



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes

Committee of the Whole

January 22, 2019

4:05 p.m.

County Square – Council Chambers

Council Members

Mr. Butch Kirven, Chairman
Mr. Willis Meadows, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Xanthene Norris, Chairman Pro Tem
Mr. Joe Dill
Mr. Mike Barnes
Mr. Sid Cates
Mr. Rick Roberts
Mr. Bob Taylor
Mrs. Liz Seman
Mr. Ennis Fant, Sr.
Mr. Lynn Ballard
Mr. Dan Tripp

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted on the bulletin board at the County Square and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned Citizens.

Council Members Absent

Xanthene Norris, District 23

Staff Present

Joe Kernell, County Administrator
Mark Tollison, County Attorney
Jeff Wile, Assistant County Attorney
Kim Wunder, Assistant County Attorney
John Hansley, Deputy County Administrator
Regina McCaskill, Clerk to Council
Paula Gucker, Assistant County Administrator, Public Works
Bob Mihalic, Governmental Relations Officer
Shannon Herman, Assistant to the County Administrator
Nicole Wood, Assistant to the County Administrator
Tim Gault, Director, Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
Dr. Brandon Dawson, Medical Control Director, Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
Larry Hill, Captain of Operations, Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
Casey Bolton, Captain of Human Resources, Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
Dr. Martin Lutz, Medical Control Director, Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
Keith Eudy, Shift Lieutenant, Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
Yvonne Henson, Lieutenant of Communications Coordinator, Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
Deanna Heger, Field Paramedic, Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Others Present

None

Call to Order

Chairman Butch Kirven

Invocation

Councilor Joe Dill

Item (3) Approval of Minutes

ACTION: Councilor Seman moved to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2018, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Kirven stated an Executive Session was listed on the agenda (Item 5); Council did not anticipate a need for an Executive Session and it was listed as a contingency only.

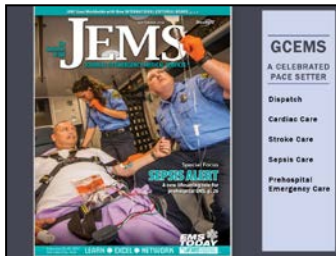
Item (4) Administrator's Report to Council on EMS

Joe Kernell, County Administrator, thanked the County's Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians for the tremendous work they do on a daily basis. In spite of having to perform in less than perfect conditions, the highly-trained individuals performed their jobs at a high level while faced with extreme weather conditions, difficult situations on scene, long hours and heavy workloads due to increased call volumes. Mr. Kernell stated the residents of Greenville County, as well as visitors, received exceptional pre-hospital care and all EMS staff members should be commended for the job they performed, including Communications, Logistics, Administration, Training/Education and Operations. Despite current challenges, Greenville County EMS continued to perform its mission at a high level and the system was fundamentally sound.

Mr. Kernell introduced Dr. Martin Lutz, Medical Director for Greenville County EMS.



Dr. Lutz, the Medical Control Physician for Greenville County EMS since 2009, stated the Dispatchers, the EMT's and the Paramedics were extremely well-trained and highly educated; however, there were things that were not known about the County's EMS system. Greenville County EMS led the state, and the nation, in certain areas. Dr. Lutz reviewed the areas where GCEMS excelled.



Dispatch – In 2012, Greenville County EMS Dispatch was recognized by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch as only 1 of 155 Dispatch Centers in the world that performed medical priority dispatch well enough to receive recognition. He added accreditation continued until the present time.

Cardiac Care – Dr. Lutz stated GCEMS was one of the first, if not the first, to perform a 12 Lead EKG in the field. Both health systems (GHS and St. Francis) made it possible in order to get the equipment necessary to perform Lead EKG's. Medics were able to contact either local hospital system if a patient appeared to be having a heart attack and the teams were ready with the appropriate medical care almost immediately upon arrival. Nationally, GCEMS was recognized by the American Heart Association with a Gold Award for STMI-care delivery; Dr. Lutz stated this was the highest award available for cardiac care.

