



**RICHMOND AMBULANCE AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 28, 2023**

Present: Weet Baldwin, Chairman
Julia Hammond, Vice Chairperson
Kirk Roberts, Treasurer
Carlos Hopkins, Director
Katherine Jordan, Director
Lincoln Saunders, Director
Sheila White, Director

Absent: Marilyn West, Secretary
Mark Hickman, Director
Joey Trapani, Director
Drew Walker, Director

Counsel: Jonathan Joseph, Esq., Christian & Barton

Guests: Sean Walker, Principal, CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA)

Staff: Chip Decker, Chief Executive Officer
Terone Green, Chief Administrative Officer
Wayne Harbour, Chief Operating Officer
Angel Dove, Chief Human Resources Officer
Bryan Aud, Director of Finance
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.

Note: The minutes follow the order of business and not the meeting agenda.

II. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Operations & Clinical Committee: Weet Baldwin reported the following:

- 1) The Committee met on November 9th.
- 2) Implementation of the ALS response (“chase”) car was discussed. A chase car responded 84% of the time to a Priority One call, meeting the response time target. RAA is meeting the response time target for Priority Three calls and improvements have been made with meeting the targets in other priorities and zones.
- 3) An update on current field staffing needs was provided. Six field providers are set to soon graduate from RAA’s in-house Paramedic class in December.
- 4) Dr. Ornato provided an update on the drone delivery project. Dr. Ornato continues to work with his research partners to move the project forward.
- 5) Ryan Martinette was hired for the position of Chief Operating Officer, set to begin with RAA in early December. Wayne Harbour will be resuming his previous role as Chief Clinical Officer and the two departments will go back to being separate.
- 6) Chip Decker received a public service award for his leadership role and RAA’s work on Project Recover. The program is sponsored by the United States Attorney’s Office-Eastern District of Virginia. Project Recover’s purpose is to bridge the gap between emergency responders, law enforcement, medical, treatment and recover communities in central Virginia and to leverage a continuum of services to the community following emergency and law enforcement responses in drug trafficking operations.

B. Finance Committee: Kirk Roberts reported the following:

- 1) CLA was present at the Committee’s meeting on October 30th and provided a presentation on the FY2023 audit.
- 2) The Committee discussed supplemental assistance to help increase collections. He commented RAA is moving through its cash reserve as expected.
- 3) An extensive discussion regarding the service rate increases took place. The rates only effect approximately 19% of RAA’s payers; half of which are either underinsured or have no insurance at all. Some are opting for payment plans, which delays incoming cash receipts. Katherine Jordan commented if someone has no insurance, they are never going to pay. Chip Decker responded those accounts are sent to collections, commenting it would likely not make a difference. He explained the impact is on the most vulnerable people, explaining they do not call 9-1-1 and ultimately their condition gets worse. The group most impacted are those who have insurance. If an insurance carrier used to pay RAA \$400, they may now pay \$900, which is still only about half of RAA’s new retail rates. Chip Decker mentioned the rates for RAA’s membership subscription plan, LifeSaver, will be increasing, effective January 1st. It is imperative the plan remain actuarially sound. Weet Baldwin recalled the rate increases were implemented in response to the recommendations from the consultants’ report. Kirk Roberts explained the average dollars per call may increase, however RAA is still not competitive in the labor market. He stated a

provider can go to a surrounding county such as Henrico and earn a significant amount of more money responding to a fraction of the calls.

Note: Carlos Hopkins and Sheila White arrived to the meeting during the Finance Committee report.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: To approve the August 15, 2023 meeting minutes.

Made By: Julia Hammond

Seconded: Katherine Jordan

Discussion: None

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Julia Hammond
Katherine Jordan
Weet Baldwin
Kirk Roberts
Carlos Hopkins
Sheila White

Nays:

None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Fiscal Year 2023 Financial Statements and Audit Report – Final Acceptance

Motion: To accept the Fiscal Year 2023 Financial Statements and Audit Report as prepared and presented by CliftonLarsonAllen, LLC (CLA).

Made By: Katherine Jordan

Seconded: Julia Hammond

Discussion: Sean Walker, Principal with CliftonLarsenAllen (CLA), introduced himself to the Board. He thanked the RAA Finance team for their work, commenting there is a great deal of cooperation necessary to complete an audit. He reported CLA was issuing an unmodified (“clean”) opinion and explained it is the highest level of assurance that can be placed on an organization’s financial position.

