A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Albemarle County Fire/EMS Board was held on Monday, September 11, 2017 at 1630 hours in the Fire Rescue Conference Room of the County Office Building, Stagecoach Road, Charlottesville.

The following members were in attendance:
Alex Belgard, Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad
Calvin Butler, East Rivanna Volunteer Fire Company
Mike Grandstaff, Scottsville Volunteer Fire Department

Others in Attendance:
David Puckett, Albemarle County Fire & Rescue
Tom LaBelle, Albemarle County Fire & Rescue

1. Call to Order
Chief LaBelle called the meeting to order at 1630 hours.

a. From the Board: Agenda Additions
Chief Grandstaff stated that he had one thing to add to the agenda in addition to 4d.

b. From the Public: Matters Not Listed on the Agenda
There were none presented.

2. Consent Agenda

a. July 2017 meeting minutes
Chief LaBelle mentioned that there had been no Executive Committee meeting in August, so the minutes included are from the July 2017 meeting.

**MOTION:** Chief Grandstaff moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the June meeting minutes as presented. Chief Belgard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (4-0).

3. Fire Rescue System Strategic Plan - update
Chief LaBelle reported that the strategic plan was still in limbo until more information is received on the standards of cover, which was pivotal to the discussion. He said that they need to figure out who would participate, and one of the items arising from the Recruitment and Retention Committee meeting was that Melanie Welcher had expressed interest in participating with the plan. Chief LaBelle stated that this raises the issue of committee participation on the strategic planning group, which had been
discussed in a larger context at the FEMS Board in terms of committee composition. He said that there were non-chiefs who were involved in committees and day-to-day future planning, so the request could be broadened to include committee members.

Chief Butler commented that it makes sense, because there were members who were very involved and probably knew more than some of the chiefs at the table.

4. Unfinished Business

a. FEMSB Work Plan Items/Policy - for Decision/Action
Chief LaBelle reported that there were currently no specific items for decision or action at this time, but there would be some coming out of the Operations Committee.

b. ACFR Volunteer Recruitment and Retention - update
Chief LaBelle reported that the radio ads had started up again, and the Recruitment and Retention Committee hoped to get the photos done this week.

Chief Butler asked about progress with recruiting for Pantops.

Chief LaBelle responded that they have recruited three operation members and two administrative members for Pantops.

Chief Grandstaff asked about the health and welfare report on the volunteer system, stating that he had volunteered to serve on it, and asked whether it fell under Recruitment and Retention.

Chief LaBelle replied that it had gone to the Recruitment and Retention Committee, but they ended up not talking about it at the last meeting – so they would address it at the next meeting. He stated that there had been three members assigned to deal with the report, and the committee would work on creating the document, which would be distributed to that team.

c. Budget Update
Chief LaBelle reported that ACFR was continuing to move forward with working on the Executive Summary for changing the policy to allow for maintenance, and they were working to get ready for next year to ensure that everyone understood what “non-capital maintenance” entailed. He explained that these were projects that were under $20K, less than five years, and they would be helping stations be more successful with those.

He mentioned that an announcement would be sent this week as a notice for stations to start putting their budgets together for next year, and they would try to do a workshop on one or two nights rather than going to each station.

Chief Grandstaff stated that this process was self-explanatory, so unless something arose at a budget meeting, he didn’t see the need to do a workshop.
Chief LaBelle responded that they did not want to leave people out of the process, but attending the workshops would not be mandatory.

d. Scottsville Rescue Update
Chief LaBelle reported that ACFR was working on a strategic initiative to address some of the administrative and staffing issues, in hopes the administrative support might help boost the numbers. He said that it might only take a year and a half or two years to bolster the administrative staffing side, but you would not see operational staff before two years out.

Chief Puckett stated that administrative and operational would take about the same amount of time – a year and a half to two years. He stated that the only other option would be to do a mid-year request to the County, which would be fairly unusual.

Chief Grandstaff emphasized that something had to be done, because the station did not staff the building for three consecutive nights over Labor Day weekend, or the following weekend.

Chief LaBelle stated that Chief Grandstaff had pointed out that as soon as the card was full with someone else’s transport unit, they didn’t get paged anymore. He asked if there was some value in ensuring they continued to get paged for a unit.