Stroke Care – Dr. Lutz stated stroke care was another type of Systems Care. GCEMS medics have learned the signs and symptoms of a stroke and were able to contact the hospital in advance of bringing a patient to the hospital. The ER Team would be able to immediately transport the patient for a Cath Scan.

Sepsis Care – In 2016, GCEMS was featured on the cover of JEMS magazine for outstanding care in dealing with sepsis, a blood infection, and the leading cause of hospital deaths following cardiac deaths. GCEMS was the first in the country to implement sepsis care via transport and was the research winner for sepsis

care in 2016; recognition for its sepsis care continue. The system was adopted by the state as well as on a nationwide level.



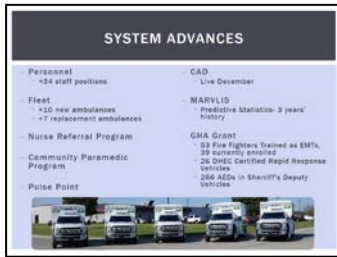
Medication Changes - Medication could be administered by medics for behavioral emergencies which made it safer for the patient, EMS personnel and law enforcement. GCEMS also developed procedures for administering medication to assist with the placement of tubes to treat breathing problems.

Pain Management – Dr. Lutz stated in the past, EMS was not allowed to administer narcotics unless by order of a physician. GCEMS worked with DHEC and the State Office and were now able to administer pain medication with standing orders.

Healthy Greenville 2036 Grant - Dr. Lutz explained that GCEMS was awarded money to work with fire departments to improve the pre-hospital response by assisting firefighters who wanted to receive EMT Certification. To date, 53 firefighters have received certification and 39 were currently enrolled in class. EMT’s were able to basically initiate any life-saving function including but not limited to: manipulate the airway, place tubes to assist with breathing and administer epinephrine, which was a life-saving medication. When the price of epi-pens increased drastically, GCEMS worked with the State Board of Health in order to allow the EMT’s to use epi-pens, when necessary.

Dr. Lutz stated he would be glad to speak to anyone at length about GCEMS and felt its dedicated staff deserved recognition.

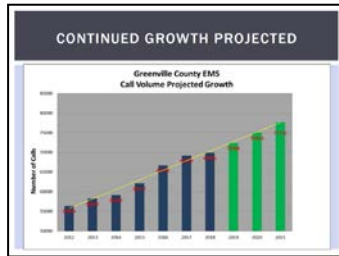
Joe Kernell thanked Dr. Lutz and continued the presentation.



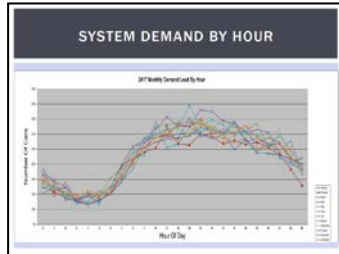
Mr. Kernell stated one of the largest stressors on the EMS system was the steady increase in call volume to match the steady population growth of Greenville County; the issue affected EMS systems across the country. The ongoing task was to balance the current resources against current demands for service. As the County’s population increased, so have demands on the system. Over the years, the County took a number of steps to meet the increased demands to include: adding 34 staff members, 10 new ambulances, 7 replacement ambulances, Nurse Referral Program, Community Paramedic Program, Pulse Point, new CAD system and Marvlis. Mr. Kernell stated the County recently applied for a \$2.5 million grant with Greenville Health Authority to improve coordination with fire and law enforcement capabilities in the most life-threatening situations. In addition to EMT training for firefighters, the grant supplied 26 DHEC certified Rapid Response Vehicles and, in the near future, would place 266 AED’s in Sheriff’s Deputy Vehicles.



