



ST. MARY'S COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES
BOARD

2024
ANNUAL REPORT

St. Mary's County Emergency Services Board Annual Report for 2024

Introduction

The St. Mary's County Emergency Services Committee was established under Resolution 94-22 by incorporating an agreement signed on Oct 11, 1994. The St. Mary's County Emergency Services Board (ESB) was adopted as a Board on July 10, 2018 effective July 24, 2018.

The Board shall advise the Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) on matters pertaining to Emergency Services in St. Mary's County. The purpose of the Board is to serve as an advisory board and communication hub between the entities providing St. Mary's County Emergency Services and the St. Mary's County Government. The Board is formed not to take the place of the St. Mary's County Fire Board Association (FBA) or the St. Mary's County Ambulance and Rescue Association (RSA), but rather to affect a partnership, coordinate, and enhance the efforts of these services. The daily provision of emergency services are coordinated through and by the member companies of the FBA and RSA in cooperation with the Department of Emergency Services to ensure that citizens of and visitors to St. Mary's County can rely on emergency responses as the need arises.

Members

The membership of the ESB shall be (1) County Fire Chief; (2) County EMS Chief; (3) St. Mary's County Fire Board Association President; (4) St. Mary's County Ambulance and Rescue Association Chair; (5) one member of a volunteer fire department elected by the St. Mary's County Fire Board Association; (6) one member of a volunteer rescue squad elected by the St. Mary's County Ambulance and Rescue Squad Association; and (7) Director of Emergency Services (ex officio); (8) Jurisdictional Medical Director (ex officio).

2024 Members:

- Gary Bell, Chair. Appointment period Nov. 15, 2018 – December 31, 2024
- Hattie Norris, Vice Chair. Appointment period December 3, 2020 - December 31, 2024
- Shawn Davidson, Secretary. Appointment period July 31, 2018 - December 31, 2024
- Ken Hicks, RSA Chair. Appointment period December 3, 2020 – December 31, 2024
- JA Nelson, FBA President. Appointment period July 31, 2018 – December 31, 2024
- CP Miedzinski, FBA Chief. Appointment period November 19, 2020 – December 31, 2024
- Director Jennifer Aubert-Utz, ex officio
- Dr. Jason Finkelstein, Jurisdictional Medical Director, ex officio

Meetings

The Emergency Services Board (ESB) holds regular meetings on the second Wednesday in even numbered months.

St. Mary's County Emergency Services Board Annual Report for 2024

Attendance

The St. Mary's County ESB held six (6) regular meetings in 2024 with nine absences for the year.

- February 14 – Jason Finkelstein, Hattie Norris
- April 10 – Jason Finkelstein
- June 12 – Jason Finkelstein, J. A. Nelson
- August 14 – Jason Finkelstein, Hattie Norris
- October 9 – Jason Finkelstein
- December 11 – Jason Finkelstein

Dr. Janelle Martin, acting JMD attended the April 10, 2024 meeting virtually.

Education & Training

The St. Mary's County ESB awarded educational scholarships to eleven (11) of the twelve (12) applicants from the fire and EMS community, based their services rendered to the citizens of St. Mary's County.

The ESB has been working to strengthen our partnership with the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute and the St. Mary's Board of Education in order to support the high school cadet program.

St. Mary's Ambulance and Rescue Squad Association and several of the volunteer departments sponsored the Patuxent River EMS Conference. 2024 was the inaugural event of what will be an annual event. The first conference was held in Calvert County, Charles will host in 2025, St. Mary's in 2026.

Routine training and continuing education is ongoing at all of the volunteer stations, and has integrated the Department of Emergency Services staff. DES EMS Division has also instituted independent training activities that have been made available to the volunteer community.

Budget and Finance

The ESB distributed budget submission packets, budget rules and Amoss Funds report packets to the fire and emergency medical services departments on behalf of the Department of Finance. All of these were returned on time and routine audits are in their final stages.

In our December meeting, the ESB voted to approve and forward the EMS Tax rate increase request from the Hollywood Volunteer Rescue Squad to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County.

The ESB is working with the LOSAP Board on ways to improve the LOSAP program in St. Mary's County and seeking to integrate property tax incentives to that program as a means of recruitment and retention in the first responder community.

St. Mary's County Emergency Services Board Annual Report for 2024

Support Services and Coordination

The Department of Emergency Services continues to provide EMS staffing and billing support. The ESB is regularly briefed on system status and frequent, detailed communication is maintained between DES staff and volunteer leadership. Continued collaboration on essential elements such as supply acquisition, controlled substance management, and quality assurance and improvement has been maintained and strengthened.

The Department of Emergency Services EMS Division was headed for the first half of 2024 by Chief Thomas Raley.

Emergency Services System Activities

During 2024 our EMS system continued to integrate Career EMS personnel, strengthen the EMS quality assurance and improvement program, and coordinate training and public outreach.

Tyler Technologies has been working closely with DES and leaders from police, fire, and EMS on the deployment and integration of the new computer-aided dispatching system. While there have been some challenges with this process, the CAD allows seamless integration of field personnel with dispatch personnel, improves information sharing between agencies, and streamlines dispatch processes. CAD went live in August of 2024 and continues to be monitored and updated based on user feedback and quality improvement data gathered.

EMS Challenges

In February DES Assistant Chief Bowman and Dr. Finkelstein were involved in a crash while returning from a call together. Both were critically injured and have been out of service since. State EMS Medical Director, Dr. Timothy Chizmar and Region I EMS Medical Director Dr. Janelle Martin have been covering St. Mary's jurisdictional duties in the interim.

In July a diversion of fentanyl was discovered in the system and DES Chief Raley was charged for the thefts. He was removed from his position as a result. Deputy Director Gardiner has been directly overseeing DES EMS personnel, coordinating with Director Utz and Chief Davidson to ensure that EMS support continues efficiently and supported by DES Lieutenants.

Conclusion

The ESB and the first responder community we represent remain committed to serving the citizens of our community. The ESB does this by advising the Commissioners of St. Mary's County on fire and emergency medical services system matters. The "tripledemic" that is still affecting thousands of people in our nation continues to impact the way we must do business in emergency services. While there have certainly been trials for our community and our services during the last several years – and while the challenges we face will continue for some time – the

St. Mary's County Emergency Services Board Annual Report for 2024

goal of providing the best possible emergency service in the best possible way to the citizens and visitors in St. Mary's County is always the priority for the ESB, volunteers in the first responder community, the Department of Emergency Services and career EMS personnel, and the government of St. Mary's County as a whole. We remain dedicated to the people we serve.

Questions or Comments about this report are welcome and may be sent to the Emergency Services Board via the Secretary at: chief200@smcvems.org.