

**Financial Assistance Review Committee (FARC)  
Quarterly Meeting  
Embassy Suites - Richmond  
Glen Allen, Virginia  
November 16, 2023  
10:00 AM**

<b>Members Present:</b>	<b>Members Absent:</b>	<b>Administration Staff:</b>	<b>Staff/Other Guests:</b>
Kevin Dillard, Chairman		Michael Berg	Scott Winston
JC Bolling, Vice Chair		Linwood Pulling	Steve Simon
Mark Barenklau			Michelle Ludeman
Tracy Hanger			Cam Crittenden
Joe Trigg			
Robert Trimmer			

<b>Topic/Subject</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person</b>
I. Call to order - Kevin Dillard, Chair i. Chairman's Report	Kevin called the meeting to order.  Kevin reminded everyone to say their name when speaking since this meeting is being recorded by the court reporter. He told the committee he appreciated each and every one of them for the work that they do and the many hours put into this committee. He thanked those that were able to attend the regional tour of the Eastern Shore EMS agencies and that we missed those that could not be with us due to scheduling conflicts. He also thanked David Long, Executive Director, of the Tidewater EMS Council and his staff for coordinating the tour. Kevin presented a card to Mike Berg from the committee with condolences for the loss of his Mom. Kevin told the committee there was a Code of Ethics form in their packet. Look it over and let me know if you have any questions. If not, please sign it and turn it in. Kevin also sent the committee a Confidentiality Statement form and asked them to review it and	No further action is required



Topic/Subject	Discussion	Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person
	<p>Alberta is looking to put their ambulance in service the first of December. Dante hasn't let us know when their ambulance will be in service but both agencies were overjoyed.</p>	
<p><b>V. Unfinished Business</b></p> <p>i. State EMS Plan – FARC Responsibilities</p> <p>ii. Eastern Shore site visit report</p>	<p>Mike sent the FARC a copy of the State EMS Plan. As part of the Eastern Shore site review, they took time to review this and hopefully the committee has had a chance to look it over. The State EMS Plan has “Draft” on it. It has been approved by the EMS Advisory Board and is pending approval by the Board of Health. There are some sections specific to the FARC.</p> <p>3.4.1 &amp; 3.4.2 Establish roles, expectations, qualifications, and training for FARC members. Mike said we need to make sure we work with that and the application to capture a high-level decision-oriented data compelling narrative information. We've been working on that.</p> <p>3.4.3 Explore Cost-saving measures to expand RSAF impact and provide greater assistance to critical programs, equipment, and vehicles. Mike said he thinks we will have an agenda item to talk a little bit more about that on a couple of areas. We need to be aware of funding opportunities to support special initiatives identified by OEMS and the Advisory Board and standardize the grant review and grading process by graders at regional and state levels. As we move forward and we have ideas and thoughts, we need to make sure we stay aligned with the State EMS plan.</p> <p>Mike said Tidewater EMS Director, David Long, extended his appreciation and shared his thoughts from the Council's viewpoint of the FARC tour. The agencies on the Shore were very appreciative that we came to the Shore to see how they did business and how things worked. The committee couldn't tour Tangier Island due to high winds and high water. The tour was time well spent. It also gave us an opportunity as a committee to be able to share time and network a little bit better to share thoughts and different aspects of the committee on how we could make this a better process and program all the way around.</p> <p>Mark said that even though we're all part of the Commonwealth of Virginia, different geographical regions have different challenges. There was a lot of discussion with different agencies about things that were region-specific. Mark said we were extremely well received by every agency. There were a lot of questions people had. They also requested that Mike come and do a grant workshop. The training program in one locality was able to get a better bang for their buck by working with the school system.</p> <p>Tracy said she would like to echo what Mark said about the training program in that locality. Obviously, our purpose on the tour was to look at the vehicles and the equipment that were funded by the RSAF grant program. We also had the opportunity to talk to them about their training objectives and their goals and how they are meeting staffing needs. The high school has a training program for EMT's. This was number one. They are fueling their volunteer system, their career system, and providing back to the community. They are building an</p>	<p>No further action is required</p>

