



**RICHMOND AMBULANCE AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
MAY 16, 2023
ANNUAL MEETING**

Present: Weet Baldwin, Chairman
Kirk Roberts, Treasurer
Marilyn West, Secretary
Carlos Hopkins, Director
Katherine Jordan, Director
Drew Walker, Director
Sheila White, Director

Absent: Julia Hammond, Vice Chairperson
Lincoln Saunders, Director
Joey Trapani, Director

Counsel: Jonathan Joseph, Esq., Christian & Barton

Guests: Matt Conrad, Vice President, Government & External Relations, VCU and
VCU Health Systems

Staff: Chip Decker, Chief Executive Officer
Joseph Ornato, M.D., Operational Medical Director
Terone Green, Chief Administrative Officer
Wayne Harbour, Chief Operating Officer
Angel Dove, Chief Human Resources Officer
Laura Bickham, Senior Executive Assistant and Assistant Secretary to the
Board of Directors

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Weet Baldwin called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

II. RECOGNITION OF BOARD SERVICE

Weet Baldwin presented Matt Conrad with a plaque of recognition for his eight years of service on the RAA Board of Directors. He noted Matt Conrad held the offices of Treasurer and most recently, Chairman. Matt Conrad was elected Chairman in 2020 and held office through the COVID pandemic. He also served as Chairman of the Board’s Finance Committee while holding the office of Treasurer. The Board thanked Matt Conrad for his service. Matt Conrad extended his appreciation for the recognition, adding that RAA is one of the best run organizations he has ever seen.

Weet Baldwin then introduced Drew Walker to the Board. He stated Drew Walker was appointed to the Board at Council’s recent meeting on May 8th. Drew Walker is the Chief Operating Officer at Chippenham Hospital. Prior to this, he served as the Vice President of Operations for Parham Doctors’ Hospital.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: To approve the February 21, 2023 meeting minutes.

Made By: Marilyn West

Seconded: Katherine Jordan

Discussion: None

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:
Marilyn West
Katherine Jordan
Weet Baldwin
Kirk Roberts
Carlos Hopkins
Drew Walker

Nays:
None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget – Final Adoption

Motion: To approve the new service rate increases effective June 1, 2023 as presented. This follows Mayor Stoney’s request for a third-party performance and financial audit of RAA and subsequent recommendations made by the consultants contracted by the City of Richmond.

Made By: Kirk Roberts

Seconded: Weet Baldwin

Discussion: Chip Decker reported the budget document included increases to RAA's service, mileage and special event rates. The budget also includes revisions to the response time targets to align RAA with industry standards. Kirk Roberts commented how the financial statements reflect how frequently RAA has needed to spend cash, adding how this was predicted to happen. He stated RAA is not competitive from a wage perspective and explained the significant rate increases tie back to the recommendations made by the consultants for at least a 325% increase of the Medicare allowable. Chip Decker reported the budget includes a 350% increase in order to get to the projected ending balance in the budget. It is proposed RAA implement the new rates on June 1st to allow for lag time between changing the rates and when payments begin coming in. The budget was built around these new proposed rates. A document with the new proposed rates was distributed to the Board. Chip Decker explained 81% of the patients RAA transports will not be impacted by the increases (Medicare recipients). He explained 11% make up the uninsured population. RAA is gearing up to assist those individuals to apply for Medicaid. Additionally, RAA is also considering changes to its financial hardship program and analyzing the data surrounding the LifeSaver membership program to assure it is actuarially sound. The remaining 8% of people have private insurance and will be impacted the most. Other recommendations made by the consultants will be explored legislatively. Weet Baldwin reported the proposed rate increases and changes to the response time targets were brought to both the Finance and Operations & Clinical Committees and both Committees recommend approval. Cost shifting is necessary to assure RAA's ending balance is met.

