

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2018 Interim

June 27, 2018

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Local Government was held on Wednesday, June 27, 2018, at 10:00 AM, in Room 171 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Rob Rothenburger, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Joe Bowen, Co-Chair; Representative Rob Rothenburger, Co-Chair; Senators Ralph Alvarado, Christian McDaniel, Dorsey Ridley, Albert Robinson, Dan "Malano" Seum, and Damon Thayer; Representatives Danny Bentley, George Brown Jr, Ken Fleming, Kelly Flood, Kenny Imes, DJ Johnson, Kim King, Adam Koenig, Stan Lee, Michael Meredith, Jerry T. Miller, Robby Mills, Phil Moffett, Arnold Simpson, and John Sims Jr.

Guests: Casey Hall and Michael Kurtsinger, Kentucky Fire Commission; Michael Poynter and Chuck O'Neal, Kentucky Board of Medical Services; Stuart Foster, Kentucky Mesonet; Ron Wolf, Associated General Contractors of Kentucky; and Bryanna Carroll, Kentucky League of Cities.

LRC Staff: Mark Mitchell, John Ryan, Joe Pinczewski-Lee, and Cheryl Walters.

New Active Shooter Training for First Responders

After brief introductory remarks from Michael Kurtsinger, Legislative Director, Kentucky Fire Commission, Mr. Casey Hall, Curriculum Coordinator, Kentucky Fire Commission, said that a task force workgroup was formed in March to look into what steps could be taken in light of active shooter/hostile events. It was decided to deliver awareness courses around the state for emergency responders. The task force recommended that a hands-on, tactical course be developed and delivered to build on concepts discussed in the awareness program.

Most fire service training is based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards. The current Awareness Level Active Shooter/Hostile Events course offering was developed in 2017, which was based on several NFPA standards and other best practices. The course objectives included: (1) introduction of Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) principles and practices; (2) pre-incident planning and recommendations for

standard operating procedures; (3) describing best response practices; (4) tactical emergency casualty care skills; and (5) lifting techniques for casualty evacuation. As of June 20, 2018, 45 classes have been held statewide, with 1239 students being served, and 13 future classes scheduled.

To address the urgent public safety needs, NFPA 3000, Standard for an Active Shooter/Hostile Events Program was issued on May 1, 2018. NFPA 3000 builds on information contained in other standards as well as concepts from the National Incident Management System (NIMS). New training programs and curriculum will be developed around this standard. How this standard is ultimately applied is up to each local jurisdiction. The need for multiple agencies cooperatively working together in a unified command setting is a major concept of this standard.

The task force will continue to meet and make recommendations. State Fire Rescue Training will continue to deliver classes statewide to engage emergency responders on active shooter/hostile events.

In response to a question from Representative Johnson, Mr. Hall stated that body armor will be assigned to the emergency responder and would normally be left on the truck. The body armor will not be worn every day, just in certain life-threatening situations.

Representative Rothenburger commented that hostile events are not limited to urban areas. They strike rural areas as well. The active shooter program is designed for departments with limited resources.

Community Paramedicine Program

Mr. Michael Poynter, Executive Director of the Kentucky Board of Medical Services (KBEMS), first listed some “fast facts” about Emergency Medical Services (EMS): there are 13,447 certified or licensed providers; 220 licensed EMS agencies; 1,060 ground ambulances; 71 helicopter ambulances; four fixed wing ambulances. In 2017, there were responses to 913,800 EMS incidents. One out of every five citizens comes in contact with EMS annually. Of those, 68 percent are 50 or older.

EMS agencies were required to submit electronic data as of January 1, 2015, by KBEMS, and there are up to 225 data points for each patient contact. All 220 licensed EMS agencies have reported.

The new Community Paramedic Program closes the community health service and EMS coverage gap by expanding the role of EMS personnel. The primary focus of the Program is to: (1) correctly navigate low acuity patients (super users) away from urgent resource utilization; (2) engage in proactive efforts to improve community health and wellness; and (3) provide continued care for an acute event to prevent unnecessary re-admission back to inpatient facilities.

There are seven pilot programs in total including Jefferson, Fayette, Oldham, Calloway Montgomery, and Warren Counties. The Lexington Fire/EMS started a pilot program in late February of this year. There has been an estimated decrease of 1,000 EMS incidents in four months. There was a savings of \$750,000 in EMS runs and a \$7,500,000 in hospital stays.

Mr. Poynter noted KBEMS' Annual Report which was distributed to committee members.

In response to a question from Representative Flood, Mr. Poynter said he would have to check on other states' EMS usage rates to see how Kentucky compares and get back with her.

In response to a question from Senator Alvarado, Mr. Poynter stated that he did not have the actual percentage of calls that are true emergencies because, for example, Louisville Metro has higher numbers of non-emergency calls per capita than rural areas. Defining which calls are urgent must also be determined. KBEMS will research these numbers and get back with him. Additionally, two-way telemedicine is evolving and can solve a lot of problems.

Mr. Chuck O'Neal, Deputy Director of the Kentucky Board of Medical Services, commented that the telemedicine program has been a slow process to get started in Kentucky because of reimbursement and staffing concerns. There needs to be a collaboration of EMS agencies with health care facilities that have telemedicine.

