



**RICHMOND AMBULANCE AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 16, 2022**

**Present:** Weet Baldwin, Chairman  
Julia Hammond, Vice Chairman  
Kirk Roberts, Treasurer  
Marilyn West, Secretary  
Carlos Hopkins, Director  
Kristen Nye, Director  
Sheila White, Director

**Absent:** Matt Conrad, Director  
Brandon Mencini, Director  
Lincoln Saunders, Director

**Counsel:** Jonathan Joseph, Esq., Christian & Barton

**Guests:** Stephen Willoughby, Director, City of Richmond's Department of  
Emergency Communications

**Staff:** Chip Decker, Chief Executive Officer  
Joseph Ornato, M.D., Operational Medical Director  
Terone Green, Chief Administrative Officer  
Wayne Harbour, Chief Operating Officer  
Michael Dixon, Chief Human Resources Officer  
Laura Bickham, Senior Executive Assistant and Assistant Secretary to the  
Board of Directors



## I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Weet Baldwin called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

**Note:** The meeting minutes follow the order of business and not the meeting agenda.

## II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Weet Baldwin noted Stephen Willoughby was present at today's meeting. He asked Stephen Willoughby if he wished to address the Board, to which Stephen Willoughby responded he had nothing to report.

## III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 17, 2022

**Motion:** To approve the May 17, 2022 meeting minutes.

**Made By:** Julia Hammond

**Seconded:** Kristen Nye

**Discussion:** None

**Motion Passed:** The votes were recorded as follows:

**Ayes:**

Julia Hammond  
Kristen Nye  
Weet Baldwin  
Kirk Roberts  
Sheila White  
Marilyn West

**Nays:**

None

## IV. SENIOR MANAGEMENT / STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Chief Executive Officer Report: Chip Decker reported the following:

- 1) No financial reports were included in today's meeting packet due to the timing of CliftonLarsenAllen (CLA) conducting RAA's annual financial audit. CLA is the same audit firm used by the City. The Finance Committee is scheduled to meet on September 8<sup>th</sup>, at which time, they will receive both the June and FY2022 fourth quarter financial reports for review. Following, all reports will be provided to the full Board. The Board can expect to receive the draft audit report in the coming months and will be asked to consider acceptance at the next meeting in November.
- 2) Kirk Roberts provided an overview of the RAA Investment Committee meeting held on August 11<sup>th</sup>. He advised the meeting was scheduled to address some previous questions raised about the appropriateness surrounding investments in an effort to determine if RAA can realize a greater return on its cash position by exploring alternate investment types with RAA's advisors from Wells Fargo. He advised the Committee was comprised of the Board Chairman, Board Treasurer, RAA's CEO and RAA's CAO. Sheila White questioned whether the City's CAO was also a member.

Weet Baldwin explained the Committee makeup was established per Board policy, adding any member of the Board is always welcome to attend any Committee meeting. Chip Decker explained a notice of the Investment Committee meeting had been posted. Kirk Roberts reminded the Board the Finance Committee was set to meet next month, commenting any questions or comments concerning RAA investments could certainly be discussed at that time as well.

**Note:** Carlos Hopkins arrived to the meeting during the discussion.

- 3) **Motion:** To authorize the Chief Executive Officer to enter into a lease agreement between the City of Richmond and RAA for the purpose of acquiring ambulances and associated equipment. Upon adoption of this motion by the Board of Directors, this motion shall be known as Resolution Number 01-2022.

**Made By:** Julia Hammond

**Seconded:** Marilyn West

**Discussion:** Chip Decker thanked Sheila White, commenting she has been instrumental in getting the Vehicle Lease Agreement between RAA and the City finalized. He also extending his appreciation to Susan McKenney, Senior Assistant City Attorney, for her rapid turnaround. He requested Board approval to authorize him to enter into the lease agreement with the City, explaining RAA assigned a resolution number to the motion as required in the agreement. A Special Meeting of City Council is scheduled for tomorrow, at which time, an ordinance will be introduced to grant the City's CAO the authorization to sign the lease agreement. Following, the ordinance would then go before City Council for adoption at their meeting on September 12<sup>th</sup>. The lease requires RAA to increase its umbrella insurance coverage to \$15 million, as required by the City. RAA received a proposal from its carrier of \$30,000 for the policy increase. Chip Decker stated Jon Joseph recommended he receive Board approval to enter into the lease agreement with the City.