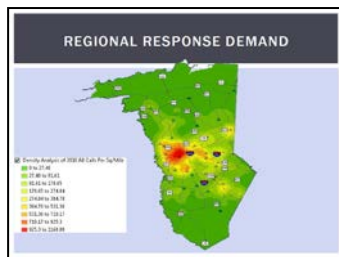
Mr. Kernell stated that regardless of how well a system was designed, the execution of the design was what mattered. From 2012 through the end of 2018, the average call volume increased by over 24% from 154 calls per day to 191 per day, or 4703 calls per month to 5824 per month.



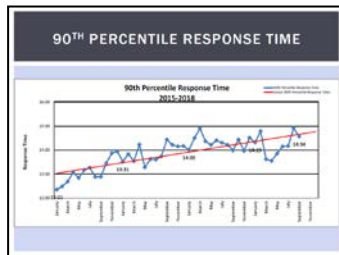
Mr. Kernell stated the overall call volume also increased over the same time period; from 56,435 in 2012 to 69,890 in 2018. Mr. Kernell stated that based on the trends, calls were projected to increase approximately 11% from 2018 through 2021.



While call volume was a major component of the deployment plan, the time of day that calls were received was equally important. Matching the system demand with the available system resources was imperative. He added that the demand by hour remained similar throughout the years. Volume began ramping up between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and remained high until 10:00 p.m. Based on the information available, it was not prudent to staff the ambulances at the same level around the clock; rather, the number of staffed ambulances needed to correlate with the number of calls received.



Mr. Kernell stated placing ambulances in the optimum location was critical in the response plan. The center core of the County was where the majority of the calls were concentrated and mirrored the population density. Mr. Kernell stated as you moved further away from the core, the emergency calls lessened. He added this did not mean if you lived outside the central core you should receive a lower level of service; it showed more resources were needed in the core.

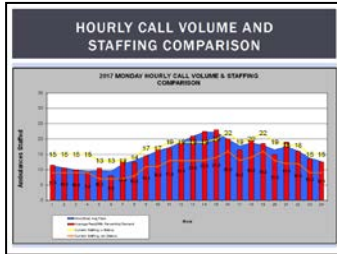


The 90th Percentile Response Time was a measure and there was a national debate regarding the long-time industry standard. Mr. Kernell stated there were currently no federal or state statutes regulating response times anywhere in the country. Instead, systems adopted self-imposed standards to benchmark performances in key areas. The 90th Percentile marked a consistent response system-wide to “Delta” and “Echo” calls, which were the most life-threatening. Historically, GCEMS set a 12 minute 30 second county-wide response standard and continually measured itself against the standard. Mr. Kernell stated the reality was that the system had an average response time of 8 minutes 52 seconds but occasions requiring more time were increasing. In recognition of the critical nature of some calls, GCEMS worked diligently to elevate partnerships which could provide trained, equipped responders county-wide when acute intervention was necessary. The time standard represented the time when EMS arrived at the scene of a call; however, the measurement failed to note the significant work on the way to a call from community partners in both fire service and law enforcement. With implementation of the new CAD system, all responders would be factored into the response time calculation.

As with all public agencies, public aid was used when response demands were such that resources were not available from the responding agency. When all of the County’s EMS vehicles were responding to calls, additional ambulances were dispatched from outside agencies which were staffed with DHEC-licensed paramedics or EMT’s. Of the 69,117 EMS responses in 2018, only 1.1% (771) were responded to by outside agencies. Mr. Kernell stated this practice was very common among fire departments, law enforcement and other public safety agencies. By having mutual aid, the individual needing services benefitted as well as the community.



Mr. Kernell stated as time went up, the compliance with the 12 minute 3 second standard dropped; as of last year, the County reached 80.48%. The 90th Percentile Response Time was not attained as frequently in recent years as in years past and there were many different reasons why.

