



ST. MARY'S COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES  
BOARD  
**2023**  
ANNUAL REPORT

## St. Mary's County Emergency Services Board Annual Report for 2023

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

#### 2022 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
- Deputy Director Kiersten Shea, acting 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.

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### **Attendance**

The St. Mary's County ESB held six (6) regular meetings in 2023 with six absences for the year.

- April 12 – Jason Finkelstein
- June 14 – Jason Finkelstein
- August 9 – Jason Finkelstein & J.A. Nelson
- October 11 – CP Miedzinski & Gary Bell
- December 13 - Jason Finkelstein

### **Education & Training**

The St. Mary's County ESB awarded educational scholarships to twenty-four (24) applicants from the fire and EMS community, based on 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.

Routine training and continuing education are 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 Fire Tax rate increase requests from the Leonardtown, Mechanicsville, and Ridge Volunteer Fire Departments 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 integrating property tax incentives to that program as a means of recruitment and retention in the first responder community.

### **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

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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 in 2023 by Acting Chief Thomas Raley.

Members of the ESB participated in the interview and selection process for the Director of Emergency Services, EMS Division Chief, and EMS Division Assistant Chief.

### **Emergency Services System Activities**

During 2023 our EMS system continued to integrate Career EMS personnel, strengthen the EMS quality assurance and improvement program, and coordinate training and public outreach.

Under the leadership of the Department of Emergency Services and in cooperation with the County Administrator and Human Resources Department, St. Mary's County conducted a search for a new Director of Emergency Services, and EMS Division Chief and Assistant Chief, hiring Chief Jennifer Aubert-Utz as Director, Chief Thomas Raley as EMS Division chief, and Todd Bowman as EMS Division Assistant Chief.

Tyler Technologies has been working closely with DES and leaders from police, fire, and EMS on the design-build phase of the new computer-aided dispatching system. We are excited by this step and look forward to the improvement in service to the citizens of St. Mary's County that this new system represents. The CAD will allow seamless integration of field personnel with dispatch personnel, improve information sharing between agencies, and streamline dispatch processes. It is expected to go online in the second quarter of 2024.

### **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 "triple-demic" 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 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](mailto:chief200@smcvems.org).