou Battistella, General Public
- Wayne Tiemersma, Garrett County EMS Chief
- Alex Mellot, Garrett County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association
- Justin Orendorf, Bittinger Volunteer Fire Department
- Sam Grant, Emergency Services
- Richard Carlson, Chief's Committee
- Mark Clookie, Southern Rescue Squad
- Bill Ingram, General Public
- Chris Nichols, General Public

### **Guests in Attendance**

- Curtis O'Neal, Garrett County EMS Lt
- Alex Kelly, MIEMMS
- Dwayne Kitis, MIEMMS
- Kevin Null, County Administrator
- David Middleton, Emergency Planner

### **Call To Order**

This Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Battistella.

Reading of previous meetings minutes was waived at this time.

## **New Business**

- Chairman Battistella read a statement as to the reason for the special meeting. Main points include:
  - ESB has received ongoing reports of issues regarding Northern Garrett County Rescue Squad (NGCRS) Friendsville Station #3.
  - After each report, ESB representative Terry Spear, Chief of Station #3 and Chairman of NGCRS has committed to improve run time and staffing.
  - After returning from a 2-year meeting hiatus due to COVID in 2020-2021, the ESB found the same issues with Station #3 was still being discussed in May of 2022.
  - In August 2022, the ESB notified the Garrett County Commissioners of concerns about the viability of NGCRS, specifically Station #3.
  - In May 2023, Garrett County Government and the Medical Director implemented to allow for mutual aid to be alerted on initial alerts.
  - NGCRS is often unable to secure crews after 1800 hours.
  - Ongoing QA/Operation issues frustrate both squad and GCES Staff.
  - NGCRS continues to operate with a very small number of participating members.
  - Chief/Chairman Terry Spear continues to be the sole functional arm of the board and cannot carry the entire load that needs to be done.
  - A letter was sent to the Garrett County Commissioners by the ESB about ongoing issues with Station #3 on August 20, 2023.
  - A work group meeting was held and included GCES Director Sam Grant, County Administrator Kevin Null, EMS Chief Wayne Tiemersma, and ESB Chairman Lou Battistella. This work group discussed that the only viable option to stop the ongoing issue is the County taking lead at Station #3 and work out details with volunteers that want remain.
  - It was noted that anything short of replacing Station #3 volunteers with county paid staff would likely extend the ongoing problem.
  - The meeting opened for discussion at 1612 hours.

## **Meeting Discussion**

- EMS Chief Wayne Tiemersma discussed ongoing concerns and presented information about NGCRS based on multiple ESB reviews spanning from 2/17/2020 until 9/25/2023. Main points include:
  - Ongoing issues with vehicle maintenance and lack of clear maintenance plan being identified.
  - Vehicle repair issues are not always addressed in a timely fashion.
  - Driver check offs are erratic at best.
  - Increasing lack of driving coverage at Station #3
  - A pattern of duty scheduled “no shows” still exists.
  - EVOG completion status is still unknown.
  - NGCRS has no identified squad level system review.

- GCES now handles all medical supplies for NGCRS.
- There is often not a quorum to conduct business for meetings.
- Although some duties have been assigned to other board members, Chief/Chairman Spear continues to be the sole functioning arm of the board.
- Financial Accountability has been a significant area of noted vulnerability.
- Percentage fail rate for first line callout is at a cumulative 22.7% currently for the year so far.
- It was noted that no one from NGCRS was present at the meeting.
- Kevin Null stated that the commissioners would like to have a recommendation from the ESB.
- Options were discussed for running operations out of Station #3, or if that is not an available option, then possibly running a 2<sup>nd</sup> ambulance and crew out of Station #11.
- Leasing the Station #3 ambulance was discussed.
- Reminder that the county is not bound by ESB recommendations.

## **Motions Made**

- **Motion #1**
  - Presented by Mark Clookie
    - “We (the ESB) are proposing to the commissioners that the county assume 24/7 EMS coverage for Station #3’s primary area of response.”
  - Motion seconded by Chris Nichols
  - Vote Results: 8 in favor and 1 abstain.
  - Result: Motion is passed.
- **Motion #2**
  - Presented by Mark Clookie
    - “The Emergency Services Advisory Board recommend to the commissioners of Garrett County that they enter into negotiations with Northern Rescue Squad regarding Station #3 and its coverage with the possibility of leasing their station, or a portion thereof, and an ambulance. Details to be discussed and ultimately resulting in a Memorandum of Understanding between Northern Rescue Squad and Garrett County.”
  - Motion seconded by Chris Nichols
  - Vote Results: 8 in favor and 1 abstain.
  - Result: Motion is passed.

## **Meeting Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 1700.

Minutes Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Lou Battistella  
Chairman