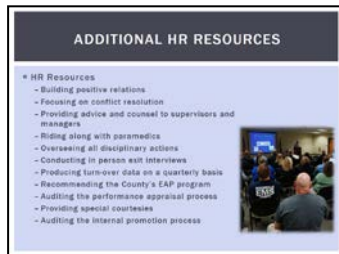


Mr. Kernell stated the County worked very hard over the past few years to make strides to cover the ever increasing call volume with a good deal of success. In 2012, a hybrid deployment system was implemented to keep trucks in the urban core, which saw the highest demand, and kept trucks closer to the next call. The hybrid system has been very successful in addressing citizen needs for faster response for emergency pre-hospital care. The system demonstrated great capabilities, but, with additional modifications, the system could operate even more efficiently. The hybrid system maintained 6 static trucks in the outlying areas compared to the call volume. If the 6 static trucks were placed in the central deployment zone and better coverage for citizens call county-wide. Most recently, a new CAD system was put in place and went live in December of 2018 and improvements were already being seen with response times, especially with the County's fire partners. The CAD system precluded the need to transfer calls and automatically sent to where they need to go. Mr. Kernell stated the new system would continue to provide time and resource efficiency which would positively impact the health of the County's citizens. However, the work life balance of employees needed to be addressed. Crews worked hard and for long hours because they loved their job and cared about the health of the citizens. With the current staffing level, it was impossible to provide as much mental and physical relief as the County would like; relief was needed in order to keep responders fresh and engaged as well as preserve long-term viability. Mr. Kernell stated in order to improve working conditions and truly drive down response times County-wide, a significant investment in people and vehicles was needed.



Moving forward, Mr. Kernell stated the County needed to review call demand and evaluate the reliability, effectiveness and validity of the current deployment strategies and the relationship of staffing levels and other impacts on the system's capability to provide services. Also, the County needed to work with both hospital systems to provide collaborative physician input to clinical and field operations. In Greenville County, there existed expertise in a multitude of business sectors, one of which was the medical sector, which possessed a high level of expertise. Mr. Kernell stated Greenville County had two premier health systems; Bon Secours St. Francis and Prisma Health. He stated he had reached out to both requesting expertise in the delivery of pre-hospital care. Dr. Spence Taylor, President of Prisma Health and Craig McCoy, Chief Executive Officer of Bon Secours St. Francis graciously offered the support of their respective organizations. Dr. Martin Lutz (Chief of Special Projects with Prisma Health), Dr. Ryan Hoffman (Emergency Department Director with Bon Secours St. Francis) and Dr. Tom Blackwell (Pre-hospital Medicine Department of Emergency Medicine Division Chief with Prisma Health) have been identified to explore identified action items and indicate opportunities for future plans. Mr. Kernell stated all three were highly qualified and possessed extensive experience.

Other items identified on the path forward included how demographic changes impacted healthcare reimbursement and service delivery as well as improvement opportunities to insure the EMS system was cost-effective while providing appropriate and equitable levels of service in terms of response, care and transport throughout all areas of the County without regard to race, creed, gender or economic status. Mr. Kernell stated it was also necessary to determine the current capacity of GCEMS to achieve healthcare's Triple Aim; to improve patient experience and outcome, enhance patient and caregiver satisfaction and optimize value and reduce cost. Engagement of stakeholders and appreciation of the EMS workforce was also vital as well as ensuring sustainable future system performance. Mr. Kernell stated the County valued the input from the EMS workforce. With the resources that both health systems had agreed to provide, Mr. Kernell stated he felt all of the items could be achieved as well as many others.



Mr. Kernell stated a member of Greenville County's Human Resources Team had been reassigned to the EMS to provide additional support and resources. The primary responsibilities of this individual would be: build positive relations, focus on conflict resolution, provide advice and counsel to supervisors and managers, ride along with paramedics, oversee all disciplinary actions, conduct in-person exit interviews, provide turn-over data on a quarterly basis, recommend the County's EAP program, audit the performance appraisal process, provide special courtesies and audit the internal promotion process. Mr. Kernell stated the County was going to address all employee issues in an effort to "do better."



