

MINUTES

**Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority
Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority Board of Directors
Regular Meeting
Monday, September 27, 2021, 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority, Administration, 8603 E. Eastridge Drive,
Prescott Valley**

In-Person Attendance

Darlene Packard; Dave Dobbs; Dave Tharp; Kathy Goodman; Matt Zurcher;
Owen Mills; Rick Anderson; Scott A Freitag; Susanne Dixon

Remote Attendance

Nicolas Cornelius

NOTICE OF MEETING

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02, notice is hereby given to the members of the Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority Board of Directors and the general public that the **Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority** will hold a meeting open to the public on **Monday, September 27, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.** The meeting will be held at **Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority, Administration, 8603 E. Eastridge Drive, Prescott Valley, Arizona.** The Board may vote to go into Executive Session on any agenda item, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3) for discussion and consultation for legal advice with Authority's Attorney on matters as set forth in the agenda item. The following topics and any variables thereto, will be subject to Board consideration, discussion, approval, or other action. All items are set for possible action. Members may attend in person or via remote methods of communication.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS

Chair Zurcher called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Zurcher led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Letters from the Public and Board Recognition

Chief Davis and Engineer Smith presented a life-saving award to Officer Wes Denison of the Prescott Valley Police Department. On July 27th, Officer Denison responded, along with CAFMA and Lifeline crews, to a report of four-month-old baby that was not breathing. Officer Denison was first on scene and after a quick assessment confirmed that the baby was pale in color, unresponsive, and not breathing. He immediately delivered back blows, successfully dislodging what was obstructing the baby's airway. Moments later, CAFMA crews arrived inside the home to find that the baby had started breathing on his own again. Officer Denison's quick thinking and quick actions saved the child.

Both presenters spoke of the special partnership enjoyed by CAFMA and the

Prescott Valley Police Department and thanked all of the officers present.

B. County and Town Current Events Summaries

Town of Prescott Valley Council members Roger Kinsinger and Don Packard provided an update on the Town, including that permits are down considerably due to pricing and shortages. New openings include Popeyes, Grumpy Sicilian, Desert Financial, and Rosa's. The Town will soon have a new Maverik station on Highway 69, an A&W Restaurant by Pronghorn Ranch, a Church's Chicken and Best Western Hotel on Highway 69 and Navajo, and a credit union near Alliance Hardware. The Jasper Parkway, an extension of Stoneridge Drive, will soon run west of Castle Canyon Mesa to Santa Fe Loop. The Town has agreed to purchase the old Coors building with the potential tenant specializing in inline hockey and other sports.

Interim Police Chief Jeremy Martin commented that it was wonderful seeing Officer Denison receive the life-saving award. He stated that the strong relationship between the two agencies is important, and believes it will continue to flourish.

Vice Mayor Karen Brooks reported that the Town is busy with permits, as well as working on the general plan.

4. REPORTS

Reports are informational only. Any item articulated in the reports is subject to clarification, discussion, and direction by the Board; no action will be taken.

A. Board Member Reports

There were no Board member reports.

B. Division Reports

There were no additional updates provided.

5. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

In accordance with A.R.S. §38-431.01(H) the Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority Board has decided to allow public comments as time permits. Those wishing to address the Board regarding an issue within the jurisdiction of this public body may do so by completing a *Call to the Public* form and submitting it to Staff. Speakers are limited to three (3) minutes, but may submit written comments for Board records. Call to the Public shall not exceed 30 minutes per meeting. Board members shall not discuss or take legal action on matters raised during an open call to the public, but may ask Staff to review a matter or may ask that a matter be placed on a future agenda.

Karen Brooks, Vice Mayor of the Town of Dewey-Humboldt, addressed the Board with a complaint from one of their citizens relating to a lack of ambulances. A 90-year-old grandfather had a heart attack and the family had to transport him to the hospital because there were no ambulances available. The Town and its citizens are not receiving the service they should be receiving from the ambulance company. She expressed empathy for CAFMA, acknowledging that CAFMA crews have to depend on the ambulance service as well, and that having to wait hours on a scene for an ambulance keeps crews from other calls.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under consent agenda are considered to be routine by the Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority Board and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items. Any item may be removed by a Board member and will be considered separately for motion, discussion, and action.

