



**RICHMOND AMBULANCE AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 18, 2020**

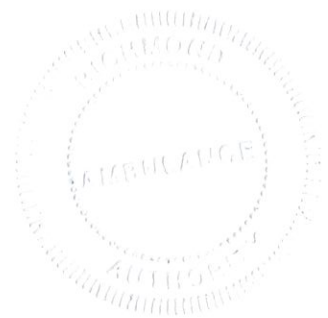
Present: Matt Conrad, Chairman
Weet Baldwin, Vice Chairman
Richard Bennett, Treasurer (*via telephone*)
Sheldon Barr, Secretary
Julia Hammond, Director
Carlos Hopkins, Director
Councilwoman Kristen Larson, Director
Elizabeth Matish, Director
John Wack, Director

Absent: Lenora Reid, Director

Counsel: Jonathan Joseph, Esq., Christian & Barton

Guests: Melvin Carter, Fire Chief, Richmond Fire & Emergency Services

Staff: Chip Decker, Chief Executive Officer
Joseph Ornato, M.D., Operational Medical Director (*via telephone*)
Terone Green, Chief Administrative Officer
Wayne Harbour, Chief Clinical Officer
Laura Bickham, Senior Executive Assistant and Assistant Secretary to the Board of Directors



I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Matt Conrad called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. He then requested to observe a moment of silence to reflect on the life of Catherine Chawlk who served as RAA's Receptionist for 22 years. At the conclusion, Chip Decker thanked Kristen Larson for recognizing Catherine Chawlk at a recent Council meeting.

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

Motion: To allow Richard Bennett to participate remotely in the August 18, 2020 meeting of the Board of Directors.

Made By: Julia Hammond

Seconded: Weet Baldwin

Discussion: Matt Conrad announced Richard Bennett had called into today's meeting. Julia Hammond then requested, in accordance with Board policy, he announce his name, current location, and the specific reason for the request to join the meeting remotely. Richard Bennett stated his name and advised he was on vacation in Marco Island, Florida.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Julia Hammond
Weet Baldwin
Matt Conrad
Sheldon Barr
Kristen Larson
Beth Matish
John Wack

Nays:

None

II. 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: Matt Conrad

Seconded: Julia Hammond

Discussion: None

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows

Ayes:

Matt Conrad
Julia Hammond
Weet Baldwin
Richard Bennett
Sheldon Barr
Beth Matish
Kristen Larson
John Wack

Nays:

None

Note: Carlos Hopkins arrived to the meeting 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: Weet Baldwin

Seconded: Matt Conrad

Discussion: None

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows

Ayes:

Weet Baldwin
Matt Conrad
Richard Bennett
Sheldon Barr
Julia Hammond
Carlos Hopkins
Kristen Larson
Beth Matish
John Wack

Nays:

None

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 19, 2020

B. July 8, 2020

Motion: To approve the May 19, 2020 and July 8, 2020 meeting minutes.

Made By: Julia Hammond

Seconded: Carlos Hopkins

Discussion: None

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Julia Hammond
Carlos Hopkins
Matt Conrad
Weet Baldwin
Richard Bennett
Sheldon Barr
Beth Matish
Kristen Larson
John Wack

Nays:

None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Revisions to the RAA Bylaws

Motion: To accept the proposed revisions to the Richmond Ambulance Authority Bylaws to combine the Standing Operations and Clinical Committees.

Made By: Julia Hammond

Seconded: Weet Baldwin

Discussion: Chip Decker advised the Operations Committee meets on a regular basis while the Clinical Committee seldom meets. For practicality and efficiency purposes coupled with the fact operational and clinical functions are performed collaboratively, it is recommended the two Committees be combined into one.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Julia Hammond
Weet Baldwin
Matt Conrad
Richard Bennett
Sheldon Barr
Carlos Hopkins
Kristen Larson
Beth Matish
John Wack

Nays:

None

B. Changes to the RAA Employee Handbook

- i. Holidays
- ii. Paid Time Off (PTO)

Motion: To accept the proposed changes to the RAA Employee Handbook as presented with regard to revisions to the holiday calendar and the implementation of a PTO Payout Program to begin in Fiscal Year 2022.