Mr. Kernell stated he was also adding six 12-hour shift power trucks to be deployed at peak demand times. Originally, EMS had requested 4 trucks. Mr. Kernell stated he met with the Public Safety Chairman, Councilor Rick Roberts, and they determined that six were needed. Mr. Kernell stated the term "power trucks" was used to define ambulances that were deployed for 12-hour shifts during peak times, usually from 7:00 or 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., on a staggered basis. Mr. Kernell stated it was very difficult to meet the demand without having excess resources. He added the County did not want to have the same flat-level of ambulances around the clock if they were not needed. Instead, they were trying to match resources with the demand.

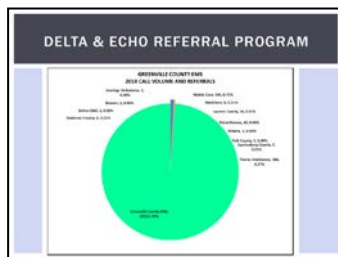
Mr. Kernell stated the current call volume demanded more crews than were available. If the six power trucks were deployed during peak hours along with the regular trucks, the County would nearly meet its recommended staffing needs. The plan outlined in the slide involved deploying two trucks at 7:00 a.m., two at 8:00 a.m. and two at 11:00 a.m. for 12-hour shifts in an effort to create a "buffer" and exceed the need or demand. Mr. Kernell stated all the data compiled was based on historical data and predictive data; there may be days where call volume exceeded expectations and days where it would not. He stated the proposed plan of action would give EMS the coverage needed so crews were able to get to the calls quickly, handle the situation and get to the next call with no undue pressure. Mr. Kernell stated the plan would also ensure EMS staff would get off of work on time; there was nothing worse than working a 12-hour shift and then having to work overtime. The goal was to retain employees and recruit new employees.



In addition to the added response vehicles, Director Tim Gault submitted a budget request for additional staff to meet call volumes for the upcoming biennial budget. Currently, there were a number of openings; several measures to allow for the hiring of additional staff on a "rolling system" would be put in place in order to not fall behind in vacancies. Mr. Kernell stated the budget document authorized FTE (full time exempt); over the years it was discovered that areas such as Detention and EMS and others had large turnover. These areas were allowed to continuously recruit due to turnover and were also allowed to over hire. If the department reached full capacity or even over, recruitment would stop and would resume later, as needed.

All the Public Safety departments were experiencing problems with compensation because of the strong economy. The County had to look at the situation and figure out how adjust. Mr. Kernell stated the County was able to provide raises over the years and had tried to move the starting salaries up. Unfortunately, this caused problems when someone recently hired made the same salary as someone who had been with the County for years. Mr. Kernell stated the County would continue to address these issues and the results of the planned Compensation Study would be incorporated into the recommended budget moving forward.

Mr. Kernell stated the department's deployment models continue to be tweaked; the impact of all deployment model changes, in collaboration with the designated physicians from both hospital systems, would be studied to ensure the highest quality of care for patients and optimal working conditions for staff. One significant improvement that was recently made was enhancing the response configuration to include well-trained and equipped first responders from fire departments and law enforcement. Mr. Kernell stated these partnerships continued to grow and provide high quality care when minutes truly mattered. There was more and more interest from firefighters to obtain paramedic certification.



A call referral program to include all neighboring EMS systems was recently put into place during high call volume times to cover the Delta and Echo calls. Mr. Kernell stated the program had proven helpful in rare times when GCEMS was unable to respond adequately to a life-threatening call. He again stressed that out of the 69,117 EMS responses in 2018, only 1.1% (771) were responded to by qualified, trained outside agencies.

Mr. Kernell asked Larry Hill, Captain of Operations, to address Council regarding the new Marvli System. The system was currently running in the background and would soon "go live."

Larry Hill stated the Marvli Program was part of the new CAD system and they were still in the configuration process which consisted of setting up post plans and assessing what the system looked like with the different models. Even though the Marvli Program had not been implemented into the system as of yet, Mr. Hill stated he wanted to give a brief overview of how the tool could work. The Marvli Program was used in EMS systems across the country in order to maintain effective coverage as well as address call demand.