- A. Approve Regular Session Minutes - August 23, 2021
- B. Approve General Fund Financial Statements
- C. Approve Fire Protection Agreements: Cunningham, Schaible, Hanby, O'Neill, Rocha (2), Schaffer, McKay, Nickle, Vairma, Schaible, Pittman, Rogers, Baker, Robinson, Jones, Walker, Howell, Mathey, Ross, and Canavaro
- D. Approve Policy Amendments: 221 Full-Time Firefighter Preliminary/Probationary Requirements, 402 Compensation, 408 Insurance and Related Benefits, 409 Educational Assistance Benefit

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Move: Rick Anderson Second: Dave Dobbs Status: Passed

Yes: Dave Dobbs, Darlene Packard, Matt Zurcher, Owen Mills, Rick Anderson

7. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Discussion and Possible Direction to Staff Regarding Certificate of Necessity (CON) and Ambulance Updates

Chief Freitag requested a Special Meeting relating to the Certificate of Necessity (CON) application. A date and time of October 12, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. was supported by the Board. Chair Zurcher stated that he would like Chino Valley and Central Yavapai Board members in attendance.

Chief Freitag further reported that that the ambulance issues have worsened, and on two recent occasions American Medical Response/Lifeline Ambulance (AMR) has requested that CAFMA back up their ambulances. The State of Arizona was unaware AMR had requested back-up from a non-CON holder, citing that another CON provider should be contacted. He explained that according to AMR's agreement with the state, AMR is their own back-up, but are already pulling units from Wickenburg, Williams, and Phoenix. He added that CAFMA is willing to help, but requires specifics from the Department of Health Services (DHS) on how to do so within statute.

He announced that AMR continues to file complaints against the Agency resulting in investigations by DHS. We have also received correspondence from DHS regarding the Agency's draft transport protocol. That protocol was approved and signed today by Dignity Health and will be sent to DHS again. The protocol states that if on scene with a stable patient, but with no ambulance available, CAFMA will transport the patient in a Rescue; DHS disagrees and stipulates that the patient must wait on the ambulance for transport. When clarification as to what wording DHS would accept, as crews cannot wait on scenes for an hour or more at a time, they were unable to clarify. He expressed that when there is not an ambulance available, or when confronted with a

lengthy response time, crews communicate with patients and frequently families opt to transport in a private vehicle, which is a potential liability for the Agency.

Attorney Cornelius reported that CAFMA has received six (6) notices of investigation since August, each accusing the Agency of transporting patients that were not in critical condition. He further reported that DHS was provided with a copy of the draft protocol, and they will soon be provided with the protocol reviewed and signed by Dignity Health. He reported that DHS does not believe the protocol to be appropriate and have demanded changes. He stressed that the protocol has been approved by the YRMC Medical Director and legal team. He conveyed that EMS Chief Niemynski is sending Rescue transport documents each week to DHS proactively, and is communicating regularly with AMR, hence the calls to back AMR up. The complaints are being responded to along with information from the EMS Division.

Chief Freitag shared summaries of a few of the incidents from the complaints purported by DHS to not be medically necessary, including:

- An incident in Dewey with Dispatch reporting no ambulances available, and no known time at which an ambulance would be available. He read a passage directly from the DHS investigation letter.
- An eight-month-old infant in cardiac arrest as a result of drowning with an ambulance an additional 10-15 minutes away. The infant was transported by CAFMA to a landing zone where a helicopter delivered him to Phoenix Children's Hospital. The infant was home a week later with no deficit.
- A traffic accident with multiple patients where AMR could only supply one ambulance. AMR delivered one patient to the hospital while a CAFMA Rescue drove an immediate critical patient to the landing zone at Station 61 for transport to a trauma facility in Phoenix.

Three of the DHS complaints are for incidents where the patient was taken by Rescue to a landing zone for helicopter transport. He continued with the following examples of complaints from DHS to CAFMA regarding transport of patients that DHS declared were not medically necessary:

- A stroke patient exhibiting facial droop with report of no ambulances for 30-40 minutes.
- A gunshot wound.
- A patient experiencing an allergic reaction with throat and face swelling and had a 30-45 minute wait for an ambulance.

He verbalized that the hospital is now flying patients between their facilities because there are not ambulances available for interfacility transports. The hospital is being told the ambulance wait time is 12 hours. The City of Prescott Fire Department (PFD) has transported two patients in the last two weeks in private vehicles with a police escort, including a critical drug overdose, due to a lack of ambulances.