Topic/Subject	Discussion	Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person
<p>I. Discussion for future site visit</p> <p>iii. RSAF Policies and Procedures</p>	<p>ambulance so that the students would have a realistic training scenario outside the classroom but also outside of their actual ride time. The agencies on the Eastern Shore seemed to be very cooperative with each other and seemed to work well together. They were sharing vehicles trying to meet the needs with limited resources.</p> <p>Kevin said the Eastern Shore site visit was very successful. The agencies were very proud of the system they have in place. The committee talked with the Director of the Communications Center. They dispatch for both counties on the Shore. When a call comes in, they can connect with a video link and see what's going on as the units are responding. This way, they get better information to the responding units. Kevin thought it was cool to see such a rural area doing some high-tech things like that.</p> <p>Mike said there's a big difference between Accomack County and Northampton County. Accomack County is very progressive and very strong. There seems to be greater support from the local government and greater cooperation among agencies. Northampton County has a lot of areas they need to work on. Mike said there is still a line of division between law enforcement and Fire and EMS at the Communication Center. When a call comes in for law enforcement, they must transfer it to the Sheriff's Department instead of having a true regional communications center. You still have time delays determining what the call is and then it must be spread out. There are opportunities for greater collaboration and efficiencies. They are on their way.</p> <p>Kevin said, if we think these visits are beneficial, we would like to schedule future visits. Due to the current climate, it may get changed but we can still plan. He talked to Mark and suggested that perhaps we would want to consider going to the Lord Fairfax EMS Council area next and the Shenandoah Valley region. JC suggested we might want to visit the Western Virginia EMS Council next. Joe said he thinks the Lord Fairfax area would be a good location to go to next, because we have been to the far Southwest and the far Eastern. Being in the Central Shenandoah area would be beneficial. He said the Western Virginia EMS Council would certainly love to have us come by on the next visit.</p> <p>Mike said the reason we put this in here is he wanted to start to get some feedback from the committee members about what should be included in here. Mohamad Abbamin started working on this. We go through our purpose and our authority. We talk about definition of terms. What will be included will be a copy of the Conflict of Interest form as well as the Code of Ethics. Mike said the RSAF Policies and Procedures are still in draft form. Mike asked if anyone had any additional items to add to the Policy and Procedures.</p>	<p>No further action is required</p> <p>No further action is required</p>

Topic/Subject	Discussion	Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person
<p>I. Regional Council grading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priorities per council</li> </ul>	<p>Kevin said he liked the idea of coming up with some best practices to give to the councils. We could talk about best practices and encourage people to do certain things such as the Code of Ethics and confidentiality.</p> <p>JC has a list of terms that he feels should be included. Anytime you reference something, there should be a hyperlink if this is a leading document that when its done could be published on the state website. Anybody can have access to it if you need to go somewhere from there, you can click on the link and go. It also can be downloadable as a PDF so you have a hard copy of it to refer back to. He said he would like to see the definitions greatly expanded as time goes forward and we start trying to track items. This is a perfect opportunity to have a living, breathing document.</p> <p>Kevin said there has been a lot of confusion over several grading periods about the priority grading by the councils. Some councils list their number 1, 2, and 3 priorities. Other councils list their number 1, 2, and 3 priorities for each planning district in their respective area. Other councils haven't listed any priority rankings because they have misunderstood the directions. We need to be clearer on what our expectations are. We want the priority rankings per regional council area, not per planning district, because it would get messy if we had a ranking for every planning district in the Commonwealth. Kevin asked the committee if everyone agreed that we would ask for the top three priorities per regional council area and not planning district? FARC unanimously approved.</p> <p>Mike said that he spoke to the Regional Councils yesterday. He told them the priority rankings should be based on the council area as a whole and not broken down by planning districts. Tidewater EMS Council said they wanted training for both the Western and Eastern part of Tidewater. They also asked for feedback from us as to what we would like to see from the Regional Councils as far as their comments. If they say, this is a well-run agency, they answer all their calls and the people are nice, is that objective criteria? Does it help you understand the grant better and can you make a better-informed decision whether we should be recommending spending public monies? Does this mean they need a new ambulance or new equipment? Perhaps we need to set down and have a little work session and figure that out. At some point, we need to be able to communicate that with the regional directors.</p> <p>JC said this would be perfect to put into the manual. We could have an outline of what to do, guidance, and so forth, so that it doesn't change from personnel to personnel when you talk to people. You would have a place to go look and say here's what is required and here's some sample information. You can compare apples to apples when we have some kind of guideline to go by. There's excellent information from the graders and regional councils. JC wishes they would elaborate a little bit more.</p>	<p>No further action is required</p>