Mr. Hill demonstrated how the Marvli system displayed an overview of the County and showed where on-duty ambulances, supervisory vehicles and 1-man QRV's (Quick Response Vehicles) were located in real-time; the system updated approximately every 5 seconds. The system also displayed real-time historical call demand. He added that the system was configurable and looked at three years of call demand. As the system updated, it showed each vehicle's location in real time, whether stationary or moving.

Mr. Hill stated the system also contained a Demand Coverage Meter to show available resources and where each was currently located. He stated when the program was fully implemented, dispatchers would have the ability to look at the Post Plan that was developed based on the call volume for a given time frame. The plan would list out the priority of posts that should be covered to give the best balance between demand and geographical coverage. He added that he had included all central deployment posts but not the static-based posts. The system would make recommendations regarding which units should cover specific posts based on the unit's location and drive time. Mr. Hill stated the Marvli's Program would also show the drive-time capability of any specific unit and would change as the vehicle continued to maneuver through traffic. Types of calls based on acuity would also be displayed as well as recommendations regarding the three best units to respond to the call based on drive time. If a call was assigned and then another unit became available that was closer, the system would alert the dispatchers. Mr. Hill stated within the core of the city, there was quite a bit of overlapping of units while in the less densely populated areas, there were less units available.

Joe Kernell recognized Tim Gault, Director of Greenville County EMS, and stated Mr. Gault had helped make the system one of the best. He added Mr. Gault had been with Greenville County EMS for 28 years in the capacities of Paramedic, Shift Supervisor, Special Operations Coordinator, Deputy Director of Operations, Interim Director and Director since 2013. Mr. Kernell stated that during his tenure, Mr. Gault had done an outstanding job and demonstrated his compassion and commitment to the organization in an extremely professional manner.

Mr. Kernell stated Mr. Gault always performed his duties in a selfless way; striving to improve GCEMS while also being concerned with the well-being of the employees he was responsible for. Mr. Gault has been instrumental in the past success of GCEMS and was never afraid to "think outside of the box" to make the system the best it could be. He added that Mr. Gault had decided to retire and would certainly be missed.

Mr. Kernell stated that was the end of his presentation. He stated he felt the County had outlined a significant forward path for GCEMS; it was not a broken system by any means. There were always challenges and EMS had met challenges in the past; he thanked the leadership of EMS for stepping up and doing what they needed to do.

Councilor Tripp thanked Mr. Kernell for the presentation and added he was very impressed with information provided. Mr. Tripp asked for clarification regarding the difference between an ambulance, a QRV and a power truck.

Mr. Kernell stated an ambulance unit was the same as a power truck; the term "power truck" was used to designate units assigned to 12-hour shifts and were utilized during peak times. He stated a QRV (Quick Response Vehicle) was normally staffed with one supervisor or paramedic and was not a transport unit.

Councilor Tripp stated he had received emails and telephone calls regarding morale issues with EMS employees; he asked if there was a morale issue among its employees.

Tim Gault stated there was certainly morale problems among EMS employees. From the time a crew member arrived at work until the time they left, which was often several hours after their shift was to end, employees were under a huge demand. They were constantly being called. Mr. Gault stated the piece that needed to be discussed was meal breaks; they eat on the run. Bathroom breaks were another issue that needed to be discussed. GCEMS employees did not have time for proper meal breaks and bathroom breaks. They were always operating in a disaster mode.

Councilor Tripp stated much of the information contained in the emails and telephone calls he had received were anecdotal. He stated he had been informed that 1 in 5 ambulances were not being utilized due to staff shortages. Mr. Tripp stated if there was a morale problem or a toxic work environment, would the County be able to properly staff all the necessary vehicles in order to meet demand. He added he was trying to figure out if there were issues deeper than a growing economy and if there were human resources issues that needed to be addressed. Mr. Tripp stated that some of the points that were covered in the presentation addressed his concerns and calmed his fears but he wanted to make sure they were not "glossing over" anything.

Mr. Kernell stated they were definitely not glossing over anything. He asked if the emails Mr. Tripp had received were from current employees or disgruntled employees.