Katherine Jordan asked about the proposed assessment fee. Chip Decker explained that prior to the onset of the pandemic, 25% of RAA's responses did not generate a transport and that during the pandemic it increased to one-third of RAA's responses. While RAA continues to provide medical services such as administering breathing treatments and checking vitals, no revenue is generated if there is no transport. If a person is assessed by a RAA provider, they will be charged for these types of assessments. Norfolk charges a \$75-assessment fee. Implementing the fee may help reduce the misuse of EMS care. Katherine Jordan stressed the importance of proper and thorough communication to the public. Carlos Hopkins inquired as to the number of calls the fee would be applicable, to which Chip Decker responded approximately one-third, commenting approximately half of those patients would not receive a bill. He explained it is more about covering the costs RAA incurs by providing a response where medical care has been provided. Carlos Hopkins expressed concern implementing the fee, noting Norfolk only charges \$75 and RAA proposes a fee of \$200. Chip Decker explained the proposed fee is based on the consultants' recommendations, adding Norfolk is heavily subsidized. Kirk Roberts concurred, commenting there are only two options; either the City subsidy increases significantly or RAA must raise rates. Marilyn West mentioned the consultants' study was done and weighs in RAA's favor, adding they looked at everything on a national level. Carlos Hopkins commented he finds the fee to be too high, particularly with no historical comparison data available. Chip Decker stated RAA is proposing a similar rate structure to that of other Public Utility Model (PUM) systems such as Ft. Worth, Texas and Charlotte, North Carolina. He also noted the consultants' recommendations were based on similar systems to RAA from across the country. Katherine Jordan stressed the need for the assessment fee to be considered a trial strategy requiring reevaluation by the Board. Marilyn West responded all rates should be analyzed and implemented on an annual basis.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Kirk Roberts	None
Weet Baldwin	
Marilyn West	
Katherine Jordan	
Carlos Hopkins	
Drew Walker	
Sheila White	

Note: Sheila White arrived during the discussion and prior to the vote.

Motion: To approve the proposed changes to the outcome-based response time targets to take effect June 1, 2023 as presented.

Made By: Marilyn West

Seconded: Sheila White

Discussion: Weet Baldwin referenced the Proposed Response Time Targets document distributed around the table, adding the targets were in line with the consultants' report. Chip Decker explained how the EMS industry breaks down call types and defines priorities. He explained the changes do not mean RAA's responses will be slower, adding that if resources are available, then nothing will change. He reported efficiencies are part of the budget and that the response time targets are a very important component.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Marilyn West	None
Sheila White	
Weet Baldwin	
Kirk Roberts	
Katherine Jordan	
Carlos Hopkins	
Drew Walker	

Motion: To adopt the Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget for the Richmond Ambulance Authority to include the capital request from the City of Richmond for future purchases of vehicles.

Made By: Sheila White

Seconded: Marilyn West

Discussion: Chip Decker expressed his appreciation to City Council for approving the text amendment which allowed for the \$1.4 million set aside in a contingency reserve to be included in the original \$4 million subsidy allocated to RAA, making the total subsidy for FY2024 \$5.4 million. He also thanked City Administration for their support. Sheila White recalled the City's assistance to RAA with capital equipment in 2022 and 2023 and asked if RAA intends to use the funding noted in the budget for capital outlay. Chip Decker explained the budget does not include the purchase of ambulances. He stated RAA did request \$350,000 to acquire one ambulance if necessary, however, it was not funded. RAA will need to order

ambulances soon to take delivery in approximately two years. RAA no longer holds a contract to purchase ambulances as it was signed over to the City. The cost has increased significantly from \$260,000 to \$350,000 in just one year's time.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Sheila White
Marilyn West
Weet Baldwin
Kirk Roberts
Carlos Hopkins
Katherine Jordan

Nays:

None

Abstentions:

Drew Walker

B. Proposed HIPAA Policy Change

Motion: To adopt the proposed change to the HIPAA policy pertaining to Privacy Training Related to Protected Health Information (PHI) as presented.

Made By: Katherine Jordan

Seconded: Carlos Hopkins

Discussion: Chip Decker noted the proposed change to one of RAA's HIPAA policies, which appears on Page B3 of today's meeting packet. He explained it was a simple cleanup to coincide with the language contained in RAA's HIPAA manual.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Katherine Jordan
Carlos Hopkins
Weet Baldwin
Kirk Roberts
Marilyn West
Drew Walker
Sheila White

Nays:

None

V. ANNUAL MEETING

A. Election of Officers

Motion: To reelect the current slate of Officers by acclamation.