There is documentation from the past weekend that AMR was at Level Zero [no ambulances available]. A critical call came out in Prescott, and an ambulance that was out-of-service for lunch responded that they would be available in 5-10 minutes, after lunch. There were no other ambulances available.

He reported that AMR is considering Wickenburg and Williams to be a part of the Quad Cities' system, and so reporting that there are available ambulances. DHS continues to ignore the problem. When DHS came to monitor the region's Dispatch traffic recently, the representative witnessed eight (8) ambulances and AMR still went Level Zero. The day before the visit there were only four (4) ambulances available, in the months prior only 3-4, and only three (3) the next morning. It appears that someone at DHS tipped off AMR to the visit.

He further reported that on September 11, 2021 there were no ambulances available for four (4) hours and CAFMA crews were sitting on scenes for an hour or more. This is a failure in the system, and is hurting the community and those calling 9-1-1. As of October 1st, CAFMA will be staffing two Rescues every day for 12 hours during peak times.

Attorney Cornelius recommended that the Board move forward with the CON application and that the Agency continues to respond to the DHS investigation letters as they come.

Chief Freitag shared that Battalion Chiefs have the technology to see how many ambulances are available and where they are located in real time. During a recent tour with the new Town Manager from the Town of Prescott Valley, there was only one ambulance available for the entire Quad Cities area, and it was staged at Prescott Airport.

Chief Davis confirmed that it is common to find just one ambulance available at the airport, and stated that he is sure that the public is unaware of how often it happens. He shared the story of a cardiac arrest patient from Chino Valley that was brought in by Station 61's crew. He asserted that CAFMA and PFD crews are constantly being informed that AMR is at Level Zero.

Director Dobbs inquired as to what happens after we reply to the investigation notice. Chief Freitag reported that DHS has not responded to the Agency's replies. He reminded the Board that Attorney Cornelius sends the responses because DHS threatened legal action. Chief Freitag shared that he left a message with the DHS investigator today that inquired as to how an eight-month-old in cardiac arrest is not a medical necessity to transport, but the investigator has yet to return the call.

Chief Freitag articulated that he would like an emergency declaration from the Governor's Office for CAFMA to run ambulances. The Rescues from Mesa and Northwest are certified in the state, but only in those areas; CAFMA requires permission to run them in this jurisdiction. Were the Agency to receive that declaration, the ambulances could be ready and staffed the next day. CAFMA is the only agency in the area that is in the position to be able to do that.

Clerk Packard stated that CAFMA has been dealing with this for seven years, but it has become progressively worse the last four years.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and Possible Approval of Resolution 2021-08 and Adoption of Fee Schedule

Fire Marshal Chase advised the Board of the requested change relating to expired construction permits.

Director Anderson inquired as to if permits were expiring due to the lack of supplies. Fire Marshal Chase explained that the contractor can request an extension for the permit before it expires, and they are able to receive as many extensions as necessary.

Chair Zurcher inquired as to whether or not Fire Marshal Chase has leeway. Fire Marshal Chase responded in the negative, stating that there is no leeway in the Fire Code.

Motion to approve Resolution 2021-08 and the Adoption of Fee Schedule.

Move: Rick Anderson Second: Darlene Packard Status: Passed

Yes: Dave Dobbs, Darlene Packard, Matt Zurcher, Owen Mills, Rick Anderson

B. Discussion and Possible Approval of Purchase of Adastragov Software for Three-Year Total of \$18,615 for the Purposes of Budgeting and Forecasting

Chief Tharp explained that the Agency has used this software for the labor-costing and PSPRS-costing modules. It is designed to be used for detailed financial forecasting and budgeting. Adastragov was willing to work within the Agency's budget, so the Agency will not have to pay all three years up front.

Motion to approve purchase of Adastragov software for a three-year total of \$18,615 for the purposes of budgeting and forecasting.

Move: Darlene Packard Second: Dave Dobbs Status: Passed

Yes: Dave Dobbs, Darlene Packard, Matt Zurcher, Owen Mills, Rick Anderson

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 5:55 p.m.

Move: Darlene Packard Second: Dave Dobbs Status: Passed

Yes: Dave Dobbs, Darlene Packard, Matt Zurcher, Owen Mills, Rick Anderson