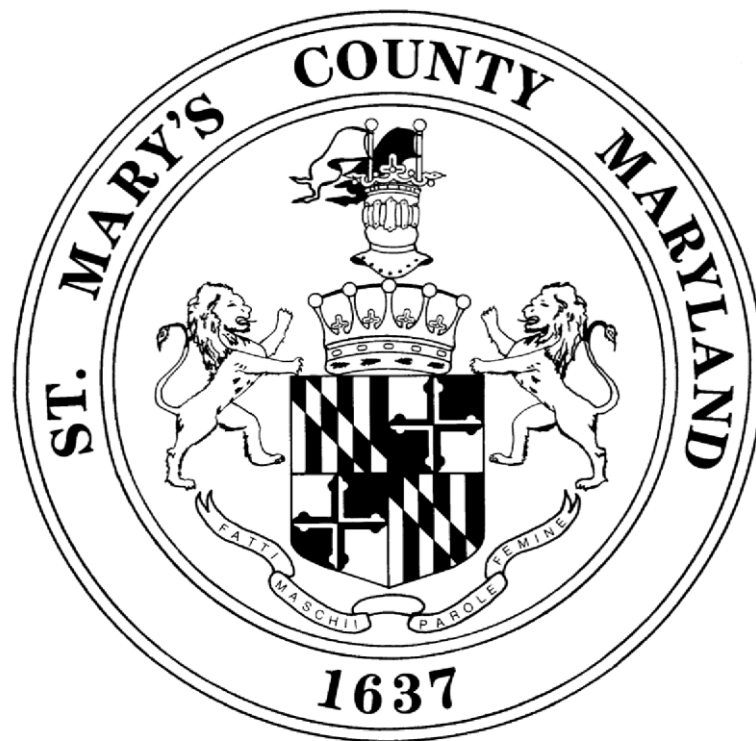


February 9, 2022

St. Mary's County Emergency Services Board



2021 Annual Report

St. Mary's County Emergency Services Board Annual Report for 2021

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 St. Mary's County (CSMC) of matters pertaining to Emergency Services in St. Mary's County. The purpose of the Board is to serve as an advisory board between the St. Mary's County Emergency Services Providers and the St. Mary's County Government as offered by the Emergency Medical System Operational Procedures, St. Mary's County Fire Board, the fire departments, and to work for the best interests of the residents of St. Mary's County. The Board is formed not to take the place of the St. Mary's County Fire Board Association or the St. Mary's County Ambulance and Rescue Association, but rather to affect a partnership, coordinate, and enhance the efforts of these services. The departments, squads, and Advanced Life Support Unit shall remain in control of fire, rescue and emergency medical service operations.

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; (8) Jurisdictional Medical Director (ex officio, nonvoting member).

2021 Members	Position	Appointment Date	Expiration Date
Gary Bell	Chair	Nov. 15, 2018	Dec 31, 2022
Hattie Norris	Vice-Chair	Dec 3, 2020	Dec 31, 2022
Shawn Davidson	Secretary	July 31, 2018	Dec 31, 2022
Ken Hicks	Member	Dec 3, 2020	Dec 31, 2022
JA Nelson	Member	July 31, 2018	Dec 31, 2022
CP Miedzinski	Member	Nov. 19, 2020	Dec 31, 2022
Stephen Walker	Member	Ex-Officio	
Daniel Geary	Member	Ex-Officio	

Meetings

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

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Attendance

The St. Mary's County ESB held six (6) regular meetings in 2021 with (7) absences for the year. There were no special meetings.

Stephen Walker – April 14th

Dr. Dan Geary – April 14th

Dr. Dan Geary – June 9th

Hattie Norris – June 9th

J.A. Nelson – August 11th

CP Miedzinski – October 13th

Dr. Dan Geary – October 13th

Election for Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary Positions were held on December 8, 2021. Gary Bell was elected as the Chairman, Hattie Norris as Vice-Chair and Shawn Davidson as Secretary.

Education & Training

The St. Mary's County ESB awarded educational scholarships to (20) applicants from the fire and EMS community, based their services rendered to the citizens of St. Mary's County.

Online training is being provided on an ongoing basis for volunteers in the St Mary's County first responder community. This has included training specific to changes required in practice due to the emergence of COVID 19 as a global pandemic as well as review of basic medical and trauma emergencies.

Steps have been taken to schedule regular small-group skills classes through the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute to support the recertification process for existing personnel as well as facilitate the courses required for provisional personnel activated under the governor's emergency orders. These classes have been scheduled in the last full weekend of each month throughout 2021 and will continue in 2022.