Chief Grandstaff responded that upper management at the station felt they were covering their calls because they were only getting one text.

Chief Puckett said that he couldn’t speak to the text, but theoretically nothing had changed from a CAD perspective and they should still get a station tone and repeat it every three to five minutes.

Chief Grandstaff stated that as soon as 11 marks up, they don’t tone.

Chief Puckett noted that he has heard 11 a few times say to continue the tone until they were closer.

Chief Grandstaff said that his station was getting repeated punches.

Chief Puckett responded that he would make sure dispatch knew that. He said that he and Chief Richardson had discussed having an ECC protocol whereby they tone four times but don’t go beyond that.

Chief Grandstaff pointed out that ECC had toned his station nine times for an accident on Howardville Turnpike.

Chief Puckett stated that he would follow up and make sure dispatch was aware of the situation, and would also bring drafts from Chief Richardson back to the Executive
Committee in October to move it to the policy side of things. He said that it was basically a draft revision of the ECC policy.

Chief Grandstaff commented that his station would need to end up looking at the types of calls they were being put on, which was 12 calls over the Labor Day weekend.

Chief Puckett said that Station 11 personnel were saying the same thing. He asked if there was any realistic short-term solution, as ACFR did not have the human resources to cover Scottsville Rescue, even if they used lots of overtime.

Chief Belgard asked if there were options in terms of staffing tankers all the time, if there was a unit that was less busy or better covered by surrounding stations somewhere further north that could have two people pulled.

Chief Puckett responded that they did not staff any tankers or anything like that, as everything was cross-staffed, and they have a minimum complement of engine and ambulance, which realistically was a lower call volume than anywhere else there were staff. He noted that the exception would be them having a busy period and running 12 calls in a weekend, which was likely busier than two or three other stations on a given day. Chief Puckett said that ACFR has discussed the fact that other stations may run into the shortage issues, and having a 24-hour flow crew could help fill an engine company, regardless of where the station is – or even cover a station’s area while they are training. He stated that this was still a fairly costly initiative, and going through the budget process is still 18 months.

Chief Puckett stated that they would need to establish from the chiefs’ perspective of whether they should approach the County Executive’s office for emergency funding.

Chief Grandstaff commented that it was reaching this point.

Chief Puckett said that a year and a half was a long time, and that was a best case scenario.

Chief Grandstaff mentioned that they had already been going through it for a year and a half.

Chief LaBelle stated that it really started to fall apart in 2014.

Chief Butler asked if their membership was completely gone.

Chief LaBelle responded that the membership was not completely gone, but they had people on the books who had not been released or were not interested, and they had individuals who were members but were not trained as EMTs or ambulance drivers, etc.
Chief Grandstaff emphasized that his station only has a small amount of EMTs but has 60 firefighters, so when a pager hits for an EMS call, it’s already off when a fire call comes in. He said that this was what was happening over the weekends.

Chief Puckett commented that the trickle-down effect was pretty substantial, when considering the impact on Scottsville Fire, Station 11, CARS – the entire southern portion of the County.

Chief Grandstaff noted that this also affected Fluvanna because they were expected to run 10 miles into Fluvanna, with their unit having to come over and cover it – so they were having to get Louisa to cover their calls. He said that Scottsville Fire had originally agreed to run second call in empty buildings, not because he didn’t want to put a crew up – and he was not above saying they wouldn’t do it anymore.

Chief Butler asked Chief LaBelle about the meeting with the Scottsville Rescue Board and what their response had been.

Chief LaBelle responded that their board wants to do better, but even if they brought in new members, they wouldn’t start an EMT class for a few months. He said they would get through EMT sometime in 2018, they would go through and get tested out, then they would have to go through an internal release process – just starting to ride at about the time recruit academy was finishing up. He stated that it would be at least a year if not longer to have personnel ready.

Chief Puckett added that staffing it may actually deter people who had been previously participating, because they would feel that there was now other coverage.

Chief Butler stated that starting with a station provided a sense of ownership.

Chief Puckett agreed, stating that one of the things they had discussed in terms of establishing a flow crew.

Chief Grandstaff stated that getting them to say they were not going to do it was the problem, and he has asked even in the leadership meeting to let him know that rescue wouldn’t have anyone for several days – but they don’t communicate it, and no one knows until the pager goes off.