Councilor Tripp stated the individuals who had contacted him were a mix of former and current employees. He stated most of the emails had been quite positive; some were just concerned about the jobs they had left and others were concerned about the jobs they wanted to keep but were getting to the "end of their rope."

Mr. Kernell stated it was difficult to discuss without specific information about the employee or former employee. He stated most employees who were running from the time they arrived at work until they left were going to be unhappy. Mr. Kernell stated he was quite unhappy that his employees had to work under these conditions. The County would continue to do what it could to address issues and that was the reason a member of the Human Resources Department would be specifically assigned to EMS. Mr. Kernell stated there were over 200 employees with GCEMS and at any given time there could certainly be issues that needed to be addressed. Staffing was always an issue and there was a need to pull from available resources for coverage. Mr. Kernell stated it was important to figure out what the true needs were.

Chairman Kirven asked Mr. Kernell to give his best estimate of how much time was needed to get the additional personnel to man the added trucks. He also asked how many people were needed to man the trucks.

Mr. Kernell stated it would take 30 employees to fully man the six trucks. The annual cost would be approximately \$1.3 million (salary, benefits, etc.). Mr. Kernell stated it was possible to complete this in the current budget year as it would take roughly 60 days to get them hired and by then we would be in the 4th Quarter. Mr. Kernell stated it would then take \$325,000 to cover the rest of the year.

Mr. Kernell added he felt the need was critical; the EMS system would not be slowing down.

Chairman Kirven stated adding the six trucks and the 30 additional personnel would result in better working conditions and a better quality of life for all of the EMS employees.

Mr. Kernell stated he felt taking these steps would take a lot of pressure off of the current employees.

Chairman Kirven stated these steps would also help the County reach and maintain its response time goals.

Mr. Kernell stated the additional resources would certainly help in attaining the goal. He stated there were times when a crew was still engaged with a patient and got notification to respond to another call.

Tim Gault stated in Greenville County there were geographical challenges because of the shape of the County. He added he did not feel it was realistic to have one single response time; based on data, there should be banded response times and realistic response times the citizens of Greenville County could understand. Within high performance EMS systems, it was all about managing risk. Banded response times would give a comprehensive understanding of the issues and help drive the operational side of EMS and how to deploy available resources. When looking at EMS department with high call volumes such as Greenville County, Mr. Gault stated it was unrealistic financially and impractical to utilize the old EMS system approach, which was still being used by departments with much smaller call volumes. The hybrid system that GCEMS was currently using certainly bridged some of the gaps but increasing staff, easing the workload and focusing on the well-being of employees would improve morale. Allowing employees to take breaks, have meals, complete calls and the necessary paperwork was extremely important. Mr. Gault stated knowing that the situation was being addressed would also raise morale. There was a feeling among EMS personnel that nothing was being done. Mr. Gault stated that EMS management had discussed for a couple of years how they wanted the system to look but it all came down to money. He added it would make an impact on the employees to know that the leadership of the County and the leadership of EMS wanted to make changes and give the employees what they deserved. Mr. Gault stated the employees of GCEMS were amazing people.

Councilor Seman stated when talking about the path forward, what would the conversation look like.

Mr. Kernell stated the process would start quickly. Prisma Health and Bon Secours - St. Francis were eager to get going. As soon as all the scheduling was worked out, things would get going. All of the County's EMS responses were ALS (Advanced Life Saving) with a paramedic and an EMT onsite. There was an option for a BLS (Basic Life Saving) system in which EMT's were sent out initially. While EMT were highly trained individuals, they did not possess the same skill set as the paramedics. However, The County was looking at potentially deploying some BLS vehicles but only for low acuity calls. A Nurse Referral Program was also an option and could potentially meet the needs of a caller without having to dispatch a vehicle. Mr. Kernell stated information would be coming very quickly. The current EMS system was highly functioning but there were additional measures that could be taken to keep GCEMS at the top and possibly take it to the next level.