He referred the Board to Page 21, Note 6 of the audit document. The financial statements include the necessary government accounting standard be applied as a result of RAA having entered into long-term noncancellable arrangements to use another party’s IT software, which is called Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITA). He then referred the Board to Page 1, Emphasis of Matter, and explained RAA adopted the new accounting guidance for SBITA. Sean Walker referenced the Management Representation Letter, commenting there were no significant findings nor were there uncorrected statements in the financials.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Katherine Jordan	None
Julia Hammond	
Weet Baldwin	
Kirk Roberts	
Carlos Hopkins	
Lincoln Saunders	
Sheila White	

Note: Lincoln Saunders arrived to the meeting during the discussion and prior to the vote.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION – DISCUSSIONS INVOLVING PERSONNEL MATTERS

Motion: To enter into Executive Session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia for discussions involving personnel matters.

Made By: Julia Hammond

Seconded: Katherine Jordan

Discussion: None

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Julia Hammond	None
Katherine Jordan	
Weet Baldwin	
Kirk Roberts	
Carlos Hopkins	
Lincoln Saunders	
Sheila White	

Note: All members of staff left the meeting prior to Executive Session and rejoined the meeting at its conclusion. Jon Joseph remained present during Executive Session.

Motion: To return to the normal order of business and the parties certified the matters discussed in closed session were related to personnel matters and conducted lawfully.

Made By: Carlos Hopkins

Seconded: Katherine Jordan

Discussion: None

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Carlos Hopkins	None
Katherine Jordan	
Weet Baldwin	
Julia Hammond	
Kirk Roberts	
Lincoln Saunders	
Sheila White	

Motion: To accept the recommendation of the Personnel Committee as presented in closed session at the November 28, 2023 meeting of the Board of Directors.

Made By: Julia Hammond

Seconded: Katherine Jordan

Discussion: Weet Baldwin advised Julia Hammond provided the Board with an overview from the Personnel Committees meeting held on November 9th.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Julia Hammond	None
Katherine Jordan	
Weet Baldwin	
Kirk Roberts	
Carlos Hopkins	
Lincoln Saunders	
Sheila White	

VI. STAFF REPORTS

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

- 1) He provided a Board membership update. The reappointments of Weet Baldwin, Carlos Hopkins and Drew Walker as well as the appointment of Mark Hickman were approved by Council at their November 13th meeting. Mark Hickman is the Senior Director of State Government Relations for VCU.
- 2) Pursuant to the recommendation made by the Robert Bobb Group, RAA is looking at all options for outsourcing part or potentially all of the Reimbursement Department. Management has a meeting scheduled on Friday to move this forward. One of the challenges RAA may face is the disruption in collections and cashflow during a transition period. Right now, RAA receives its annual City subsidy on a quarterly basis. It would be ideal to receive the subsidy annually in the event there is a cashflow interruption. Other EMS systems who have transitioned to outside billing services reported cashflow issues and that it took a little over six months to begin to recover.
- 3) Earlier this year, a meeting was held with Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Deputy CAO-Finance & Administration, and Jason May, former Director for the City's Budget & Strategic Planning Office. At that time, they recommended RAA break out its future subsidy

requests into three sections to provide the City with a better understanding of RAA's methodology. Last week, Chip Decker attended a virtual meeting with Sabrina Joy-Hogg along with members of the City's Budget & Strategic Planning Office to discuss the three sections of RAA's FY2025 request. Chip Decker provided the Board with an overview of RAA's subsidy request, which he displayed on the projector. He explained the three sections, which included the methodology used for the base request, the amount needed in cash reserve for operating needs, and the third section highlighted RAA's capital needs (equipment leases). During the January meeting with Sabrina Joy-Hogg and Jason May, it was communicated the City would prefer to fund RAA's annual capital lease amount through the subsidy RAA receives.

The base request of \$6.9 million is the minimum RAA can request since RAA does not have the cash in the bank available to subsidize the subsidy it receives. Without any change, RAA will end the year with \$1.1 million in the bank. He noted it was too early to report on the impact of the service rate increases. He expressed his understanding the City would prefer RAA hold the leases and bill the City for the lease payments as opposed to the City leasing to RAA. Next fiscal year, RAA will need to acquire new heart monitors as the current inventory will have reached its end-of-life. This will be an additional \$900,000 needed to cover the lease payments, in addition to the \$6.9 million base subsidy.

Sheila White noted RAA is reporting the need to supplement its cash reserve, which continues to decline year to year. She inquired as to the reason for the depletion in cash if receivables are up year to year, adding both revenue and expenses remained flat from 2022 to 2023. Chip Decker responded it is due to the cash coming in and the cash going out, adding that when the total subsidy amount was \$3 million, it caused RAA to spend down its cash reserve. Weet Baldwin suggested a meeting be scheduled between Sheila White, Kirk Roberts, Chip Decker, Terone Green and Bryan Aud to provide a better understanding of the methodology used to support RAA's request for FY2025.