Representative Rothenburger commented that he hopes there is open dialogue on reimbursements.

In response to a question from Senator McDaniel, Mr. Poynter stated that there are no reimbursement protocols for superusers calling when there is no medical emergency. Through use of the program, EMS can decrease the run volume and see savings.

Senator McDaniel commented that there should be a way to charge those people who abuse the system and that there should be reimbursement.

Mr. O'Neal said that ambulances are reimbursed only when transportation is provided. Local governments absorb the costs for other expenses. Medicare and Medicaid cannot be billed when there is no patient transportation. There is a push on the national level to change the reimbursement model from a transportation-based model to a service-provision model, wherein payments can be made for the healthcare that was provided.

In response to questions from Representative Meredith, Mr. Poynter said there are more paramedics than there, but there also are more incidents. It is true that some people call an ambulance knowing that their wait time in an emergency room will likely be less than going to the emergency room by personal transportation. The cost for an ambulance service run varies by agency, run volume, staffing levels, and government subsidies, and can be between \$250 and \$650. Most EMS units in the state lose money per call.

In response to a question from Representative Miller, Mr. O'Neal said that the standards for becoming a paramedic are national. Mr. Poynter said that a person can become a paramedic without being an EMR or an EMT.

Representative Flood noted her support of the program because it "filled in the gap" while improvements are made in the management of health care.

Weather Station Program

Dr. Stuart Foster, Director of the Kentucky Mesonet, said that a mesonet is a dense network of automated "ground truth" weather stations. Its success depends upon partnerships for station locations. In 2007, the Kentucky Mesonet was recognized as the official source of climatological observations for the state and was approved for federal funding via the National Weather Service. Kentucky is one of three states possessing a world class research grade weather monitoring network.

The vertical integration of the Kentucky Mesonet includes testing and calibrating of instruments, installing and maintaining instruments, quality assurance and disseminating of data, and archiving data and system metadata. Station instrumentation includes standard instrumentation (air temperature, precipitation, leaf wetness, solar radiation, relative humidity, wind speed and direction); base infrastructure (data logger controls station operations, cellular modem enables two-way communication via AT&T, and batteries are trickle charged via solar or AC power); and supplemental instrumentation (soil moisture and temperature, barometer, camera, and multi-level temperature).

There is spring, summer, and fall site maintenance to maintain station network infrastructure where personnel checks and cleans instrumentation, periodically swaps out instruments and replaces batteries, cuts vegetation, and takes site photographs. Personnel also fixes instruments when issues are found.

Regarding the metadata database, there is inventory of all scientific instrumentation, including serial numbers, deployment sites and dates, and calibration history. Records of visits to all sites for both regular maintenance and trouble tickets are kept.

There are over 200,000,000 data values collected, processed, and archived each year across the network for quality assurance.

Local sponsorships, state appropriations (which are leveraged), federal grants, and public-private partnerships fund the weather program. Examples of local partnerships include Standard Station Installation Agreements—estimated station cost is \$25,000 (local sponsor’s portion is the first \$15,000 with the Mesonet’s match of the remaining \$10,000); Sponsorship Agreements—annual contribution up to \$5,000, but currently \$3,000 supports cost of maintaining station, priority site for instrumentation enhancements; and Site License Agreements.

There are opportunities for outreach, including an available mesonet app. The Temperature Inversion Monitoring System is an experimental project supported by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Midwest Climate Hub. Multi-level temperature measurements help to determine when the potential for a temperature inversion is high. Farmers can determine when conditions are right for applying chemical treatments to crops without contaminating undesignated crops. This information can be used for other applications.

A grant from the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) was used to develop the Kentucky Drought Early Warning System. The mesonet is also working with rural water associations and the Kentucky Division of Water. Drought declarations come from the U.S. Drought Monitor which derives part of its dataset from Kentucky’s mesonet. It has a direct implication for water management and an indirect effect on federal disaster systems programming.

The Vegetation Health Indicator is an experimental project for Drought Impact Monitoring. There is visual imagery to document landscape condition, and infrared imagery to document vegetation health.

The weather program is a world-class infrastructure benefitting rural and urban communities across Kentucky. It is enhancing public safety in partnership with the National Weather Service, and strengthening economic competitiveness and development of weather-sensitive industries. Money invested in the mesonet is leveraged and provides value in terms of services back to local communities. It is a priority to grow Kentucky’s “knowledge economy” through research and development partnerships.

In response to a question from Representative Brown, Dr. Foster stated that the Mesonet provides data to FEMA for reports that are used in disaster declarations and additional weather related incidences.

In response to a question from Representative Bentley, Dr. Foster said there needs to be local partners in order to install more weather stations. He would like to speak with local governments about forming partnerships and adding more stations. The World Meteorological Organization provides a guideline-based scoring system for the optimal

location of stations. The mesonet is interested in improving public safety from an immediate weather perspective and industry from a climate perspective.

In response to a question from Representative Rothenburger, Dr. Foster indicated that the mesonet can provide “ground truth” over time to augment radar-based weather conditions that can improve guidance for the issuance of severe weather alerts.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.