

EMS Delivery and Sustainability Meeting 1 Minutes

Sept 6, 2023 1:00 to 3:00 pm

Group convened at 1:03pm with Chair Slama gaveling in. Meeting held hybrid at the League building and via Zoom.

Task force appointees and staff present:

Committee Co-chairs:

Andrew Slama, Fire Chief, Edina

Michael Juntunen, Coordinator for Community Paramedicine Ambulance Service, Mayo Clinic

League of Minnesota Cities (1 metro / 1 greater mn)

Marshall Hallock, Administrative Business Director, Red Wing (**absent**)

John Vance, Fire Chief, Minnetonka

Municipally owned ambulance service

Justin Miller, City Administrator, Lakeville

MN Ambulance Association (hospital based ambulance service and privately owned):

Brent Custard, Director of Ambulance Operations for North Memorial

Randy Fischer, CEO Stevens County Ambulance

Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association (1 metro / 1 greater MN)

Greg Peterson, Fire Chief, White Bear Lake Fire Department

Jesse Buhs, Fire Chief, Cloquet Area Fire District

MN Hospital Association

Rick Ash, CEO, United Hospital District, Blue Earth, MN

Rick Breuer, CEO and Administrator of Community Memorial Hospital in Cloquet

Department of Public Safety

John Cunningham, Assistant Commissioner of Emergency Services, Minnesota Dept. of Public Safety

MN Chapter of National Association of EMS Physicians

Nick Simpson, Chief Medical Director, Hennepin EMS

Dr. Aaron Burnett

Coalition of Greater MN Cities

Brian Holmer, Mayor, Thief River Falls

MN Association of Small Cities

Matt Essig, Ambulance Director, Lewiston

Community EMT and or Community Paramedic Program

Steve Koering, Fire Chief, St. Louis Park

MN Department of Health

Tim Held, Deputy Director, Office of Rural Health & Primary Care, MDH

MN Dept. of Health and Human Services (MNDHS)

Diogo Reis, Division Director, Health Improvement and Benefit Design, MN Dept. of Human Services (**absent**)

Staff:

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Anne Finn, Intergovernmental Relations Director, LMC
Ted Bengtson, Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator, LMC
Helen Dubay, Admin, LMC
Tom Fennell, Legislative co-chair for MN Ambulance Association
Buck McAlpin, MN Ambulance Association
Melissa Reed, Park Street Public
Sonnie Elliot, MN Fire Chiefs Association
Dane Meyer, Legislative co-chair for MN Ambulance Association

Discussion:

Chair Slama gave a brief history of the task force noting that it was intended to be a legislatively convened task force but LMC has agreed to administer in the meantime.

Chair Slama noted rules are to be similar to city council meetings – work through chairs, formal motions, etc.

Chair Slama noted certain lobbyists and staff are invited to the meeting for the purpose of administration and advising task force members on issues of EMS and fire.

Chair Slama noted that there is a hybrid option for in person and virtual. Encouraged in person attendance.

Chair Juntunen reviewed the rules established at pre-meeting:

- Roberts rules
- Gavel will rotate with chair Slama taking gavel at first two meetings
- Members will speak through chair
- Actions such as adoption of recommendations will require votes
- Meetings will be every other Wednesday, 1-3pm, until February, 2024.
- Meetings will be streamed and open to anyone who would like to view meetings
- Non-members will be allowed to submit commentary to emstaskforce@lmc.org
- Minutes from prior meetings will be sent out with meeting materials prior to meetings and subject to approval
- Meetings will not be recorded but minutes will be available upon request.
- Task force members may designate alternates but should notify co-chairs and staff prior to meeting.

1:13: Introductions and discussion of issues impacting stakeholders.

Members went around the room and introduced themselves, the organizations they represent, and brought forward 1-2 primary issues they are concerned with. Chair Slama noted the group would like to emphasize agreement and wins in its intention to present findings to the legislature:

Chair Slama:

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Fire dept. in Edina has a service which does first response – last few years been strain on ambulance service and results in first response spending more time on scene. Noted ambulance availability and time stuck on scene waiting.

Greg Peterson:

Departments frustrated with system that they're stuck in. Staffing models have shifted in departments and cities want more say in level of service provided to community.

Steve Koering:

Noted challenge from Community Health perspective at local level.

No metrics to guide community health or determine quality of service. Should be set of standards

Jesse Buhs:

- Looking for distinct revenue lanes. Being asked by neighboring staffs and ambulance services to cover their staff. Greater MN service needs are impacting larger providers as they require additional funding

John Cunningham:

- Noted DPS has broad net of stakeholders across first response groups – interested to see how state can potentially assist

John Vance:

- Delayed response times without coordination, need more local control to improve

Nick Simpson:

- Services have become more complex between systems. One size fits all system for all calls is no longer working and needs refresh. Cited social services, substance use, multiple agencies as examples. Also noted full ICUs and ERs being problematic and leading to backlog in transport.

Dr. Aaron Burnett:

- Difference between regular citizen expectation and hospital based expectation of EMS delivery. Expectations of hospital business decisions not within control of ambulatory services, but they are tied to them financially in rural MN. Noted multiple systems that aren't keeping up to standards.

Brent Custard:

- Demand on EMS has grown since pandemic. Demand on alternative and 911 response compounds and EMS system not designed to address. i.e. patients calling to move from bed to sofa, non-emergency responses, etc.

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- Response times are more difficult due to transport.
- Supply chain issues of ambulances, medication, and staff

Randy Fischer:

- Noted funding being EMS's root of frustration for other; getting less than 40% of charges and not being sufficiently reimbursed. Increased funding would help solve recruitment and training issues.

Justin Miller:

- From city perspective, number 1 issue is response time to calls. Any way to encourage recruitment and assist staff, decrease transport time, or service expectations, possibilities.

Michael Juntunen:

- Workforce and staffing funding
- Volunteerism suffering
- Looking at new EMS services and setting up best practices for delivery

Rick Ash:

- From rural hospital association perspective: all ambulance are volunteer but also need fulltime job and can't balance demand. Struggling to cover costs as well.
- Also asked what to do with coverage for a mental health transfer – other ways to transfer. ALS transports

Matt Essig:

- Lewiston managing multiple ambulance services between cities – capacity shortage
- Need to adjust to new age of volunteers

Rick Breuer:

- Lower hospital staff capacity requiring more transport and EMS time demand.
- Noted burnout among staff over the last few years.
- EMS and hospital staff need better relationships to understand needs from each side.

Tim Held:

- Emphasized that whole system needs rework – just looking to support priorities of committee
- Biggest issue is workforce shortage especially in transports in Greater Minnesota

Mayor Brian Holmer:

- Recruitment and retention – can't rely on volunteers or to be on-call.
- Long transport times

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Task Force broke at 2:10pm and reconvened at 2:21pm

Remaining business/discussion:

Chair Slama

- noted that the committee would like to bring in Dylan Ferguson of MN EMSRB to present information of facts and data to lay framework for group's work. Opened the suggestion up to the group and invited them to submit any ideas today or between this meeting and next.
- noted meeting 2 will be a mix of presentation and discussion/brainstorm of which issues group would like to tackle. Meeting 3 will be prioritizing those issues.

Chair Juntunen agreed.

Nick Simpson:

- Noted that the issues discussed today are universal and looking forward to collectively working on them

John Vance:

- Should examine other systems for best practices

Chair Slama noted potential for breakout groups or subcommittee to work through various issues as well. Chair Juntunen in agreement.

Chair Slama looked for motion to adjourn, Aaron Burnett motion, Nick Simpson second

Task Force adjourned at 2:28pm