Lincoln Saunders asked how co-location of Communication Centers might help RAA's budget, to which Chip Decker responded RAA may see a decrease in software costs however not in personnel costs. He then explained dispatch operations in Richmond. It appears the Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness & Response (DECPR) will keep the call and perform Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) at DECPR. RAA would still have to answer non-emergency calls, but no longer receive 9-1-1 calls. RAA will lose both its Accredited Center of Excellence (ACE) designation as well as its accreditation by the State's Office of EMS (OEMS). RAA would no longer be an accredited answering point. Lincoln Saunders responded there is no accredited center for Fire or Police, to which Chip Decker mentioned he was not sure where DECPR was in the accreditation process. Weet Baldwin commented on the specialized approach to dispatching techniques as opposed to a more generalized approach when it is being performed for more than one discipline. Lincoln Saunders stated the City wants to be certain the DECPR call-takers have the necessary level of expertise and it is his understanding they are getting the proper level of training to effectively perform EMD.

Chip Decker recalled several years back, RAA began saving for the purchase of the new regional radio system, at which time, the City requested RAA accept a significant reduction in subsidy and spend down its savings for this purchase and that RAA would be included in the City's new radio system. Instead, the City removed RAA's infrastructure from the new radio system. As a result, RAA will "go dark" when the switchover occurs and there is not enough time to finalize co-location. Lincoln Saunders responded the Robert Bobb Group is scheduled to provide an update soon based on the recommendations included in their report. He added there is room to differ on a particular recommendation, however he would first like to see where the consultants stand. Kirk Roberts commented on the loss of institutional expertise and the risk associated with it, adding the need to ensure a base level of people to run the system as is the case with other public safety agencies. Weet Baldwin concurred, adding specialized communication services are vital and that any decision should be thoroughly vetted.

- 4) The Public Safety Chiefs continue to meet monthly. The November meeting was cancelled due to the three Town Halls scheduled. Unfortunately, there was no citizen turnout at any of the events. Katherine Jordan commented she would have liked to have known they were taking place, to which Chip Decker responded they were not well marketed.
- 5) Management learned yesterday RAA would be receiving the full, three-year reaccreditation (maximum time period allowed) by the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS). The CAAS onsite review team was at RAA on November 6th and 7th. An agency is evaluated on each characteristic of the accreditation process in addition to the comprehensive application package RAA submitted months prior. CAAS accreditation signifies RAA has met the "gold standard" determined by the ambulance industry to be considered an essential, modern EMS provider. CAAS standards often exceed those established by state and local regulations.
- 6) Earlier this year, it was reported there was a misappropriation of millions of dollars at OEMS. While the investigation continues, it appears there may be an issue with the return-to-locality funds. With the money unaccounted for, OEMS has halted all grant funding opportunities, placed a hold on the return-to-locality funds as well as payments to the EMS regional councils.

Note: Sheila White left the meeting during the report.

- 7) Hospital collections have improved. RAA will be receiving a settlement agreement from HCA, and both VCU and Bon Secours have paid. Moving forward, HCA will be putting policy changes in place. The disagreement was over transfers from HCA facilities to non-HCA facilities. RAA bills the originating facility. Chippenham Hospital's new Chief Financial Officer was not honoring those requests for transfer, however, has now agreed to pay 50% of those transfers and 100% of those HCA had agreed to pay upfront. Lincoln Saunders asked why RAA would pick up there, to which Chip Decker replied RAA was required to do so by ordinance.
- 8) Amit Patel, RAA's Deputy Chief Operating Officer, won the 2023 ODEMSEA regional award in the category, "Innovation Excellence in EMS." This particular category recognizes an individual for their innovative approach to enhancing EMS.

Under Amit Patel's leadership, RAA moved to the BLS-tiered response system and began an in-house training program for candidates with no EMS experience.

- 9) He reminded the Board the joint press event was moved to tomorrow, November 29th at 11:00am. The event will still take place at RAA. It is a joint event between RAA, the City of Richmond and the Richmond Police Department (RPD) to help raise awareness for recovery resources and programs available to help those suffering from addiction this holiday season. Both RAA and RPD received public service awards from the U.S. Attorney Office for the Eastern District of Virginia for their work with the Project Recover program.

VII. OPERATIONAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Absent / No Report.

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATES

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

- A. February 20, 2024
- B. May 21, 2024 ****Annual Meeting****

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn the November 28, 2023 meeting of the RAA Board of Directors.

Made By: Katherine Jordan

Seconded: Julia Hammond

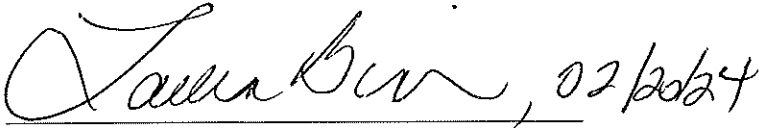
Discussion: None

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows

Ayes:
Katherine Jordan
Julia Hammond
Weet Baldwin
Kirk Roberts
Carlos Hopkins
Lincoln Saunders

Nays:
None

Note: The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.


Laura Bickham, Assistant Secretary