



**RICHMOND AMBULANCE AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 15, 2022**

Present: Matt Conrad, Chairman
Weet Baldwin, Vice Chairman
Richard Bennett, Treasurer
Julia Hammond, Secretary
Brandon Mencini, Director
Kristen Nye, Director
Kirk Roberts, Director
Sheila White, Director
Lincoln Saunders, Director
Marilyn West, Director

Absent: Carlos Hopkins, Director

Counsel: Jonathan Joseph, Esq., Christian & Barton

Guests: Beth Matish, Chief Executive Officer, Retreat Doctors' Hospital

Staff: Chip Decker, Chief Executive Officer
Joseph Ornato, M.D., Operational Medical Director
Terone Green, Chief Administrative Officer
Wayne Harbour, Chief Operating Officer
Michael Dixon, Chief Human Resources 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 8:01 a.m.

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

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

III. PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION

Motion: To adopt the resolution of recognition and appreciation of Elizabeth (“Beth”) Matish as presented.

Made By: Julia Hammond

Seconded: Weet Baldwin

Discussion: Matt Conrad announced Beth Matish was RAA’s longest-standing Board member, having served for 16 years. He shared excerpts from the Resolution of Recognition and Appreciation. Matt Conrad then presented the Resolution to Beth Matish and thanked her for her commitment and years of service to RAA. Beth Matish thanked the Board, commenting how hospital executives are held accountable to Boards so she understands the importance of their role. She noted the importance of an open, healthy dialogue between the Board and management and that she hoped her service on the RAA Board contributed to the great work RAA does.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Julia Hammond
Weet Baldwin
Matt Conrad
Richard Bennett
Brandon Mencini
Kristen Nye
Kirk Roberts
Marilyn West

Nays:

None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 16, 2021

Motion: To approve the November 16, 2021 meeting minutes.

Made By: Weet Baldwin

Seconded: Julia Hammond

Discussion: None

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Weet Baldwin	None
Julia Hammond	
Matt Conrad	
Richard Bennett	
Brandon Mencini	
Kristen Nye	
Kirk Roberts	
Marilyn West	

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Increases to the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget

i. Phase 4 Provider Relief Funds

Motion: To appropriate federal Phase 4 Provider Relief funds awarded and distributed to RAA in December 2021 to the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget, Capital–Vehicles account in the amount of \$1,011,080.00 for the purpose of purchasing vehicles.

Made By: Kristen Nye

Seconded: Brandon Mencini

Discussion: RAA was awarded Phase 4 Provider Relief funds from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Chip Decker explained the HHS funding was awarded based on RAA’s application of lost revenue due to the impact of the coronavirus. He explained the request before the Board is to appropriate the funding received to the Capital-Vehicles line item within the budget. He stated it is quite possible RAA will need to lease vehicles next year. Kristen Nye recalled that when the budget was adjusted last year, it was advised leasing would be short-term and that RAA would have to pay more in the out years. She asked if that was still the case, to which Chip Decker responded affirmatively, adding that the first few years it is financially advantageous to lease.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Kristen Nye	None
Brandon Mencini	
Matt Conrad	
Weet Baldwin	
Richard Bennett	
Julia Hammond	
Kirk Roberts	
Marilyn West	

Note: Lincoln Saunders arrived to the meeting following the vote.

ii. **Employee COVID-19 Bonuses**

Motion: To appropriate funding received from the City of Richmond and designated to the Richmond Ambulance Authority to the Fiscal Year 2022 personnel accounts in the amount of \$593,979.00 for the purpose of reimbursing RAA for COVID-19 bonuses paid to eligible employees in December 2021.

Made By: Kristen Nye

Seconded: Lincoln Saunders

Discussion: Chip Decker reported the City was providing COVID-19 bonuses to first responders and certain City employees. RAA put forward the money in order to assure employees received their bonuses prior to the end of December. He explained the City would be introducing a paper to Council to provide reimbursement to RAA. When this occurs, the money will be allocated to revenue. To reassign the money to each departmental budget, Board approval is needed. Matt Conrad asked about the timing when RAA could expect reimbursement. Lincoln Saunders responded a paper will be introduced on March 14th, commenting he is confident the funding will be provided to RAA. He explained budget amendments go directly to the full Council for consideration and not through Standing Committees.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

Ayes:

Kristen Nye
Lincoln Saunders
Matt Conrad
Weet Baldwin
Richard Bennett
Julia Hammond
Brandon Mencini
Kirk Roberts
Marilyn West
Sheila White

Nays:

None

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

B. **Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Adjustment**

Motion: To authorize the CEO to reallocate the necessary funding to the appropriate line items to address Fiscal Year 2022 Budget changes.

Made By: Weet Baldwin

Seconded: Brandon Mencini

Discussion: Chip Decker stated it is a standard accounting practice to “true up,” the budget. He explained, as is the case with all projected spending, the Fiscal Year 2022 budget included expenses planned for approximately a year ago and now there are some expenses that need to be reallocated or transferred to address some changes. In accordance with policy, RAA’s CEO is authorized to reconcile the budget through the true-up process, however, the Finance Committee had previously requested changes be

brought to their attention. He reported the amount to be reconciled totals \$553,772, explaining there are savings in some areas and overruns in others. The Board is requested to authorize the reallocation and transfer of funding from various accounts in the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget. For clarity, the Board is not requested to change the intent of the approved budget.