Topic/Subject	Discussion	Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict of Interest - Grading</li> </ul>	<p>Joe stated we need to start offering guidance to the councils on what the comments need to be, because you all have seen as part of the review process, the comments are all over the place. It almost seems like certain councils are not wanting to go on record to give accurate information as to what's truly going on with an agency. A good piece of equipment such as a Lucas, a new ambulance, a new monitor would benefit an agency. We all know that. We need to determine as a group what information is useful and funnel it down to the councils so they can provide us with the information we're looking for to help guide us in our decision-making process. Joe said he supports this initiative 100 percent, and we need to move forward with it.</p> <p>Mark said one of the things he has noticed is when an agency is looking to add an ambulance to their fleet (not a replacement), there's no information in the grant that justifies why. How many simultaneous incidents last year did you run? If you had an additional truck, would it decrease your response time? A lot of time they state they need an additional ambulance because their calls have increased. There needs to be documentation as to why they need it.</p> <p>Steve has been the Director of the Western Virginia EMS Council for the past 3 years. He has been involved with the council for over 20 years. Therefore, he has a lot of knowledge about the RSAF grant program. He said that when we have council directors that replace council directors, some of the new directors aren't familiar with the RSAF process. They may come from the education side and not the administration side or vice versa. The grant information isn't always passed down from one director to another. They have no instructions about how to administer the RSAF grant program. They had never been told when they should abstain or not to abstain from grading. Steve thinks the more information we can give the regional directors, the better.</p> <p>Michelle has been with the Northern Virginia EMS Council for over 22 years. She said the grading has changed a lot, especially in their council. She is always calling Mike asking him for direction on what to do and how best to do it. She said each council does something different throughout the state. She said some direction would be great. She said some type of wording from FARC on what we're allowed to do would be helpful.</p> <p>Scott believes the reason the councils are not giving direct recommendations is that they don't know who will see the comments and don't want to take ownership of them. Some of the directors don't know what the expectation is. At the next directors meeting, we need to say this is what the expectation is. We need to see that the recommendation is of the council, good or bad. If an agency puts in a grant and it's not awarded, the council should reach out to the agency (after the awards have been announced) and explain to them why they didn't get awarded. Show them the grade and comments and tell them why they received the grade and comment they received. Ask them had they spoken to their leadership or council? This gives you the opportunity to say yes, you received a bad grade but this is the reason why.</p>	<p>No further action is required</p>

Topic/Subject	Discussion	Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person
<p>II. Additional items to include</p> <p>iv. Other</p>	<p>No additional items</p> <p>Cam Crittenden came into the room and Kevin introduced her to FARC as the Acting/Interim Director for the Office of EMS. He asked her if she would like to say anything.</p> <p>Cam told the committee that she knew some of them and others she didn't know. She looks forward to working with them. If anyone has any questions, comments, or concerns, to call her. She has worked at OEMS for 7 years and was involved in ODEMSA for probably 15 years. She had sat through the grading process at ODEMSA but never understood what was required or expected by FARC. She feels we can show the councils what we are looking for.</p> <p>Kevin had each member introduce themselves and tell Cam what region they represent.</p>	<p>No further action is required</p> <p>No further action is required</p>
<p>VI. New Business</p> <p>i. Hardship grant formula</p>	<p>Mike said the regulations talks about 50/50 funding for a standard grant. It also talks about hardship funding as determined by the FARC. We are not sure how the 80/20 funding level was selected as the hardship funding. It could have been in regulations back in the day. Mike suggested that we look at potentially changing that formula. We've had this discussion among ourselves where agencies will put in for a hundred percent funding. They may not get 100 percent funding, but it may be reduced to 80/20 funding. If they put in for 80/20 funding the worse case scenario is it may be reduced to the 50/50 funding if not hardship. The agencies have figured out if I don't get the funding level requested, it will probably be reduced to a lower level. This learned behavior has occurred a lot in past grant cycles. Mike did a spreadsheet from the last round of grants that were awarded 80/20 funding. He chose the 75/25 and 70/30 funding levels to see what the awarded amount would look like and how we may be able to spread the wealth further. He then opened the floor for discussion. Mike said it would take a programming change to go from 80/20 to 75/25 or 70/30 funding.</p> <p>Kevin said he personally likes the thought of changing the percentages, because we have limited money to go around and that just gives us an opportunity to spread the money better.</p> <p>JC asked what is hardship? He would like to see what other grants are out there and what they consider hardship. If we need to go to 90/10 or 75/25, what is hardship? The unwritten rule is we will lower it down and award it to them at a lower value. JC said if you are applying for something, you should be able to defend what you're applying for. You should be able to convey this is an actual need instead of a wish list.</p> <p>Joe said he would be in favor of lowering the threshold and percentages to 70/30 or 75/25 funding level. People are applying for 100 percent funding thinking we'll cut them to 80/20 or</p>	<p>No further action is required</p>