Chief Puckett agreed, noting that he had not heard anything from them since the first of the year regarding schedules.

Chief LaBelle mentioned that Scottsville Rescue had given them access to the EMS Manager, but it was pretty clear that it was not accurate. He said that they have plugged people in but don’t take you out if you aren’t showing up.

Chief Grandstaff pointed out that he was not trying to criticize the station.
Chief LaBelle said they need to figure out a solution.

Chief Puckett commented that ultimately they want to provide service, and it was not great service coming from town for an ambulance, and it was having a negative effect on other agencies. He stated that he had heard an unconfirmed report that the rescue station had lost another member or possibly two.

Chief LaBelle said that the second member who had quit was convinced to return. He stated that ACFR’s plan was for the station to maintain the status quo or even improve slightly – but if they were continuing to implode, there should be a conversation about whether to go to the County for a mid-year funding request.

Chief Puckett stated that he needed to ascertain whether this was a situation to be acted upon immediately or later, and they could certainly look at response times but they did not tell the whole story.

Chief Belgard said that it was concerning in terms of response to emergencies like a cardiac arrest in that area of the County, and if Medic 11 or Engine 111 were not in service, the question was whether a BLS truck, a medic, and a car would be the first arriving resource to a really bad call that’s potentially a long distance away. He stated that they need the statistics from the last 30 days regarding number of calls covered, how many calls units from other areas have had to cover.

Chief Grandstaff stated that the pendulum had definitely swung that there were more outside agencies covering than Scottsville Rescue personnel.

Chief Belgard said this had been his impression as well.

Chief Grandstaff mentioned a call related to an incident the previous Saturday on Irish Road near the Nelson County line.

Chief Belgard responded that the two trucks CARS had staffed with CFD plus daytime holiday staffing was both down in Scottsville’s first-due area, and they had to call people in to backfill the City.

Chief Puckett said that there had been a seizure call from Scottsville, and 151 from Ivy was the closest medic to respond because other units had responded.

Chief Butler stated that he would have a lot more sympathy if the Scottsville Rescue chief had demonstrated more effort to address the situation, but it has obviously been blown off. He said that while they are independent stations, they are all part of one system and the system was getting the shaft because of one station.

Chief Puckett agreed, stating that it was easier to carry forward if there is someone advocating for the station – which was not the case currently.
Chief Belgard pointed out that the geography was also a challenge, given Scottsville’s location, and the spillover effects go to Lake Monticello – which is a very active agency covering a lot of calls.

Chief Grandstaff said that Lake Monticello has a hard time with day coverage now too.

Chief Belgard stated that he knew that Buckingham and Nelson had paid staff, but presumably none of their stations were close. He said that the spillover effects were actually impacting departments that were not represented at FEMS meetings, which could be a political challenge when talking about assuming 100% of costs for a 24-hour crew for a station that sits on the border with a locality that isn’t in a position to provide mutual aid in the other direction.

Chief Puckett said that 50% of the calls were in other localities.

Chief Grandstaff noted that they were recouping some of that.

Chief Puckett stated that they were recouping some of it, but nowhere close to the amount of personnel calls.

Chief Belgard asked if the County had done any analysis as to whether a short-term contract could be used with Medic 5 or another third-party EMS contract agency.

Chief Puckett responded that they have only taken a surface look at this, adding that they didn’t even use part-time people because it was not an option where it was easy to generate extra part-time personnel.

Chief LaBelle stated that the standard of cover would point to some of the problems with who was covering the calls there.

Chief Puckett stated that one of his concerns is that it won’t accurately capture it because of the data set, and at the time they started the project it was 2012-2015, so from January 2016 it has probably had further decline. He said that Station 11 has had an increase from Albemarle Health & Rehab, and there were factors that have taken place since then that have affected it.

Chief Grandstaff noted that his EMS calls had dropped from June to the first of August, but now they have picked up tremendously again – with 15 in the last two weekends.

Chief LaBelle stated that the rescue station had been working really hard during that time.

Chief Puckett asked if there was just less EMS call volume there.

Chief LaBelle responded that they had gotten to the point that it was Wednesday night
and part of Sunday that they weren’t covered, and now there were consistently multiple
nights during the week.