Following the vote, Marilyn West inquired as to the process RAA follows for making motions at meetings, stating she is used to motions being brought forward from the respective Standing Committees. Chip Decker explained the Board's Standing Committees provide their recommendation(s) for action by the Board, at which time, a proposed motion is prepared and brought forward for Board consideration based on that Committee's recommendation.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Weet Baldwin	None
Brandon Mencini	
Matt Conrad	
Richard Bennett	
Julia Hammond	
Kristen Nye	
Kirk Roberts	
Lincoln Saunders	
Marilyn West	
Sheila White	

C. Retail Service Rate Adjustment

Motion: To approve an increase in the ALS2 retail service rate from \$650.00 to \$800.00, effective January 1, 2022.

Made By: Julia Hammond

Seconded: Brandon Mencini

Discussion: From time to time, RAA reviews its retail service rate structure. Chip Decker explained while few pay retail rates, there is still a great deal tied to them, particularly what is paid by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). RAA's retail rates have not been adjusted in quite some time. He reported the new ALS2 Medicare allowable rate now exceeds RAA's rate. He explained the ALS2 category, stating it is when more complex care is required in response to critical care incidents. This may require medically necessary supplies and services (i.e., responding to chest pain calls, running IV's). An adjustment for this transport type is recommended from the current rate of \$650.00 to \$800.00. The new Medicare allowable is \$682.84. The average ALS2 rate amongst RAA's Virginia peers is \$745.00. Chip Decker advised RAA's rates are about half of what other agency partners around the country charge. Medicare and Medicaid are RAA's largest payers, making up approximately 60%.

Matt Conrad asked if the proposed increase affects self-payers, to which Chip Decker responded it could, however, only to a certain extent. He explained RAA offers payment

arrangements to those with financial hardships and also noted RAA's subscription program, the Lifesaver Membership Program. Weet Baldwin confirmed this proposal was discussed at the Operations & Clinical Committee meeting and approval is recommended. Jon Joseph stated most insurance carriers pay at the Medicare rate, adding that when rates are lower than Medicare's allowable, an agency will lose money on the insurance side as well. Matt Conrad inquired about billing practices of other City providers, such as the Richmond Volunteer Rescue Squad (RVRS). Chip Decker explained RVRS outsources its billing activities. RAA used to handle the billing for RVRS, however from a quality assurance/improvement perspective, it became somewhat cumbersome. He mentioned Henrico County does not bill, however, most providers surrounding Richmond do.

Motion Passed: The votes were recorded as follows:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>
Julia Hammond	None
Brandon Mencini	
Matt Conrad	
Weet Baldwin	
Richard Bennett	
Kristen Nye	
Kirk Roberts	
Lincoln Saunders	
Marilyn West	
Sheila White	

VI. SENIOR MANAGEMENT / STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. **Chief Executive Officer Report:** Chip Decker reported the following:

- 1) He referenced the copies of RAA's 2021 Annual Report distributed around the table. On February 22nd, Chip Decker will be presenting the Report to Council's Public Safety Committee. He explained all Boards and Commissions are required to present their annual report to their respective Council Standing Committee.
- 2) He noted copies of the section from the Richmond City Code, Section IV: Emergency Medical Services, was also distributed around the table. When the City Code was changed, an update was required. The Board is receiving the updated copy to be replaced with the existing version in each member's Board Information Binder.
- 3) The Operations & Clinical Committee met on February 1st. He thanked Marilyn West for volunteering to serve and welcomed her to the Committee.
- 4) Wayne Harbour now serves as RAA's Chief Operating Officer. Following Michael Colman's departure, RAA conducted a nationwide search for the position which proved unsuccessful. Wayne Harbour has been with RAA for 30 years and brings a wealth of historical operational and clinical knowledge to the position. His former position, Chief Clinical Officer, has been eliminated. RAA is restructuring the two departments into one, which falls in line with the structure of most EMS agencies across the country. RAA plans to hire a Deputy Chief of Operations, supporting RAA's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Richard Bennett asked if the new organizational structure follows any industry best practice, to which Chip Decker responded it does. Most agencies have the clinical functions within the Operations

Department, unless a full-time Operational Medical Director is in place. There is constant coordination between the areas of Operations and Clinical.

Marilyn West inquired about RAA's administrative structure. Chip Decker explained Human Resources reports to him, adding Information Technology (IT), led by a Director, also reports to him. RAA's Chiefs, Public Relations/Media Manager and Senior Executive Assistant make up the rest of Chip Decker's direct reports. Previously, Human Resources reported to Administration.