Councilor Roberts stated he appreciated Councilor Tripp's questions and thought they were very pertinent. He added this was an opportunity to look where the EMS system was and where it could advance in the future and not a time to throw blame. Prior to the issue being leaked to the press, Mr. Roberts stated he had a very frank conversation with Tim Gault and he had shared that he was aware there were issues that needed to be addressed. Mr. Roberts stated Council needed to determine where they were lacking; Public Safety encompasses the Sheriff's Office, the Detention Center and EMS. Mr. Roberts stated that Sheriff Brown had indicated he needed more money; while that may be debatable, it was very clear that there was a lack of funds. He asked if there were issues in the Dispatch area of EMS or other areas. Mr. Roberts stated Council expected the Administrator to use the limited amount of funds available and fix the problem; he added it was not possible. Mr. Roberts stated not raising taxes was a great way to get re-elected but it was not realistic to continue to hand the Administrator a budget that did not meet the County's Public Safety needs. He stated Council was putting Mr. Kernell in a position where he could not be successful. Mr. Roberts stated Council needed to address the needs of the Detention Center and the Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Kernell stated it was a constant challenge to meet the needs of the County's individual departments, especially with such a strong economy. Greenville County competed with the private sector more now than in a long time. Mr. Kernell stated the pay level for some positions were somewhat lower but the County offered great benefits. He stated that Public Safety was a very visible challenge and there were challenges throughout the agency. Mr. Kernell stated they had been working on the EMS situation for a while and it was time to make the move. There were some other requests within the EMS budget. A paid consultant would be completing a compensation study in the near future.

Councilor Roberts stated he appreciated Mr. Kernell's diligence and Mr. Gault's honesty in addressing the issues.

Councilor Meadows stated it appeared that EMS was an organization that was well-organized and the problems that have surfaced were due to the information that was in the newspaper. He asked Mr. Kernell if he had a copy of the survey that was done.

Mr. Kernell stated he did not have a copy of the survey.

Councilor Meadows stated the newspaper had indicated over 100 employees took part in the survey which appeared to be a fair sample of employees. He asked if it would be beneficial to look at the survey and the responses to determine if there were other issues that were not being addressed.

Mr. Kernell agreed the survey was important and why a member of the Human Resources Department was being assigned to the EMS Department. He added there were possible plans to administer a valid survey and personally talk to the employees to get to the bottom of the problem. Mr. Kernell stated it was discouraging because there was an "Open Door Policy" in place; any employee was free to come to his office and discuss any concerns they may have and he encouraged it. The County's biggest investment was its employees.

Councilor Meadows asked if it was possible to obtain a copy of the survey that was given and the answers that the employees gave.

Mr. Kernell stated he would try and get the information.

Councilor Ballard stated he had a copy of the survey which contained 15 questions. He added that 112 employees took the survey and he assumed they were all current employees. He read the survey twice and then he studied it. He also completed a summary of the most prevalent answers. The first question asked how long the employee had been with the County; Mr. Ballard stated it was interesting that 51% of the participants had been employed less than 5 years. Most of the issues brought up in the survey were addressed by the presentation. Mr. Ballard stated the problems with EMS could be worked out.

Chairman Kirven asked how were units moved around now in the absence of the Marvliis Program implementation.

Larry Hill stated the same type of historical data review had been completed. The six outlying static stations were in place and in the remainder of the County, central deployment was utilized directly from the County Square EMS office. Mr. Hill stated a posting plan was developed with different locations that the dispatch team was able to refer to in order to assign calls. Dispatchers looked for the highest priority post that was not covered and would assign an available ambulance to that post. With the current system, coverage for the County could vary from very good to marginal. Marvliis would make the process much simpler and more efficient.

Councilor Dill thanked everyone for the information presented and added that EMS was a process that changed all the time. He added when there was something that needed to be done, Council was willing to take the necessary measures.

Item (5) Executive Session

The Executive Session was not needed.

Item (6) Adjournment

ACTION: Councilor Dill moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina G. McCaskill, Clerk to Council