



**RICHMOND AMBULANCE AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

Present: Matt Conrad, Chairman
Weet Baldwin, Vice Chairman
Richard Bennett, Treasurer
Julia Hammond, Secretary (*via telephone*)
Kristen Larson, Director
Beth Matish, Director
Lincoln Saunders, Director
John Wack, Director (*via telephone*)

Absent: Carlos Hopkins, Director

Counsel: Jonathan Joseph, Esq., Christian & Barton (*via telephone*)

Staff: Chip Decker, Chief Executive Officer
Joseph Ornato, M.D., Operational Medical Director
Terone Green, Chief Administrative Officer
Michael Colman, Chief Operating Officer
Wayne Harbour, Chief Clinical Officer
Laura Bickham, Senior Executive Assistant and Assistant Secretary to the Board of Directors
Cory Bernardo, Logistics/Production Manager
Sarah McDaniel, Paramedic

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Matt Conrad called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. He welcomed Lincoln Saunders, Acting Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Richmond, to the Board.

Motion: To allow Julia Hammond to participate remotely in the February 16, 2021 meeting of the Board of Directors.

Made By: Weet Baldwin

Seconded: Richard Bennett

Discussion: Matt Conrad announced Julia Hammond had called into today's meeting. Weet Baldwin then requested, in accordance with Board policy, she announce her name, current location, and the specific reason for the request to join the meeting remotely. Julia Hammond stated her name and advised she was currently home. She stated she had a scheduling conflict and would be attending a General Assembly Special Session meeting set to begin shortly.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Weet Baldwin
Richard Bennett
Matt Conrad
Kristen Larson
Beth Matish
Lincoln Saunders

Nays:

None

Note: Following the vote, Matt Conrad announced John Wack was dialed in to today's meeting to make an announcement. John Wack advised he had accepted the position as the Chief Financial Officer for Henrico County Public Schools and that his last day with the City of Richmond is February 26th. Beginning February 27th Sheila White, currently the Deputy Director in the City's Finance Department, would be the Interim Director of Finance. He extended his appreciation to the Board. Matt Conrad thanked John Wack for his diligent service and support of RAA. Following the announcement, John Wack left the meeting.

II. ODEMSA Award Winners

Chip Decker announced RAA was very fortunate to have four ODEMSA regional award winners to recognize at today's meeting. He explained the Old Dominion EMS Alliance (ODEMSA) is RAA's regional EMS council within Virginia's Office of EMS (OEMS) for central Virginia. ODEMSA is one of 11 regional councils across the state. Each year, the 11 councils each select one person or group for 13 EMS award categories to be recognized for excellence in their respective field.

Mike Colman introduced Sarah McDaniel, RAA Paramedic. He announced Sarah McDaniel won the award for *Outstanding EMS Prehospital Provider*. She was recognized for her high return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) in cases of cardiac arrest, which shows excellent

critical thinking skills. She is dependable, with an excellent attendance record, always showing up for her shifts with a positive attitude. He then introduced Cory Bernardo, RAA's Logistics/Production Manager. Cory Bernardo won the award for *Outstanding Contribution to EMS Health & Safety*. Mike Colman explained Cory Bernardo had initiated a decontamination compliance monitoring program. The program has RAA's Logistics Department using a device called a luminometer to test random surface areas on ambulances and determine the effectiveness of RAA's cleaning methods. While the program confirmed RAA was meeting decontamination and cleanliness standards, he took it a step further by independently researching and purchasing state of the art sprayers and solution that kill bacteria and germs more effectively than ever before through a positively charging solution as it comes out in a mist.

Wayne Harbour announced RAA's Operational Medical Director, Joseph Ornato, was the winner in the category, *Physician with Outstanding Contribution to EMS* for his commitment to the research and delivery of naloxone via drone. Seven of RAA's dispatchers received training and are set to become FAA-certified commercial drone pilots and deliver the FDA-approved, intranasal spray naloxone antidote to bystander 9-1-1 callers at the scene of an opioid overdose while RAA paramedics are heading to the scene.

Chip Decker announced Mike Colman won the award in the category, *Outstanding EMS Leadership*, for successfully identifying and appropriately re-categorizing Priority One call types in RAA's system. This led to freeing up RAA's resources for more serious emergency calls. He also worked with staff members to implement changes to an RAA protocol which only allowed ALS providers to care for 9-1-1 patients being transported to a hospital emergency department and determined many of RAA's 9-1-1 transports could be properly managed by BLS providers. By expanding the patient care responsibilities of EMTs, RAA was able to decrease the workload on ALS providers when more acute care was not required and improve recruitment and retention of EMTs by expanding their patient care responsibilities. Chip Decker advised management continues to work with the Board's Operations & Clinical Committee on this initiative, adding it may require a change to the City Code.

All regional award winners are automatically entered for a chance to win the Governor's EMS Award. The Board applauded the winners. Matt Conrad commented that winning so many awards within one organization was a direct reflection on the agency's leadership, and thanked Chip Decker for his exemplary work.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 17, 2020

Motion: To approve the November 17, 2020 meeting minutes.