Initial certification classes, primarily through the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute have expanded back to pre-pandemic course enrolments.

The St. Mary's County ESB has received regular briefings on the challenges being faced by the St. Mary's County Board of Education staff in managing the cadet program in fire and EMS offered through the Forrest Career and Technology Center. The Board endorsed a move to using the College of Southern Maryland to teach the emergency medical technician portion of the program and St. Mary's Fireboard Association leadership has continued to engage on the fire training components.

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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.

In our October meeting, the ESB voted to approve the grant application from Ridge Volunteer Fire Department for Water Way Improvement Funds for \$50,000 to purchase a new fire/rescue boat. This was done with the understanding that RVFD cost is \$100,000; no county funds were requested, and the grant application met financial and legal requirements. The approval was forwarded to the Commissioners with a request that the Commissioner President sign a letter of support stating the same.

In the same meeting, the ESB voted to approve and forward to the LOSAP Board revisions to the standard pay out endorsed by both the Fireboard Association and Ambulance and Rescue Squad Association and recommend that it be enacted by the Commissioners.

American Rescue Fund grant moneys were made available to the fire and EMS communities to help cover budget shortfalls and a dip in charitable giving secondary to the global pandemic conditions that are still a challenge for responders. The ESB reviewed and approved proposals from both the St. Mary's Fireboard Association and the St. Mary's Ambulance and Rescue Squad Association totaling \$1,675,550.00 to provide infrastructure upgrades and equipment needed in the system.

Support Services and Coordination

The Department of Emergency Services has established an Emergency Medical Services Division. This division takes the place of the short-term contract that was instituted in 2020 and is providing additional staffing and administrative support to the emergency medical services system. The search for a chief to lead the EMS division is under way, they are being led in the interim by Acting Chief Kiersten Shea, who stepped in after the first chief, David Stamey, moved on to another chief's position out of state.

The services supported by the Department of Emergency Services include billing processing, medication acquisition and tracking, and staffing support, for both advanced and basic life support services in the county. All the county's volunteer emergency medical services departments have benefitted from this partnership.

In November Dr. Dan Geary stepped down as the Jurisdictional Medical Director for St. Mary's EMS. Dr. Timothy Chizmar, State EMS Medical Director is acting while a search for a permanent replacement is conducted.

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Legislative Recommendations

There were no new legislative items brought to the ESB in 2021.

Emergency Services System Activities

2021 continued to present challenges to the typical way of life for every person on the planet. In St. Mary's County that translated to severe stresses being placed on our volunteer emergency services. Efforts that have been undertaken to address those stressors in the EMS service have been outlined in this report. In addition to the steps and planning already mentioned, our emergency services have participated in a county-wide partnership with agencies across the spectrum of services to help respond to the global pandemic threatening lives every day, all the while continuing to answer emergency calls.

Under the leadership of the St. Mary's County Health Department (SMCHD) and the county Emergency Planner, coordination and planning meetings continue to be held as circumstances dictate. Volunteer fire and EMS personnel have participated in all these meetings. Fire and EMS volunteers coordinated with the Emergency Services Coordinator to ensure adequate access to personal protective equipment for first responders and worked under the auspices of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMSS) to qualify EMS volunteers to help test citizens for COVID-19, hosting mass-testing events at EMS stations for both responders and the public. Also, under a MIEMSS program, both volunteer and career EMS personnel in St. Mary's County have partnered with SMCHD to support mass vaccination clinics and testing sites in St. Mary's County. Fire department personnel have also helped support this effort with manpower and facilities support.

The new computer aided dispatching system was awarded to Tyler Technologies and is in the design-build phase of the process. We are excited by this step and look forward to the improvement in service to the citizens of St. Mary's County that this step represents. The new system will allow seamless integration of field personnel with dispatch personnel, improve information sharing between agencies, and streamline dispatch processes.

In November, Michael Cahall, veteran paramedic and chief of the Lexington Park Volunteer Rescue Squad died suddenly. The Commissioners of St. Mary's County honored Chief Cahall by ordering the Maryland and County flags flown at half staff in his memory. All fifteen partner departments and agencies in the emergency services of St. Mary's County, as well as many from outside the county, provided support to LPVRS and the Cahall-Davidson family at the services held and in the weeks since.

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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 EMS service matters. As the world has continued to adapt to the changing landscape necessitated by the global coronavirus pandemic, so has St. Mary's County. While there have certainly been trials for our community and our services during the last year – and while the challenges we face will continue for some time – the 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.