**Motion Passed:** The votes were recorded as follows:

**Ayes:**

Julia Hammond  
Marilyn West  
Weet Baldwin  
Kristen Nye  
Kirk Roberts  
Carlos Hopkins  
Sheila White

**Nays:**

None

- 4) At the May meeting, the Board approved the point criteria for the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for EMS Billing Services. Brandon Mencini volunteered to serve on the RFP Selection Committee. The Board had also approved a comprehensive review of RAA's current billing functions. A Request for Information (RFI) was issued and RAA received seven responses. Unlike an RFP, an RFI is more of an information-gathering type of process to allow RAA to better understand what options are available. Once the RFI review is complete, an RFP will

likely be issued, tailored to meet RAA's needs from a billing contractor. RAA uses both ZOLL Data Management and ZOLL Medical (ZOLL®) for several pieces of medical equipment and they are also RAA's current medical billing software provider. At ZOLL's expense, they are providing consulting services to help bring together RAA's current electronic Patient Care Report (ePCR) software system and ZOLL's billing software system to explore ways for a more seamless interface and workflow.

- 5) The City Auditor's Office FY2023 Audit Schedule includes a plan to hire an outside consultant to perform a "non-audit service" of RAA. Chip Decker advised he was unsure as to the status of this audit, adding RAA looks forward to getting to work on the project. He commented he has a good idea of what the project will entail, explaining the audit schedule included the topics the consultant will cover. In order to get started with some of the data collection the consultant will request, Chip Decker contacted Stephen Willoughby to provide RAA access to its historical data RAA staff could not obtain. Stephen Willoughby stated the last he heard, the City Auditor is currently working with City Procurement to get the RAA audit underway.
- 6) At its meeting in May, the Board received a presentation from the U.S. Attorney's Office-Eastern District of Virginia (USAO-EDVA) on the Project RECOVER program. The focus of the program is to connect those suffering from substance abuse disorders with peer recovery support. RAA anticipates taking over as sub-grantee for the grant USAO-EDVA received from the sponsor, the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), set to take place on October 1<sup>st</sup> once it is confirmed HIDTA will be continuing grant funding for the program. The HIDTA's grant is funded as a reimbursement program.
- 7) **Motion:** To approve an update to RAA's response area rezoning as presented to the Operations and Clinical Committee at the August 11, 2022 meeting and to revisit response area zone realignment at least every ten years, pursuant to the most recent census data available.

**Made By:** Carlos Hopkins

**Seconded:** Julia Hammond

**Discussion:** During the Board's Operations & Clinical Committee meeting held on August 11<sup>th</sup>, a discussion about RAA's response area rezoning took place. The City is currently broken into four response zones. Prior to this, there were six zones; four that were primarily handled by the Operations Contractor and two zones that were designated areas for Richmond's two remaining volunteer rescue squads. In response to a decrease in rescue squad coverage, the Board approved a realignment of zone boundaries to four zones, back in 2004. The 2020 census reports a population of 135,000 people north of the James River and 93,000 south of the River, however, it would not prove to be equitable service by simply splitting the service areas into only these two zones. The response time compliance standard in each of the current four zones is 87.5%. To better determine equitable service, given the current population distribution (based on the latest census data), the four-zone realignment is proposed to better support the City's efforts to redistrict and revitalize neighborhoods. RAA's zone realignment proposal takes into account the delivery of equitable service to all Richmond residents and visitors, regardless of location or the ability to pay.

Weet Baldwin confirmed the topic was discussed in great detail with the Committee and explained how RAA is a unique system, in that it uses System Status Management (SSM) to more-effectively deploy RAA ambulances rather than having a unit posted in one spot waiting for the next call for service. He explained SSM is a predicted deployment approach based on historical data. Marilyn West concurred, commenting how the RAA team presented their ideas thoroughly and clearly to the Committee. She complimented RAA on the great things it does and how more community visibility and awareness is key.