Made By: Beth Matish

Seconded: Weet Baldwin

Discussion: None

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Beth Matish
Weet Baldwin
Matt Conrad
Richard Bennett
Julia Hammond
Kristen Larson
Lincoln Saunders

Nays:

None

IV. SENIOR MANAGEMENT / STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Chief Operating Officer Report: Mike Colman reported the following:

RAA has rolled out a part of the ET3 (Emergency Triage, Treat and Transport) model. ET3 is a pilot CMS payment model designed to provide greater flexibility and new payments to ambulance providers to help address emergency healthcare needs of Medicare Fee-for-Service beneficiaries following a 9-1-1 call. So far, RAA has transitioned 13 calls for service to the ET3 pilot with seven paramedics now trained in the program. Only one of the 13 calls required a transport to the hospital as a result of the Nurse Practitioner being unable to manage the patient's pain on scene. The remainder of these calls successfully transitioned to a telehealth provider and/or DispatchHealth® for more appropriate, alternative care. RAA continues to work to better streamline telehealth calls for service. Once CMS accepted RAA's application, it was then necessary to put a number of agreements and contracts in place. He commented he was optimistic about the program, adding it officially went live on January 1st.

B. Chief Administrative Officer Report: Terone Green reported the following:

He recognized the teamwork and effort that went into assisting his staff with the transition of a number of HR-related tasks to ADP as part of RAA's Comprehensive Services Plan. He extended his appreciation to Cory Bernardo for providing a great deal of help, commenting he was instrumental to the process.

C. Chief Clinical Officer Report: Wayne Harbour reported the following:

He announced cadets are scheduled to complete RAA'S EMT program on February 25th. Seven enrollees have completed the course. The next class is set to begin on March 15th. Chip Decker explained RAA continues to look at creative ways to recruit people towards a career in EMS. He reminded the Board RAA had implemented a program for individuals (referred to as, "cadets") looking to start a career in EMS called the EMS Placement Program. Cadets may have little to no EMS experience. They are provided the training and the opportunity to secure their EMT certification at no cost. Recruiting experienced EMS providers continues to be a challenge across the industry. The program has proven successful for RAA as another means to recruit much-needed EMS providers.

Kristen Larson asked if RAA had a relationship with Richmond Public Schools (RPS) for participation in the program. Wayne Harbour responded RAA currently maintains a

partnership with the Richmond Technical Center, adding most students go onto college through scholarships while others go on to nursing or other medical schools. Only two students applied for work with RAA in the last two years. Kristen Larson inquired as to what could be done to help strengthen the pipeline, to which Chip Decker responded RAA's cadet program could be offered. He advised RPS' instructor had moved onto teaching at a community college. Mike Colman commented on the benefits of RAA's cadet program and explained how they are hired on day one, receive excellent benefits and no cost training, which can then open the door for growth and promotion opportunities within the organization. Kristen Larson commented how RPS guidance counselors could help promote the program and offered to make the initial introduction.

Terone Green reported RAA had recently hired a Talent Acquisition Specialist, to which Chip Decker commented how impressed he was with her initiative and eagerness towards working on RAA's recruitment needs.

D. Chief Executive Officer's Report: Chip Decker reported the following:

- 1) Michael Dixon was recently hired and is set to begin on February 22nd as RAA's Chief Human Resources Officer. He brings executive, HR leadership and public sector experience, having worked for Henrico County. Recruitment for an HR Generalist is underway. In the coming weeks, the HR department should be fully staffed.
- 2) Copies of RAA's 2020 Annual Report were distributed at the start of today's meeting. Chip Decker is scheduled to present the report to Council's Public Safety Committee at their next meeting set for February 23rd. A few years back, an ordinance was put in place outlining new reporting requirements for boards and commissions.
- 3) Council's Public Safety Committee will also be considering RAA's Board vacancies at their February 23rd meeting. There are currently three vacancies and seven applicants. Two vacancies are the result of the resignations of Michael Kelly and Sheldon Barr. The third is the result of Beth Matish's term expiration. One of the applicants is Brandon Mencini who replaced Sheldon Barr at Chippenham Hospital as Chief Operating Officer. Another applicant is Heather Ward, a 4th District Richmond resident. She has done volunteer work with Hanover County Fire-EMS. Kirk Roberts has also applied, recommended by Kristen Larson. He too is a 4th District Richmond resident and was an EMS provider some time ago. He completed his ride-along requirements with RAA. Lovell Davis, also a 4th District Richmond resident, has applied. He is a former RAA employee. Andrew Ramsey was recently appointed to the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA). Michael Dickinson, 1st District Richmond resident, applied for a number of boards and commissions and Nathan Joyce is the seventh applicant. Nathan Joyce is a 6th District Richmond resident, currently serving as a member of Central Virginia's Waste Management Authority and Ethic Reform Commission.