Made By: Beth Matish

Seconded: Carlos Hopkins

Discussion: Chip Decker recalled having made Juneteenth a paid, permanent RAA holiday. Currently, RAA observes 11 holidays and the City observes 13 (plus one personal floating holiday). He recommended aligning RAA's holiday calendar with those observed by the City. This includes adding Christmas Eve and Good Friday. He proposed the elimination of Columbus Day. It has long been a sensitive and controversial holiday and in the spirit of diversity, equality and inclusion for all, he recommended RAA remove Columbus Day from its holiday calendar.

Chip Decker referred the Board to the Discussion Paper included in today's meeting packet (Pages B8-B11). He explained how field staff are able to take (paid) PTO in addition to getting paid for the shifts they are approved to be off. The proposed program would also allow administrative staff to take advantage of a payout. Carlos Hopkins questioned the financial impact a payout might have on RAA's budget. Chip Decker explained implementation of the program would not begin until next (fiscal) year to allow for proper planning when preparing the FY2022 budget. The ability to allow staff to "sell" PTO would not be guaranteed each year, as it would be based on RAA's financial position at the time.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Beth Matish
Carlos Hopkins
Matt Conrad
Weet Baldwin
Richard Bennett
Sheldon Barr
Julia Hammond
Kristen Larson
John Wack

Nays:

None

Motion: To approve the allowance of a one-time extension of RAA's PTO carryover maximum as presented.

Made By: Julia Hammond

Seconded: Weet Baldwin

Discussion: Chip Decker noted the Discussion Paper also included a request to extend the PTO carryover maximum to March 31, 2021 (currently resets on January 1st each year). With the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and ongoing civil unrest, scheduling time off has been difficult. Extending the carryover maximum may help alleviate this challenge. Matt Conrad confirmed these retention initiatives were presented to both the Operations and Finance Committees and approval is recommended.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Julia Hammond
Weet Baldwin
Matt Conrad
Richard Bennett
Sheldon Barr
Carlos Hopkins
Kristen Larson
Beth Matish
John Wack

Nays:

None

V. SENIOR MANAGEMENT / STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. CEO Report: Chip Decker reported the following:

- 1) He referenced the challenge coins around the table. They were designed by staff through a contest and were distributed to all employees. He then asked the Board to accept the coin as a token of RAA's appreciation for their ongoing support and leadership.
- 2) No financial reports were included in today's meeting packet. He explained the outside auditors are currently conducting RAA's FY2020 audit. The Finance Committee is set to meet in September, at which time, both the June and 4th quarter financial reports will be presented. Following, they will then be shared with the Board. The Board can expect to receive the draft audit document in the coming months, and will be requested to accept it in November.
- 3) He noted the attendance of Melvin Carter, Richmond Fire & Emergency Services' (RFD) Fire Chief and welcomed him to the meeting.
- 4) He asked John Wack if City first responders were going to be receiving \$1,000 in hazard pay and John Wack clarified it was not just for first responders; rather all non-exempt City employees who were requested to work by their Supervisor during the pandemic. It became necessary to call dozens of employees back to work to keep administrative functions running. Melvin Carter added there was no distinction with

RFD and RPD, explaining it included everyone. John Wack stated the hazard pay was included in the last paycheck. Chip Decker advised the Board may be asked to consider this topic at the next meeting in November, which is typically when annual raises are given. John Wack reminded the Board the budgeted 2% increases were removed from the City's budget.

- 5) The federal lawsuit between Western Star Health Authority and RAA and the City of Richmond was set for oral arguments in late October, however, the Fourth Circuit Court has canceled this, so it is assumed a decision will be made based on the appellate briefs previously submitted.
- 6) Council's Public Safety Committee met on July 28th, at which time, two ordinances introduced to Council the day before were considered. The first was with respect to a helicopter staged at Chippenham. He explained it was not HCA, rather Med-Trans which is the aeromedical part of Global Medical Response (GMR); the parent company of American Medical Response (AMR). Med-Trans will not be competing with RAA. The Virginia Office of EMS requires Med-Trans receive permission from the local governing body (in this case, Richmond City Council) to maintain the required base of operations within the City.

The "companion," ordinance also introduced was unanimously stricken by Council back in 2019. Basically, it grants authority to the Fire Chief for oversight of EMS permits and franchises. Chip Decker explained the EMS system design, noting it includes only one franchise holder, which is RAA. There is no limit to the number of permits that can be issued. Western Star Health Authority sought a permit, which was denied. Chip Decker recalled his days with Lifeline Ambulance and Lifeline's attempt to secure a permit, which was denied. The founding documents from the early 1990's grandfathered the volunteer rescue squads into the Richmond EMS system, and these squads hold permits. This ordinance places a two-year maximum on the permit holder and Chip Decker advised he was unsure if the volunteer squads would be exempt or not, due to their grandfathered status. He expressed his concern with the portion of the ordinance that grants the Fire Chief the authority to suspend RAA's franchise. He recalled his opposition to this ordinance when it was introduced back in 2018 and ultimately stricken in 2019.

