



Clark County Health Department

Dr. Eric B. Yazel, Health Officer

1201 Wall Street | Jeffersonville, IN 47130 | (812)282-7521

www.clarkhealth.net

CLARK COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

April 22, 2024

Board members present: Dr. Eric Yazel, Clark County Health Officer; Jason Werle, Norton Clark Hospital; Mark Furnish, Monroe Township Fire Department; Gavan Hebner, Clark County Emergency Management Agency Director; Jeff Dixon, International Board-Certified Paramedic; Shannon Watterson, Jeffersonville Retired Paramedic & Fire Fighter.

Staff members present: Doug Bentfield, Administrator; Michael Ross, Patti Smith, Idannia Portugal.

Dr. Yazel called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

Gavan Hebner made a motion to accept Emergency Medical Services Subcommittee Bylaws as presented, Jeff Dixon second.

Jason Werle made a motion to nominate Dr. Eric Yazel as EMS Subcommittee President, Gavan Hebner seconded. Dr. Eric Yazel is president for the Emergency Medical Services Subcommittee.

Mark Furnish made a motion to nominate Jason Werle as EMS Subcommittee Vice President, Dr. Eric Yazel seconded.

New Business:

Overview of Goals:

Dr. Eric Yazel began by stating there has been an EMS Advisory Board present in Clark County, but has now been made official. This board is populated with members of different skillsets and backgrounds that will represent the county and seek the best possible outcome for the community.



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Length of Public Comment Resolution:

The Emergency Medical Services Subcommittee wants to include public comments in their meeting and allow persons to voice their opinion and be heard. Jason Werle made a motion to allow a maximum of three (3) minutes per person for public comments, Shannon Watterson seconded.

Summary of Current Situation:

Given the current situation with our primary service provider and looking at Floyd County; Clark County can evaluate future planning with this information. Clark County is still under contract with New Chapel through the end of 2025. Dr. Yazel stated there could be three types of potential outcomes; the first being a sudden interruption of operations, which is something the board should be prepared to participate in planning and implementation of a resolution. Potential solutions include looking at partners such as New Washington, Tri- Township, surrounding counties, and may also look for something short-term from private ambulance providers. Dr. Yazel stated he had not had any indication that this was imminent, but would still like the board to be prepared. Jason Werle wonders if the current county ordinance prevents or limits other services from helping the county. Jeff Dixon believes verbiage needs to be change and revised to allow other services to provide service in the county and assist when needed. As a board we have a moral, legal, and ethical obligation to choose the best service for Clark County.

Discussion of Emergency Action Plan:

Ultimately the Clark County Commissioners make the final decision on EMS matters. The Subcommittee and Clark County Health Board may provide guidance or suggestions. The board will provide suggestions based on facts and data.



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Jeff Dixon stated we have a chance to do something right and have plenty of examples from the past two decades of what didn't work. The committee can provide factual data and provide a plan moving forward that is in the best interest of the county. Various systems are available that could help gather this data, such as heat maps. As a board, we need to have transparency and communication in order to find a happy medium when it comes to evaluating run times in the least populated areas or far reaches of the county. Dr. Yazel stated he will have a break down of response times, run volumes, etc. for next meeting so this data can be discussed. Dr. Yazel suggested the safety plan can be revised or updated every 2 years, but initially will do quarterly reviews to ensure changes are positive and concerns are addressed as the community grows.

Discussion of Long-Term Plan:

The County has until the end of 2025 to evaluate a new ambulance service or model, but now is the time to begin planning. Currently there is no competition in Clark County, so other options such as starting a county funded EMS may be the most favorable option at the moment. In order to begin this process, it is important to talk about the start up cost and the cost to maintain this service. Other factors to examine is offering competitive pay for employees and to consider the time it may take to build an ambulance service. Current estimates suggest it will take 15-18 months to identify funding and implementation of a new service.

Current Provider Update: New Chapel

New Chapel was not present at EMS Subcommittee meeting.

Mutual Aid- Tri- Township and New Chapel:

Dr. Yazel stated that he is Tri- Township Medical Director and Clarksville Fire Medical Director, it is a volunteer position, not a monetarily compensated position. No concern or conflict of interest was identified during the meeting. Currently Tri- Township and New Chapel are working on a Mutual Aid Agreement.



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State Update:

Dr. Yazel said that the state is currently working on grant funding and funding for educational programs/opportunities for students. Will have more updates on this soon.

Fire Department Updates:

Chief Mousavi stated he has spoken with their board members and citizens over the last couple of years and he stated there is demand for their own EMS in their community. This is also the model Tri-Township Fire supports. They are currently working with surrounding entities, working on mutual aid agreement with CCHD and New Chapel, and have purchased two used ambulances. These units are already in service. Tri-Township staffs two paramedics a day, this will increase over the next 12-18 months to three paramedics per day. They have budgeted this and are attracting personnel that would function as firefighters/paramedics in their agency. The cost of an EMS unit is expensive ranging from \$350,000 to \$400,000 and may take up to two years to receive.

There were over 20,000 ambulance runs in Clark County in 2023, Floyd County received 2,800 runs in 2023. This data demonstrates the necessity of this service and the data will dictate how many ambulances and staff will be needed to begin an EMS Service in Clark County.

At the moment, there are not many resources that offer paramedic training in the county, but the expectation in the future is increased opportunity as services expand. Mr. Werle mentioned New Chapel is attempting to start a training institute; it is currently being reviewed.

Chief Cochran (New Washington Fire) stated funding is limited but they are trying every day to improve service. He also stated he is a firm believer of a county service which will help with the cost and employee benefits. New Washington Fire is trying to step up and do their part. They have spoken with other entities, such as Tri-Township, to discuss protocols on how they can intercept if they are unable to get a paramedic in a timely manner. Chief Cochran believes that utilizing the fire departments in the county will double our force. When this system is built, there needs to be a plan set in place regarding funding as well to maintain this service.



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Public Comments:

Kaitlin Blessitt, Clark County resident, stated she is very pleased to see the professionalism of this board and is happy it is official. She has spoken with Clark County Commissioner's and stated they don't know about any problems with EMS in Clark County, which is very worrisome to her. Ms. Blessitt did not feel the sense of urgency from them that we have a problem here and after attending the Clark County Health Board meetings, she did not get the sense of them being very familiar with the issues either. She believes we have good people to solve this problem but sounds like we are already behind. She hopes the Commissioner's can move quickly to do what we need to do.

Chris Fox believes Clark County Council also needs to be at the table and represent the County.

Gavan Hebner, EMA Director, was disappointed New Chapel was not present at this meeting he believes our contracted provider should have an obligation to be present.

Adjourn:

Dr. Eric Yazel made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Jeff Dixon second. Meeting ended at 2:19 PM.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MAY 21st, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Eric Yazel,
EMS Subcommittee President