

**Marion County Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory  
Board November 20, 2024 Minutes**

- 1. Call to Order** – The Marion County Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board met in the Training Room at Marion County Fire Rescue Headquarters, 2631 SE Third Street, Ocala, FL 34471 on November 20, 2024. Patricia Gabriel called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.
- 2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call and Quorum Determination** – Roll call was taken and a quorum was met.

Members Present:

Patricia Gabriel, Chair

Floyd Magwood

Erika Skula, President and CEO, AdventHealth Ocala (arrived at 4:17 pm)

Clint Welborn, Fire Chief, Ocala Fire Rescue

Adam Woods

Dr. Frank Fraunfelter, Medical Director, Marion County Fire Rescue

Members Absent:

Erin Jones, Healthcare Development Director, Ocala/Marion County Chamber and Economic Partnership

Alan Keesee, CEO, HCA Florida Ocala Hospital

Others in Attendance:

Robert Kruger, Deputy Chief of EMS, Marion County Fire Rescue

Pam Doherty, Administrative Staff Assistant, Marion County Fire Rescue

Barry Cannon, EMS Manager, HCA Florida Ocala Hospital

Chad Belger, Division Chief, Marion County Fire Rescue

James Lucas, Public Safety Information Manager, Marion County Fire Rescue

John Gabriel

- 4. Approval of Minutes** – The August 21, 2024 Marion County Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board minutes were submitted for approval. Dr. Fraunfelter made a motion to approve the minutes and Adam Woods seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.
- 5. Marion County Fire Rescue Updates**

5.1 Department Update

Chief Kruger opened the department update discussion and presented a 32-page PowerPoint slide presentation to the Advisory Board. EMS Central's grand opening was held Wednesday, October 23, 2024. The EMS crews are enjoying the new 20,000 square foot building located in the City of Ocala. Station 22 is in the process of a kitchen remodel. Marion County Fire Rescue's growth plan includes refurbishing some of the current stations and getting them up to building code with commercial appliances, bathroom remodels and new paint.

Marion County Fire Rescue took delivery of three new fire apparatus last quarter. Fire apparatus have gone up almost 25% in price; the surtax helps with the purchase of capital equipment.

The new employees hired last quarter are part of the non-cert program and will graduate mid-June. Marion County Fire Rescue will be approximately 10 positions away from being fully staffed once these new employees graduate.

The Medal Day celebration was held at the Reilly Arts Center, located at 500 NE 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Ocala, FL, with nearly 450 attendees, featuring a performance by Emory Robinson, a former American Idol contestant. Annual awards were handed out for FY 22/23 and FY 23/24. This was a fantastic event and everyone attending had a great time.

The 5-year Strategic Plan close out was presented to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). The new strategic planning process will start January 2025.

Several different Marion County Fire Rescue teams deployed to Hurricane Debby, Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton during the months of August, September and October 2024.

Marion County wrapped a fire apparatus in pink for Breast Cancer Awareness month. This was an actual fire engine that runs calls, with a QR code linking to breast cancer awareness information.

## 5.2 Budget Update

### Fire Fund Operational Priorities:

- Evaluate firefighter schedule changes – the 24/72 schedule would add 200 people and an additional \$30 million dollars to the budget
- Add a Division Chief officer
- Add a QA Specialist in the Fire budget
- Look at workload and increase the current relief factor from 1.17 to 1.25
- Add 27 dual-certified firefighters
- Add (2) ladder companies
- Add (22) dual-certified firefighters (6 Lieutenants, 6 Driver Engineers, 10 firefighters)

### EMS Fund Operational Priorities:

- Add an Associate Medical Director
- Add (3) EMS Battalion Chief positions
- Add (3) additional transports
- Add a QA Specialist in the EMS budget

## 5.3 Presentation

### Administration and Support Priorities over the next 5 Years:

- The beginning of the design phase of the training center and the Baldwin Ranches station
- Station bathrooms and bay floor remodels
- Land purchase in Ocklawaha, Pedro, and West Port
- Acquiring the Certificate of Occupancy for Station 23's modular building in Pedro and moving in mid-December
- Working on adding Logistics personnel
- Looking at the possibility of a new Logistics building and additional administrative space

### Fire Prevention Priorities:

- Looking at adding (2) Fire Inspectors and office space
- Looking for funding to increase public education for large purchase items

Chief Kruger discussed a study that is being conducted between Marion County Fire Rescue, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Marion County's Growth Services department regarding how construction of 100 homes in a response area would impact the department's current operations. The Sabana Farms parcel, located at 3718 NW 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue, off Highway 27 in Station 20's response zone is being used in this study. Factors that may determine impacts on operations include Insurance Services Offices (ISO) ratings, resource reliability, workload, and concurrency (the number of incidents occurring simultaneously within the service area). If the ranges of these services are in the low range, adding resources to the department's operations is not necessary. If the ranges of these services are in the high range, it may be necessary to add stations, personnel, resources and trucks.

#### 5.4 Hospital Inter-Facility Update

The hospital inter-facility transfers have taken a large workload off Marion County Fire Rescue. The department went from 716 transfers in FY 21/22, down to 25 transfers in FY 24/25. The hospital system has provided great work to our department.

Future projects include the addition of five (5) Community Paramedic program positions; approval of the surtax; construction of EMS West on a 10-acre piece of property off State Road 200; and a strategic planning session in January 2025.

Marion County is looking at putting blood and antibiotics on critical care units, as well as adding two new ventilators to the rescues at a cost of \$25,000 each. Also, the department is working towards replacing 98 LIFEPAKs currently being phased out, at a cost of \$4.4 million.

### **6. Board Items**

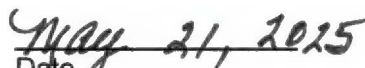
#### 6.1 FY 23/24 Quarter 4 Report

The FY 23/24 Quarter 4 Report was provided to the Advisory Board.

- 7. Next Quarterly Meeting Date** – The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in the Training Room at Marion County Fire Rescue, 2631 SE Third Street, Ocala, FL 34471.
- 8. Adjournment** – There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Approved:

  
Pat Gabriel, Chairperson

  
Date