Chief Grandstaff said his station was toned the other night for Rolling Road when there
was already someone in the building, and he thought CAD was supposed to address
that.

Chief Puckett responded that there was a strange spot in that area.

Chief Butler said he has had CAD issues as well.

Chief LaBelle stated that it seemed to him that there was concern with the impact on the
system, so the system could have a conversation with Scottsville – or they could just
keep trying to find ways of providing staff.

Chief Grandstaff pointed out that the system had already had a conversation with them
with the Executive Committee met with them.

Chief LaBelle said that he had done most of the talking at that meeting, so he didn’t feel
the system as a body had said they were being very clear about their intent, passing a
resolution, etc. He stated that whatever proposals ACFR puts forth in a budget process,
the question would be what the impact on the system would be. Chief LaBelle said that
if they asked right now, the most ACFR would say was that the Executive Committee
had held a meeting and a conversation with Scottsville Rescue and they were working
on a plan – which may or may not have deteriorated since. He stated that it seems that
this item should be sent back to Chief Eggleston, who may in turn say he wants more
from the FEMS Board. Chief LaBelle said that this was a top priority for Chief Eggleston
and he is very concerned about the level of support for EMS transport.

f. SAFER grant update
Chief LaBelle stated that there was no real update to be provided.

5. New Business
a. Chief Grandstaff said that it needed to be determined whether by-laws should be
changed to not meet every month, in the event a meeting was not needed.

Chief LaBelle stated that the by-laws also provide the authority to postpone a meeting,
and asked that he be given an opportunity to look at the by-laws and provide options
regarding changing this.

Chief Puckett said it didn’t specify this in the ordinance.

Chief LaBelle stated that he didn’t know if they would have to revisit the ordinance.

Chief Grandstaff recalled that the ordinance did not stipulate a level of detail beyond
establishing the Executive Committee.
Chief LaBelle said they would want to review it at the end of the EC and FEMS Board meetings to determine whether a meeting was needed the subsequent month.

Chief Grandstaff agreed, noting that the last EC meeting had lasted only about 20 minutes.

Chief LaBelle stated that they could also handle this via teleconference, and the drive time shouldn’t be longer than the meeting. He stated that he would have the information ready for the next EC meeting.

b. Chief Belgard reported that at the last City Council meeting, they passed an EMS cost recovery program, so the exact implementation start date was not set yet but the intent was that it was designed to be as identical as possible to Albemarle County so that it would not be a road block if the mutual aid situation changed in the future. He said that it would be the same rates, the same open procurement contract, etc. Chief Belgard noted that this was in process and it was CARS’ intent to sign on with the County system as well, with it being identically set up once the details were worked out.

6. Next Executive Committee Meeting
   a. Monday, October 9, 2017, 1630hrs. ACFR Conference Room

7. Adjournment

Chief Grandstaff moved to adjourn the meeting, which passed by unanimous voice vote.

The Executive Committee adjourned their meeting at 1703 hrs.
ALBEMARLE COUNTY FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BOARD

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

ATTENDANCE LOG

Date:  Monday September 11, 2017

VOTING MEMBERS (OR DESIGNATES)

Chief Alex Belgard (CARS):

Chief Calvin Butler (East Rivanna):

Chief Michael Grandstaff (Scottsville Fire):

Chief Kostas Aliberti (WARS):

Tom LaBelie (Albemarle County):

GUESTS & OTHERS

Guest/Other:  David Puckett

Organization/Agency/Affiliation:  ACFR
ALBEMARLE COUNTY FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ACTION RECORD

AGENDA TITLE/ISSUE: Consent Agenda
AGENDA DATE: 9/11/2017

MOTION: Approve Minutes
MOTION MADE BY: Mike Grandstaff
SECONDED BY: Alex Belgard

SUBSEQUENT MOTIONS/AMENDMENTS:
1.

CALL OF THE QUESTION:

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I hereby attest that the foregoing is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

__________________________________________
Tom LaBelle
Clerk

__________________________________________
September 11, 2017
AGENDA TITLE/ISSUE: AGENDA DATE: 9/11/2017

MOTION: MOTION MADE BY: SECONDED BY: To Adjourn Mike Grandstaff Calvin Butler

CALL OF THE QUESTION:  

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Tom LaBelle
Clerk

September 11, 2017