- 5) RAA's agency license expires next month. Led by the Virginia Department of Health, Office of EMS (OEMS), RAA's license renewal process is currently underway. This involves producing several documents and records to RAA's OEMS representative, as well as a detailed inspection of all vehicles. The onsite, documentation portion of the inspection is scheduled for March 10th.
- 6) Delegate Lamont Bagby and Senator Jennifer McClellan have co-patroned a resolution recognizing RAA's 30th anniversary, which is currently moving through the process at the General Assembly.
- 7) In an effort to better focus RAA's recruitment and retention efforts in Human Resources, it was decided to split the Administrative Assistant and Receptionist positions into two, separate FTE's. The Administrative Assistant position is within the HR department, which make it difficult to perform sensitive and/or confidential work while performing the job duties of a Receptionist, since the workstation is in the lobby. The Administrative Assistant will continue to be in HR, while the Receptionist will be in Administration.

Kristen Nye recalled Chip Decker mentioning staffing levels had increased. Chip Decker advised overall morale has improved. Management recently reduced the provider workweek from 48 to 42 hours without reducing their annual salary. Providers are now working three days per week instead of four. They still have the opportunity to pick up another shift. He attributed the biggest contributor to improved morale was the implementation of the BLS tiered response system. Some 9-1-1 calls are not life-threatening and don't necessarily require the skills and training of a nationally-registered paramedic. While response time compliance still remains a challenge, RAA is seeing an improvement in the length of time it takes crews to respond to calls. For RAA to be successful with response time compliance, units must be properly staged at their assigned posts. Chip Decker explained this would mean a crew would need to have cleared a hospital and return back to the assigned post within a set amount of time. While wait times at the area hospitals has slightly improved, they are still not where they used to be. Matt Conrad asked when RAA expects to see improvement in compliance, to which Chip Decker answered hopefully, this month.

The Academy of International Mobile Healthcare Integration (AIMHI) recently released a joint statement on the use of lights and sirens on EMS responses. Regardless of whether it is a fire department or EMS agency responding, it can be quite dangerous for the responding unit when it is not a true emergency. Chip Decker announced it was the first time both Fire and EMS professionals have come together, adding it was determined lights and sirens do not affect patient outcomes and puts both providers and the public at risk. Lincoln Saunders stated the City is putting together a

meeting to include RAA to address public safety, which will include a focus on addressing gun violence. He added the meeting will also include the City's Office of Aging & Persons with Disabilities and Social Services. He explained a goal of the meeting is to establish other agencies who may be more appropriate than RAA to respond first.

- 8) RAA's subsidy request for FY2023 is \$5.9 million. It takes into account the City's request to not have a significant amount saved, however assures RAA maintains a sufficient amount of cash reserve to conduct its business. The City categorizes RAA as a non-departmental, charitable donation. RAA missed the new deadline for its subsidy submission due to a change in process. For the past 30 years, the City has provided an application packet, however, this was not the case in 2021. RAA received an extension on the deadline and the subsidy request was submitted.

Kristen Nye recalled a discussion last year following the conclusion of the budget process, where both RAA and the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) should not be in competition with other groups seeking donations. Lincoln Saunders responded the funding does not come from the same place and that RAA is not considered a City, quasi-governmental partner. He commented this is likely why the deadline passed. He stated he would ensure RAA falls in the same category as other governmental groups, adding the City is currently working on drafting an agreement with RAA. Matt Conrad asked if the categorical change would be reflected in the Mayor's current budget proposal, to which Lincoln Saunders responded affirmatively.

VII. OPERATIONAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR: Joseph Ornato reported the following:

- 1) An impact analysis on the opioid crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic recently concluded. Since 2017, 586 of 3,000 patients suffered a serious opioid overdose (OD). 71% of those patients received Narcan® intravenously by EMS. The analysis revealed a 22% increase in EMS response, post-pandemic when compared to pre-pandemic numbers. These results align with what is being seen on the national level. In Richmond, the number of patients suffering from cardiac arrest due to an OD and when a RAA ambulance arrives on scene is 2.9%. This is a real testimony to the level of care RAA crews provide. Despite all the challenges RAA's providers faced during the pandemic, response to these patients' side remained unchanged. RAA crews report whether a bystander provided hands-only CPR. Prior to the pandemic, that number was zero. Now, it is approximately 50%. It is likely the bystander is witnessing the overdose as it happens. In summary, RAA has been able to maintain the necessary care to these patients despite personnel challenges and COVID-19.

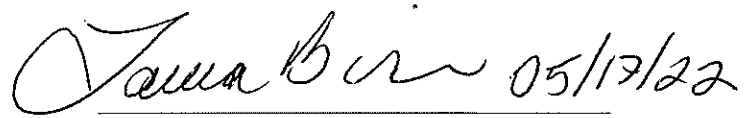
VIII. NEXT MEETING DATES

Matt Conrad noted the upcoming meeting dates, which are follows:

- A. May 17, 2022 ****Annual Meeting****
- B. August 16, 2022

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Matt Conrad adjourned the February 15, 2022 Board of Directors meeting at 8:50 a.m.

 05/17/22

Laura Bickham, Assistant Secretary