Sheila White expressed concern, commenting ten years may be too long to revisit zone alignment, particularly with Priority One compliance standards not met. Chip Decker confirmed response time compliance is reviewed carefully every month. Julia Hammond added that response times are not solely predicated on population, explaining the ongoing issue with hospital offload times remains a significant factor. Carlos Hopkins recommended setting the benchmark with the most current census data available. He acknowledged other triggers affecting RAA's response times are regularly reviewed, however, a major shift in City demographics does not occur that frequently. He recommended setting the benchmark based on census data available at the time and amend as necessary.

**Motion Passed:** The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Carlos Hopkins	None
Julia Hammond	
Weet Baldwin	
Kirk Roberts	
Marilyn West	
Kristen Nye	
Sheila White	

- 8) Chip Decker requested Stephen Willoughby provide an update to the Board on the status of traffic signal preemption by emergency vehicles. Chip Decker recalled the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) Pulse Bus Rapid Transit System grant the City received several years ago and stated he believed implementation to include emergency vehicles was set to take place in 2022. Stephen Willoughby confirmed the City's Department of Public Works received the federal grant. He advised, at the last meeting he attended, it was decided the Richmond Fire Department would serve as the pilot agency, however the City was still struggling with the software to use for tracking purposes. He stated it had been quite some time since he had received an update.

Chip Decker explained traffic signal preemption by emergency vehicles would allow for a safer response, benefiting not only the public safety providers, but all citizens on the road. He emphasized implementation would be one of the best things the City could do in support of the Vision Zero program. Kristen Nye agreed, commenting on Chip Decker's regular attendance to Council's Public Safety Committee meetings and how an update on the status from City leadership at the Committee's next meeting would be appropriate.

- 9) The City's Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) will be conducting training in Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD). Chip Decker recalled DEC had purchased all three modules (Police, Fire, and EMS) from the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) several years ago. For more than 40 years, the IAED has remained the standard-setting organization for emergency dispatch with RAA's former Executive Director, Jerry Overton, currently serving as the IAED's President, overseeing the organization's accreditation center. RAA is one of the longest-standing organizations holding Accredited Center of Excellence (ACE) certification through the IAED, with Saskatoon in first place as the longest-standing ACE-accredited center (located in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, referred to as the Saskatchewan Health Authority Medical Communication & Coordination Centre South).

Chip Decker asked Stephen Willoughby how the EMD training was going and requested he brief the Board on the impact it will have on RAA's accreditation. Stephen Willoughby responded training is underway for the Police and Fire disciplines and reported one of the drivers for pursuing EMD training was to comply with a State requirement mandating all Virginia emergency dispatch centers have the ability to provide CPR pre-arrival instructions. Chip Decker advised DEC had initiated a number of different programs, commenting the department is quite different than what it used to be and Stephen Willoughby has become very well-informed of City affairs.

- 10) The Old Dominion EMS Alliance (ODEMSA) is one of 11 regional EMS Councils in Virginia. Each year, the regional councils across the state recognize one individual or group for 13 EMS award categories to be recognized for excellence in their respective field. This year's winners will be announced on Facebook Live®. While the announcement of this year's winners is currently embargoed, Chip Decker advised RAA was fortunate to be celebrating three people set to receive awards. Each regional category winner is then submitted to the Virginia Office of EMS (OEMS) for a chance to be recognized with a Governor's EMS Award, announced in November at the annual Virginia EMS Symposium. Weet Baldwin questioned if RAA had ever won in the past, to which Chip Decker responded affirmatively. He stated RAA received the *Outstanding EMS Agency Award*, Chip Decker won the *Outstanding EMS Leadership Award*, and Joseph Ornato received the award, *Physician with Outstanding Contribution to EMS*. RAA has been fortunate to receive several other ODEMSA awards in the past as well.

- 11) **Motion:** To approve the Richmond Ambulance Authority making a donation of an ambulance to Ukraine as presented at today's meeting and subject to Finance Committee consideration and approval.