Topic/Subject	Discussion	Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person
<p>ii. Vehicles per locality discussion</p>	<p>50/50. There's no punishment for applying for 100 percent because we're going to take care of it on the back end.</p> <p>Mark echoed JC and Joe's comments. He would like to see us spread the money further and if it takes changing the percentages to make that happen, he is okay with that.</p> <p>Mike said that sometimes we lose sight that the grants are gifts from the Commonwealth. The agencies and other entities forget that too. Mike said he did have concerns for the smaller agencies that live dime to dime. With cost increases across the board, the price increases are going to be passed on to the consumers. Is it the State's responsibility to keep them in business. It's not our responsibility to be their ambulance replacement program.</p> <p>Michelle said she thought the agencies will do fine with changing it from 80/20 to something different.</p> <p>Steve said it bothers him when someone applies for 100 percent funding because they typically do not know or understand the system. They haven't reached out to anyone at the State or council level. Steve agrees with changing the hardship percentages. It drives him crazy because you will see a multitude of different price quotes depending on the agency. He feels the mom and pop volunteer rescue squads get taken advantage of by the sales people.</p> <p>We need to discuss this further and then decide. Kevin said we'll put that on the agenda for our next meeting.</p> <p>Kevin had discussions with some of the committee members about the number of ambulances in each county. You may have a bunch of independent agencies and a career department in the same county. How many ambulances are in that county? If the career agency is in need of an ambulance and the volunteer squad has 4 almost new ambulances sitting there, how do you grade an ambulance request? We probably should have another question on the grant application that asks how many ambulances are in the county? Should we be funding more ambulances if there are several that are not being used? Kevin feels all the agencies should be working together. Everybody is operating their own silos. Maybe, it's time to knock down some of those silos and learn how to work together countywide.</p> <p>Mark said a lot of agencies feel they need 2 ambulances in case one goes down and then they have none to answer calls. Are they staffing one ambulance or both ambulances? If you had more cooperation between the locality instead of every individual agency, if an ambulance in the county goes down, you know there is another ambulance available in the county to use. Mark's volunteer agency has 2 ambulances. One of them is at another station more than his</p>	<p>No further action is required</p>

Topic/Subject	Discussion	Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person
<p>iii. Other</p>	<p>own. The other agency is using it as a loaner ambulance and currently need it more. That is cooperation in your locality.</p> <p>Joe said this is a huge issue statewide. There are a couple of agencies in his area with this problem. One of the career agencies is struggling to cover costs because ambulances break down, and the volunteer agencies are refusing to loan them ambulances.</p> <p>JC said that perhaps the councils could help with this since they do the grading too. They can paint the picture for us and that's valuable information.</p> <p>Robert said in Chesterfield County they have plenty of ambulances. There are 15 additional ambulances that are being utilized 15 to 20 percent of the time. We have 15 units sitting there in the county that have very little use. Each squad probably only has one marked up at a time.</p> <p>Tracy said we probably need to look at distances between ambulance stations and then how long would it take the volunteers to get an ambulance from a reserve place? How far away is that reserve ambulance/station? There are more factors that go into this than just how many ambulances are in a particular county. This also impacts the mutual aid agencies that are responding. There are a lot of ambulances just sitting there but how much maintenance are they getting?</p> <p>Kevin said there was a lot of good discussion on this, and we'll have more to come.</p> <p>Mike said there were changes to the application for the Spring cycle. The financial page has been updated so they no longer must have the number. They must attach either their 990, their most recent audit, or a profit and loss statement.</p> <p>Joe requested that the admission of the inventory listing be added to the agenda. We would like to see a listing of all the ambulances an agency has. This would also include all the Lucas devices, defibrillators, and things of that nature. If an agency asks for 20 defibrillators, we can see how many ambulances they have and see if they are wanting to replace them all or a portion of what they have. Joe asked us to put it before the committee for the addition of an inventory list to the required items when you are requesting those type of things.</p> <p>The committee was in favor of this addition to the application.</p> <p>Mike said that would take a programming change and he would work with OIM to make it happen.</p>	<p>No further action is required</p>

<b>Topic/Subject</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person</b>
VII. Next Meeting	November 30, 2023 @ 10:00 am, Office of EMS, 1041 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen, Virginia 23059 (Grant Review and Grading). Our next FARC Quarterly meeting will be on Thursday, February 1, 2024, at the Embassy Suites. Our meeting will begin at 10:00 am.	No further action is required
VIII. Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.	No further action is required

DRAFT