

**Marion County Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board
August 21, 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 August 21, 2024. Dr. Fraunfelter 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 (arrived at 4:05 pm)
Alan Keesee, CEO, HCA Florida Ocala Hospital
Floyd Magwood
Erika Skula, President and CEO, AdventHealth Ocala (arrived at 4:07 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

Others in Attendance:

James Banta, Fire Chief, Marion County Fire Rescue
Robert Graff, Deputy Chief of Operations, Marion County Fire Rescue
Robert Kruger, Deputy Chief of EMS, Marion County Fire Rescue
Pam Doherty, Administrative Staff Assistant, Marion County Fire Rescue

4. **Approval of Minutes** – The May 15, 2024 Marion County Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board minutes were submitted for approval. Dr. Fraunfelter made a motion to approve the minutes and Floyd Magwood seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

5. **Marion County Fire Rescue Updates**

5.1 Budget Update

Chief Banta opened the budget update discussion. The proposed budget was presented to the Commission on July 2024 and the two scheduled public hearings will take place September 5, 2024 and September 23, 2024 at 6 p.m. when the Commission will either approve or make changes to the budget. No changes are anticipated. Some highlights in the Fire budget include a request for a new Multimedia Technician to focus on social media and multimedia aspects and 10 additional Firefighter/EMTs for a relief factor to cover for vacation and sick leave. Also requested was a station package to include personnel to upstaff a fire station and additional administrative changes for an increase of approximately \$1.83 million dollars. The EMS budget proposal will include 6 additional single certified paramedics and 4 single certified EMTs to help with staffing and the relief factor. On the Community Paramedicine side, 5 additional Community Paramedics were requested. The Board is indicating they are in support of these requests.

During the budget process, a request was made for additional funding to add a second set of gear for each firefighter. With cancer being a leading cause of death for firefighters, a second set of gear will provide them time to properly clean and decontaminate their gear, free of carcinogens, and provide a clean set of gear to wear to the next fire.

Additional projects moving forward include purchasing thermal imaging cameras which are handheld cameras enabling firefighters to see through smoke and dark environments. Typically, these are found in the fire engines, but not the ambulances. The department has 28 cameras ordered. A multi-million dollar radio project is also currently in the process. This will eliminate any dead zones in Marion County and is a joint effort with the Marion County Sheriff's Office. These radios have the ability to live track where the radio is located, which enhances safety of firefighters, especially in the wildland areas.

Construction of EMS Central should be complete by October 2024 and the station should be in operation by November 2024. There will be a grand opening and ribbon cutting.

In 2019, the State of Florida adopted State Statutes to cover firefighters regarding 21 different types of cancers that were determined to be job related. Through discussions with the Marion County Board of County Commissioners and Marion County Administration, a County policy was adopted to allow a one-time \$25,000 payout along with some of the co-pays. If you were diagnosed prior to the Statute going into effect in 2019, you would be denied. The County is being proactive on this policy.

At the next Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board meeting, the department would like to do a presentation of the State of the Department. This was agreed to by consensus of the Advisory Board.

5.2 Hospital Inter-Facility Update

Chief Kruger advised the Quarter 3 interfacility transports are extremely low. During April 1 through July 1, 2024, Marion County Fire Rescue only had 22 transports out of AdventHealth's 3 facilities. During the same time period, Marion County Fire Rescue only had 117 transports out of HCA's 5 facilities. Marion County is very appreciative of both the efforts by the hospital systems. Chief Graff explained this has shifted the UHU's (Unit Hour Utilizations) and now the EMS trucks are staying in zone, which cascades over and makes a significant difference in improving our system responses.

Erika Skula is pleased that AdventHealth is a partner with this program and Alan Keesee said HCA Florida crews love this partnership. It's a win-win. The transition has been smooth.

The Rock the Country concert was an epic event for Marion County Fire Rescue and the crews did a great job managing the volume of patients, especially on the first day. During planning for next year, both hospitals will be included for additional assistance to provide hospital staff. Some of Marion County Fire Rescue's staff will plan to go to specific training for managing large events. On the first day, 300 people were treated.

6. Board Items

6.1 FY 23/24 Quarter 3 Report

Dr. Fraunfelter said we are continuing to see improvement on return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC). The automated compression devices, called Lucas devices, have been added to the vehicles which do continuous cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for the medics. The percentages of ROSC have increased from approximately 21% to 30-32%.

There have been discussions in the Community Paramedicine program regarding the addition of the Nurse Practitioner and putting together a game plan on managing the patient load. The focus in future months will be to help decrease the reliance on the 9-1-1 system and place these patients into primary care.

The Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) program is working to reduce overdoses in the County. Marion County has received funding of \$264,000 for this program.

University of Florida Health (UF Health) has a new community hospital in Marion County that may be interested in being a part of this advisory board. There are ten inpatient beds in their emergency department. Some transplant patients are kept here locally. The transport numbers have not been significant at this location. Chief Banta will extend an invitation to their CEO to see if there is interest in being part of this board. The Fire and EMS Advisory Board would have to make a request to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners to add this member to the advisory board, and then the Commission would have to approve the request and adjust the resolution to be a voting member.

Dr. Fraunfelter has reiterated there is great leadership from the County's administrative team. Chief Banta has pushed that kudos down the line. The department is seeing the benefit from the additional command staff positions that were approved by the County Commissioners and the County Administrator. These positions have helped spread the workload and allowed Division Chiefs to help with different projects that the department previously didn't have staff to accomplish.

Floyd Magwood says the department is doing a great job providing the data and facts, which shows the results. Adam Woods said the transparency helps.

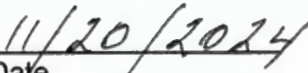
Pam Doherty passed out a one-page Advisory Board Training Completion Form to the Advisory Board members that have not yet completed the form. Once completed, they can submit it to either the Board of County Commissioners at Commissionadmin@marionfl.org; Pam Doherty at Pam.Doherty@marionfl.org; or bring it to the next quarterly meeting.

7. **Next Quarterly Meeting Date** – The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 20, 2024 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 4:45 p.m.

Approved:



Pat Gabriel, Chairperson



Date