Chip Decker stated he is hopeful to also secure representation from Bon Secours. He advised Michael Singleton, Chair & Medical Director of the Emergency Department at Richmond Community Hospital, had not applied. Should the Committee insist on filling all three vacancies, it would result in the end of Beth Matish's membership on the Board. Richard Bennett asked what the Board's role was in the selection process, to which Chip Decker recalled the Committee's request for current members to weigh in on what the

makeup of the Board should be and the kind of expertise the Board needs. He explained Council appoints members to the various Boards, commenting they are very in-tune with who would be best suited to serve. Richard Bennett advised the recent acquisition by Mercy Health would result in a period of changes in staffing, adding it would take at least six months for things to settle. Chip Decker responded he would see if the Committee would entertain a delay.

Note: Beth Matish left the meeting during the discussion. Prior to her departure, Chip Decker presented her with a gift on behalf of the Board and staff in appreciation for over 15 years of service to RAA as a valued member of the Board of Directors.

- 4) In January, the Fourth Circuit Court issued a (published) opinion and judgement in favor of RAA following the appellate oral arguments heard back on December 10th with regard to the federal lawsuit filed by Western Star Health Authority (“Western Star”) against RAA and the City of Richmond. Following, Western Star has requested an *en banc* hearing. Matt Conrad explained an *en banc* session is when a case is heard before all the judges of the court rather than just the panel of judges who heard the prior appeal. The lawsuit was filed in response to the Veterans Administration’s (VA’s) RFP issued for the provision of non-emergency transport services in the City which required proposers hold a permit to operate EMS vehicles in the City. The City did not grant Western Star a permit. One of the EMS system design components requires exclusivity to RAA in the marketplace. RAA continues to handle transports for the VA.
- 5) The ongoing, inclement weather has been tough on the system, however, RAA’s field staff continue to rise to the occasion and are working extremely hard.
- 6) Nearly 60% of all RAA employees have received at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. There are a few departments who are hesitant to receive the vaccine. RAA is eligible to give vaccinations. RAA would have to pay its vaccinators overtime since there is no funding stream to support a mass vaccination effort. Altria approached RAA to provide medical standby services during their vaccination times, however, the significant number of standby hours requested would be very difficult.
- 7) Since RAA is not a City department, the budget request process is quite different. As a non-departmental agency, the City requires RAA to submit its funding request through a grant application process. He advised RAA cannot survive without City subsidy, adding the payer mix simply would not support it. Patients are either Medicaid recipients or are unable to pay whatsoever. This time, RAA requested a fairly significant increase in subsidy, having received no increase the past two years and the two years prior, RAA only received half of the increase. He explained RAA would like to reduce the hours of the workforce to allow for a better work-life balance, noting the time to act would be now while call volume is down. Currently, field staff work a 48-hour workweek, with 8 hours of overtime built in. Ideally, management seeks to reduce those shifts to either a 40 or 42-hour workweek. RAA requested an additional \$1.3 million in subsidy. This would support the reduction in work hours without reducing annual pay. Lincoln Saunders stated this was a tough budget year and that affording increases would be quite difficult. He asked if the reduction in field shifts was something RAA could move toward achieving at the current funding level, suggesting an increase in subsidy may be

something to consider at a later date. Lincoln Saunders advised that as the City is able, quarterly re-appropriations are made.

V. OPERATIONAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR: Joseph Ornato reported the following:

Later this week, a call is scheduled with the Project Officer from the National Institute of Health (NIH) regarding the additional funding (totaling \$1.7 million) for Phase II of the project for the drone delivery of the opiate analgesic, naloxone. The project goal will be to have all EMS agencies across the country on board, once the project proves successful. The technology is crucial to be able to fly the drone to exactly where the patient is located. Landing the drone is the current issue. The lay person would not necessarily know they need to get out of the way of an incoming drone due the danger of the propellers. Researchers are looking into different release mechanisms to “drop” the medication from overhead. The two drones being used now will not be permitted for commercial drone flights. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has two rules: 1) drones cannot be flown over people, and 2) drones cannot be flown at night. However, the FAA is implementing a new system that will allow air traffic controllers to locate drones at all times. This will require a new class of drone, which the potential Phase II NIH grant funding would support.

Matt Conrad thanked Joseph Ornato for the update. Matt Conrad mentioned he believed Ann-Francis Lambert, Councilwoman for the 3rd District, was a drone pilot which may be of interest to help gage Council’s support of this project. Joseph Ornato expressed his appreciation for the information.

Note: Richard Bennett left the meeting prior to the report.

VI. NEXT MEETING DATES

Matt Conrad noted the dates of the upcoming Board meetings. He reminded the Board the Election of Officers would take place at the Annual Meeting in May.

- A. May 18, 2021 ***Annual Meeting***
- B. August 17, 2021

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Matt Conrad adjourned the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

 05/18/21

Laura Bickham, Assistant Secretary