Made By: Katherine Jordan

Seconded: Carlos Hopkins

Discussion: Weet Baldwin announced today's meeting serves as the Board's Annual Meeting. He confirmed the Board's current Officers each expressed interest to continue serving in their current roles and noted the current Officers are as follows:

Weet Baldwin, Chairman
Julia Hammond, Vice Chairperson
Kirk Roberts, Treasurer
Marilyn West, Secretary

Weet Baldwin asked if there were any additional nominations, to which there were none.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Katherine Jordan	None
Carlos Hopkins	
Weet Baldwin	
Kirk Roberts	
Marilyn West	
Drew Walker	
Sheila White	

B. Committee Membership

There was no discussion regarding Committee membership.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Personnel: Weet Baldwin reported the following:

- 1) On behalf of Julia Hammond, he advised the Committee will focus on more continuous communication regarding the CEO's performance.

B. Operations and Clinical: Weet Baldwin reported the following:

- 1) The Committee met on May 9th and discussed the consultants' recommendations for service rate adjustments, the assessment fee implementation and changes to the response time targets discussed earlier in today's meeting.
- 2) RAA is seeing a slight increase in ET3 enrollment. RAA Field Supervisors are using a script provided for BLS (non-emergency call types), which has begun to help increase enrollment numbers.
- 3) Dr. Ornato provided a brief overview of the status of the drone delivery project.
- 4) The idea of securing grants to help fund some of the costs for EMS delivery was discussed.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

Chief Executive Officer's Report: Chip Decker reported the following:

- 1) Next week is National EMS Week. RAA's Annual Appreciation Celebration typically held in May will take place in the fall. Activities to celebrate the week will be held at RAA as well as the area hospitals. He referenced the EMS Week gift distributed around the table to the Board.

- 2) The Public Safety Chiefs continue to meet monthly. The participants include Chip Decker, Melvin Carter (Fire Chief, Richmond Fire & Emergency Services), Rick Edwards (Interim Police Chief, Richmond Police Department), Stephen Willoughby (Director, Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness & Response) and Jeff Gray (Senior Policy Advisor to Lincoln Saunders, City CAO). The meetings have been productive, with the group now working on finalizing the City of Richmond's Public Safety Chiefs Committee Charter. The City's Active Shooter Response Plan is currently being reviewed. It is Chip Decker's understanding the City is looking into contracting with the Robert Bobb Group to assist with the implementation of many of their recommendations, pointing out the report touches on other City departments and the role they need to play.
- 3) He extended his appreciation to Danny Garrison, RAA's Director of Communications, and his team for successfully achieving ACE (Accredited Center of Excellence) reaccreditation from the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED). RAA has consistently remained ACE-accredited since 2001 and is the second longest agency to hold this designation in North America. Should RAA no longer receive 911 calls, this distinction could be in jeopardy. It is believed DECPR is looking to assume all call-taking functions for the City.
- 4) **Motion:** To adopt the resolution as presented recognizing those field providers who have successfully completed the Richmond Ambulance Authority's Advanced-EMT course.

Made By: Katherine Jordan

Seconded: Marilyn West

Discussion: RAA's Emergency Medical Technicians-Basic (EMT-B) recently completed a three-month Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (A-EMT) course which provided them with the necessary training for specific advanced life support skills and the performance of select medical interventions. While the plan was to have these providers attend today's meeting to be recognized by the Board, a few of them are currently working. RAA's A-EMT's work different shifts, making it difficult to logistically have them all attend. Management will be arranging to have them each recognized, at which time, they will receive a certificate of completion and a copy of today's proposed resolution.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Katherine Jordan
Marilyn West
Weet Baldwin
Kirk Roberts
Carlos Hopkins
Drew Walker
Sheila White

Nays:

None

VIII. OPERATIONAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Joseph Ornato reported the following:

- 1) He thanked Jon Joseph and the City's legal team for the public declaration letter required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The letter confirms the City recognizes RAA as a critical component to the drone project for the delivery of naloxone and an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). There is a similar grant project pending with the American Heart Association (AHA) to put a program in place in James City as well as a rural county in North Carolina. The next step is to apply for a grant to start a public drone service in the urban setting to include Richmond, Virginia and Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. The cost to place AED's throughout the City would be 400 times more expensive than having five drones deliver them to bystanders witnessing a cardiac arrest.

IX. NEXT MEETING DATES

Weet Baldwin noted the dates of the upcoming meetings, which are as follows:

- A. August 15, 2023
- B. November 21, 2023 (**Proposed New Date: November 14, 2023**)

X. ADJOURNMENT

Weet Baldwin adjourned the May 16, 2023 Board of Directors meeting at 9:20 a.m.

Handwritten signature of Laura Bickham, dated 08/15/23.

Laura Bickham, Assistant Secretary