

Workforce Development Committee Meeting Minutes

Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services
Embassy Suites Hotel
2925 Emerywood Parkway, Richmond, VA 23294
November 14, 2024

Members Present	Members Absent	Staff	Guests
Matt Rickman, Chair	Jason Ferguson, VCCS	Debbie Akers	Karen Owens NVFRS
Cody Jackson, Commercial Ambulance Association, Vice Chair	Byron Andrews, VA State Firefighters	Tim Perkins	Thomas Bianco, student
David Tesh, VA Recruitment and Retention Network	Derek Fuller, VA Recruitment and Retention Networks	Chris Vernovai	Matt Lawler
Christina Smith VACO	Paul Hoyle At-Large	Devin Chenault	
R. Bruce Stratton, VAVRS	VAGEMSA REP TBD	Ron Passmore	
Gene Dalton, WVEMS			
John Bianco, At-Large			
Wayne Perry			

Topic/Subject	Discussion	Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person
I. Welcome	The meeting was called to order at a.m. by Chair Matt Rickman	
II. Introductions	Attendees introduced themselves	
III. Approval of the Minutes	Motion to approve August 1, 2024 meeting minutes Motion made by: Bruce Stratton	

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	2 nd by: Gene Dalton Motion carried	
IV. Chairs Report	Matt reported minimal updates since the last meeting, mentioning ongoing changes in key positions within the EMS office and the Governor's Advisory Board. The committee will continue with current operations until further direction is provided	
V. OEMS Reports	Debbie Akers discussed changes in office EMS staffing, including employee resignations; so the division staffing is getting smaller but it's business as usual otherwise. Tim Perkins provided an update on the national EMS documentation survey, which is comprehensive in that it involves providers, agency leaders, billing and coding professionals. Tim also reminded the group that Rural Health Day is Thursday and more information will be distributed from OEMS related to rural health on Monday, November 18, 2024. Finally, Tim announced that hard copies of meeting minutes will no longer be distributed at meetings and will continue to be sent to committee members electronically.	
VI. EMS Officer – Chris Vernovai	Chris provided an update on the EMS Officer program, noting that since 2016, 463 students have graduated, and 10,592 CE hours have been accredited. The program is planning more classes for the upcoming year and is working on expanding its reach. The program's progress, challenges, and future plans were discussed, including issues with class cancellations due to low registration numbers and funding hurdles; however, plans to expand classes and improve accessibility continue despite financial and logistical challenges.	

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<p>VII. Standard of Excellence – Tim Perkins</p>	<p>Tim announced that the Standards of Excellence program is on hiatus for reevaluation. The program has struggled with incentivization and manpower over the past 18 years. A work group is being formed to address issues, review the program, and plot the course moving forward for SOE. Current applicants will need to reapply. Cody Jackson, David Tesh and Gene Dalton volunteered to serve on the workgroup.</p>	
<p>VIII. Virginia Recruitment and Retention Network – Derek Fuller/Dave Tesh</p>	<p>The Recruitment and Retention Network met in August to talk about rebuilding and working to build a schedule for 2025. So as soon as they have that, they'll be bringing that forward to the committee.</p>	
<p>IX. Old Business</p>	<p>Keeping The Best (KTB) Toolkit – The program is set to be delivered at Rescue College in June. Discussions focused on adapting the program for different formats and ensuring it is available on Moodle for broader access. Additional instructors are needed to support ongoing training. A recommendation was made to include a module on onboarding in the toolkit.</p> <p>Backgrounds/Fingerprinting – Debbie Akers highlighted issues with applicants not completing fingerprinting, which is delaying certification. Efforts are being made to remind applicants of this requirement to include the possible addition of an onboarding module to KTB and Officer I, inclusion in the Fire HR Forum at VA Fire Chiefs Conference and word of mouth.</p> <p>High School EMS Programs - Debbie provided updates on high school EMS program initiatives, including collaborations with Prince William County High School, Prince William County Fire Department, and three additional schools where programs are advancing. Development of a high school EMS manual, incorporating Department of Education (DOE) regulations, is on track for</p>	

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	<p>implementation in 2025. Meetings with school administrators are focused on emphasizing the importance of program preparedness. A proposal to introduce Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) training in 10th grade as preparation for Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) courses in 11th and 12th grades is under consideration. Discussions also addressed the applicability of these programs for standard EMT training, the importance of parental involvement, and the potential for dual enrollment options in EMR and EMT programs.</p> <p>Registered Apprenticeships – The group discussed the lack of communication with Virginia Works and the impact of staffing changes on the registered apprenticeship program. Further discussion regarding registered apprenticeship was placed on hold until staffing stabilizes.</p>	
<p>VII. New Business</p>	<p>New Director – No specific about the status of the director position has been shared. The last we've been told is interviews have taken place, but we the staff does not know the outcome of the interviews to date.</p>	
<p>VIII. Public Comment</p>	<p>Matt Lawler asked for more feedback on the EMS Officer I program, highlighting that the pilot program launched in 2016 yielded reported data that raises the question of satisfaction with current performance metrics. Chris Vernovai explained that the program faced reductions in course offerings during COVID, with efforts now underway to expand into new areas, including Southwest Virginia. Challenges include low registration numbers, incomplete pre-course work, and high dropout rates, with the registration-to-completion ratio dropping from 70-80% pre-COVID to 62% currently. Funding hurdles, particularly travel</p>	

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	<p>expenses for instructors, have also limited access to various regions. Chris emphasized the need for further instructor development at the agency level to support program growth. He noted that departments in Loudoun County, Fredericksburg, and Alexandria are using the program for dual and EMS-only officer roles, reflecting significant program evolution. EMS Symposium has proven valuable resources for students, and there now is a need to feature the program at expos like Tidewater, Central Virginia, and Fire Chiefs' events.</p> <p>Thanks to Karen Owens for her service to OEMS Scott Winston made retirement official – January 31, 2025 Dave Tesh – Retiring December 1, 2024</p>	
IX. Dates for future Meetings	February 6, 2025 May 1, 2025 July 31, 2025 November 6, 2025	
X. Adjourn	The meeting was concluded at 1130 following the completion of the full agenda.	

Respectfully submitted by: Christina Smith
 Committee Secretary



Workforce
Development Comm

Attachment A

EMS OFFICER 1 Course Completion Dashboard