**Made By:** Kristen Nye

**Seconded:** Marilyn West

**Discussion:** RAA's Public Relations/Media Manager, Mark Tenia, received a request for the donation of an ambulance to Ukraine. The ambulance would be donated to a non-profit organization. RAA would have no connection to, or responsibility for, the

unit after it has been donated. The organization handles all shipping arrangements and will travel to/from RAA to get the ambulance. The unit is valued anywhere from \$6,000 to \$12,000 if traded in or sold on GovDeals.com, an online marketplace for governmental entities for the sale of surplus assets.

Chip Decker recognized RAA receives a subsidy from the City and therefore understands the sensitivity of considering such a request. However, he indicated he was in favor of making the donation, adding it could be a very good public relations opportunity. Other public safety agencies have made similar donations and were featured on CNN. The non-profit organization handling the donations advised the ambulance would be in a combat zone and if it lasts 12 months, it would be considered a success. They are specifically requesting vehicles with anywhere from 200,000-250,000 miles on them. Sheila White inquired about the mileage and the value the vehicle may still have for RAA, to which Chip Decker explained RAA places the value of its fleet on engine wear and tear as well as mechanical functionality, so depreciation is based more on years of use rather than mileage. Wayne Harbour reported that after five years (and approximately 220,000 miles), a unit is shifted from being used for out-of-town transports to only transports within the City. Kristen Nye stated she believes the donation is a good idea, adding her support of how RAA evaluates a unit's value. She suggested further research be done and presented to the Board's Finance Committee before moving forward. Chip Decker explained the Finance Committee's recommendation would then require a Board vote. Weet Baldwin suggested further vetting by the Finance Committee, adding if the Committee was in favor of making the donation, RAA would then be authorized to move forward.

**Motion Passed:** The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Kristen Nye	None
Marilyn West	
Weet Baldwin	
Julia Hammond	
Kirk Roberts	
Carlos Hopkins	
Sheila White	

- 12) Kristen Nye requested an update on RAA's staffing levels, to which Chip Decker responded that for the first time in a long time, RAA has been hiring people faster than they are leaving. He reported between May and June, RAA produced nearly the same number of unit hours (number of ambulances on the street), ran essentially the same number of calls in the two months, yet in June compliance dropped. During that same time, there was an increase in hospital offload times, heavily impacting the number of unit hours produced. Hospitals are declaring disaster-type status. When hospital Emergency Departments fill up, RAA transports to a stand-only Emergency Room, however, they too are saturated and can only handle a few patients at a time. This weighs heavily on EMS provider retention. Paramedics and EMTs are tired of waiting at hospitals, resulting in getting off work later and more frequently. RAA will not be more successful until the hospitals become more successful.

**V. OPERATIONAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT** Joseph Ornato reported the following:

- 1) He noted his participation at the last RAA Operations & Clinical Committee and stated hospitals are struggling due to the dramatic decrease in the workforce. As COVID begins to ramp up and hospitals become saturated with patients, he has personally seen inter-facility transfers of critically ill patients to facilities located anywhere between two to three hours away. Chip Decker added how extremely difficult it has become to find facilities accepting patients suffering from mental health emergencies. The number, "988" has recently been unveiled to help find these patients assistance who may not require EMS assistance.

**VI. NEXT MEETING DATES**

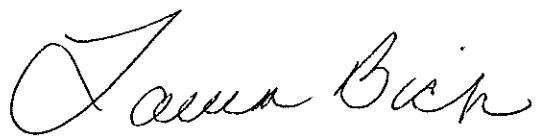
Weet Baldwin noted the dates of the upcoming meetings, which are as follows:

- A. November 15, 2022
- B. February 21, 2022

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Michael Dixon reported RAA is almost fully staffed with EMTs, however, HR is struggling to fill Paramedic positions. The HR Department continues to look at ways to increase field provider recruiting. RAA has begun screening candidates through aptitude and skillset testing. RAA is in the final stages of implementing artificial intelligence to be included on the career page of RAA's website. The Authority is looking into field provider scheduling changes for all providers to work a shift on a weekend rather than only having weekends filled by part-timers. Kristen Nye inquired as to staff's response to the reduction in the workweek from 48 to 42 hours. Michael Dixon responded he has received a great deal of positive feedback.

Weet Baldwin adjourned the August 16, 2022 Board of Directors meeting at 9:05 a.m.

 11/15/22

**Laura Bickham, Assistant Secretary**