Chip Decker stated he had spoken to Melvin Carter prior to today's meeting regarding his concern and Melvin Carter responded an amendment would be made for Council's consideration at their upcoming Special Meeting scheduled for this Thursday, August 20th. Weet Baldwin commented that if RAA held the franchise it seemed practical for the Authority to oversee the issuance of permits. Chip Decker explained City Administration has selected RFD to be responsible for the oversight of the City's EMS permit process. Since RAA is not a City department, oversight could not be given to RAA, which Melvin Carter concurred. Chip Decker explained with RAA having no input in the permit approval process could directly affect how RAA provides EMS services and would be contrary to the system's design. Melvin Carter stated it was never his intention to have the ability to revoke or suspend RAA's franchise. Kristen Larson commented there needed to be a level of trust that the amendment will be presented as stated, adding it was highly unlikely anything would

be voted on at Thursday's meeting. She stressed the need for the inclusion of RAA in any proposed policy change since it directly affects EMS in the City and encouraged Chip Decker's involvement. Chip Decker explained the current system design supports RAA's exclusivity in the marketplace. Once permits are issued, it takes away revenue from RAA, adding the current City subsidy of only \$5 million is not a large investment for the City to have to make for the provision of an essential City service, such as EMS. Kristen Larson responded any proposed amendment would not be considered by Council until September.

- 7) An email was sent to all members of City Council suggesting the City fully fund RAA and make "ambulance rides" free. Chip Decker responded to Council explaining Richmond's EMS system design along with the increased funding RAA would need to receive.
- 8) RAA's current road safety technology manufactured by ZOLL is at its end of life and ZOLL is no longer producing it. RAA will be moving forward with purchasing a dash cam hardware subscription for each ambulance. They are forward and inward-facing dash cams that also monitor driving. If it detects an over force, it takes a video clip and provides the driver with an audio notification. Additionally, it can detect if the driver is not watching the road and would alert them to look up. It tracks when emergency lights are on as well as monitors the temperature inside the drug cabinet. RAA's policy permits Chip Decker to reallocate funding within the budget without increasing the overall budget. He will be authorizing a reallocation of \$67,000 from the fuel line item to purchase these dash cams. The Board had no objections.
- 9) With the recent resignation of the City's Boards & Commissions Administrator, RAA learned of a backlog of applicants to serve on the RAA Board. A total of four people have submitted applications within the last several months. This was presented to Council's Public Safety Committee at their July 28th meeting, at which time, it was continued. This was done to allow the current membership an opportunity to weigh in on what type of expertise the Board needs. Chip Decker commented some of the applicants have also applied for almost every City Board and Commission. He added the most disappointing part of the process is RAA would be set to lose Beth Matish. The challenge is to find people that would be ideal contributors to RAA's mission and this Board overall. Kristen Larson advised Council can do whatever is the pleasure of the Board. She explained that while there are already four applicants, should others continue to apply, they will all be equally considered. Matt Conrad asked if Council is able to hold off on an appointment, to which Kristen Larson responded affirmatively, adding so long as the Board can continue to provide the necessary oversight and govern appropriately.

Note: Richard Bennett disconnected from the meeting during the discussion regarding Board membership.

VI. Operational Medical Director: Joseph Ornato reported the following:

He reminded the Board the National Institute of Health (NIH) has funded the project for the drone delivery of intranasal naloxone. The project began one month ago, and is going very well. At a recent NIH conference, the project sponsor expressed how delighted they were with

the progress of the project and were encouraging another application for additional grant funding, which would also be beneficial to RAA. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, opioid overdoses have nearly tripled, making this project even more critical. Seven of RAA's System Status Controllers have been successfully trained in the FAA-approved commercial drone course. Next, they will receive flight training.

VII. NEXT MEETING DATES

Matt Conrad noted the dates of the upcoming Board meetings, which are as follows:

- A. November 17, 2020
- B. February 16, 2021

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Matt Conrad adjourned the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

Laura Bickham - 11/17/2020

Laura Bickham, Assistant Secretary