



Emergency Medical Services EMS Oversight Board

800 Chestnut Street
Hybrid Meeting
September 14, 2022
2:00 PM to 3:30 PM

Agenda

Board Members Present:

Executive Satpal Sidhu (*Chair*)
Rick Kowsky, *Cascade Amb. Citizen at Large*
Seth Fleetwood, *City of Bellingham Mayor*

Hall Walker *Finance/Budget Citizen Rep.*
RobRoy Graham *Fire Commissioners Assoc.*
Michael Lilliquist, *Bellingham City Council*
Scott Korthuis, *City of Lynden Mayor*

Board Members Not Present:

Robert Rush Jr. MD, *Medical Community Rep.*

Tyler Byrd *WC County Council*

Also Present:

Mike Hilley, *WCEMS Manager*
Scott Ryckman, *Bellingham Fire Dept.*
Jeremy Morton, *WCEMS FC*
Bill Hewett, *Bellingham Fire Dept.*
Katie Poole, *WCEMS*
Steven Cohen, *WCEMS*
Dr. Marvin Wayne, *MPD, WCEMS*
Rosalee Cowan, *WCEMS*

Tawni Helms, *Whatcom County*
Hank Maleng, *Fire Chiefs Association*
Dewey Desler, *Citizen Representative*
Tyler Schroeder, *Whatcom County*
Jerry DeBruin, *WCFD14*
Rachel Carlson, *WCFD1*

1. Welcome & Confirmation of June 15, 2022 Minutes

Kowsky moved approval for the June 15, 2022 minutes with one adjustment to the roll call. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved. Korthuis asked about money being spent on the 5th medic unit and lift kits and where that is at in the process. The contracts for the PowerLoad purchase, reimbursement, and installation are in development and will be presented to County Council shortly. The ALS 360 agreement was approved at County Council the night before, securing contracts for

the new 5th Medic Unit equipment, maintenance agreements, and the purchase of 10 new PowerLoads.

2. Finance Review

Schroeder

Schroeder summarized the June 2022 14.6-million-dollar end fund balance with the contracts being developed factored it in. The end fund balance is more than the reserve policy of 12.8 million, which is 70% of expenditures.

3. DEI Amendment/Additional EOB members

Hilley

County Council supported an ordinance amendment to add two additional EOB board members to represent DEI on the board. Language was also added to the Levy Plan to encourage DEI within the Countywide EMS system. Councilmember Galloway was available in the meeting for folks to ask questions. Ryckman asked that the group to review Bellingham City's and Whatcom County's joint resolutions in order to follow the proper procedures and processes of adding two new individuals to the board. The group will review the process of adding new board members, in addition to reviewing the ordinance in order to instate the EOB changes asked for in the ordinance.

4. Communications for Levy Information

Poole

Communications chair, Katie Poole, presented EMS Levy informational materials that were created with other members of Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham. This information will be reviewed by the County attorney and then pushed out to the EOB. The group discussed what these materials could be used for and what the plan for communications is. McDermott explained to the group that the union will not be launching a communication campaign for the EMS Levy due to not having the funds to support the Levy. Fleetwood, Sidhu, and others talked about keeping messaging factual and educational in addition to information dissemination techniques. Lilliquist cautioned the group from speaking too much about this topic beyond reviewing the content of the informational materials presented by Poole.

5. BLS Allocation Discussion

Chair Sidhu

Executive Sidhu revisited the June 2022 EOB approved 5 million-dollar BLS allocation distribution. Due to the uncertainty of the Levy, Executive Sidhu proposed delaying the 5 million BLS allocation distribution until after the Levy ballot measure passes or fails. Mayor Fleetwood and Lilliquist questioned the proposal due to the EOB already having approved the distribution of the 5 million within a motion and how the proposed delaying of the BLS allocation could create potential criticisms of the EMS system having a surplus of funds. Graham expressed that withholding the BLS allocation could signal to the public that the group does not have confidence in the Levy Plan or reserve policy and that the EMS system has excess money within its reserves. Mayor Korthuis expressed that withholding the BLS allocation for another

six weeks until after the ballot measure may be a prudent move in the case of Levy failure. Executive Sidhu explained further, agreeing that there is too much money within the EMS reserve.

Executive Sidhu expressed that the BLS Allocation could be better distributed based on a need basis, with a more equitable formula to support smaller agencies. Lilliquist advocated for Bellingham receiving a higher allocation due to Bellingham doing a large portion of EMS work in the County. Maleng advocated, on behalf of the Fire Chiefs Association of Whatcom County, for the formula used to create the allocations, saying that it is viewed as being a fair formula to the Chiefs of Whatcom County. Carlson added that it is important not to delineate Fire District 7 and Bellingham Fire from the rest of the County because their higher call loads and ALS services lighten the load on smaller agencies throughout the County.

Ryckman stated that he feels that the decision to delay the BLS allocation could be subverting the County Board process and that it could be illegal, Executive Sidhu clarified that there is no reversal of a decision being made, just delaying payment until after the Levy election. DeBruin stated that he felt like the process of getting the BLS allocation contracts completed had been extended to begin with and asked if that was an intention of the County to delay it. Hilley clarified that the process had to go through multiple steps according to the proper contract processes. The process was not intentionally drawn out.

Hewett asked if the intention of Executive Sidhu is to not distribute the BLS allocation, Sidhu clarified that it is a delay, not a reversal of a motion. If the Levy fails, the EOB will come together to discuss the allocation and the plan for running the EMS system.

6. Round Table/Good of the Order

Chair Sidhu

7. Public Comment

Chair Sidhu

Finance Committee member and citizen Dewey Desler urged the group to band together and support the Levy, especially elected representatives in the County.

The EMS Oversight Board is a public meeting where members of the community may offer their input and feedback. Community members can review the hybrid meeting through this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86516886972?pwd=VWZGRVo3TlEwYnlPQnlUcGdSYUJzZz09>

September 14, 2022 EOB Meeting Recording: <https://youtu.be/TcsRGZo8Cec>