

MEDINA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
EXECUTIVE BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

February 2, 2017

Present:		Fire Chiefs:	
Conrad Sarnowski	Adam Friedrich	Rob Haas	Jeff Hall
Brian Guccion	Bob Painter	Ken Barrett	William Disbrow
Michael Costello	Christina Fozio	Jim Baird	Jack Petrone
Matt Hiscock	Matt Hiscock	Scott Schmoll	Mark Crumley
Ralph Copley	Matt Sturgeon	Ben Nau	

Sarnowski called the meeting to order at 7: 00 PM.

Everyone present briefly introduced themselves.

Sarnowski described that this meeting was at the request of the Fire Chief's Association to go over issues with the All-Hazards fund policy. He invited someone from the Chief's Association to describe the concern.

Chief Haas presented that the policy was distributed at a Fire Chiefs' meeting and their questions and concerns are from that. Chief Haas and Chief Strazzo had a conversation with Mike Lyons before the policy was adopted about what in the policy they thought would not work. Unfortunately, those things still turned up in the policy. As a group, they think it is a poor policy because it will be tough to administer and they'd like to talk about what could be adjusted.

Fozio commented that this policy is not a role of the Association. The policy is intended to bring credibility to the All-hazards Team, allow each fire chief, independently, to be a part of an advisory board, as a sub-set of Emergency Management. With the decisions taking place among the Association, and knowing that the Prosecutor's Office does not see that the Association has any sort of authority, what the policy is intended to do is give authority to independent fire chiefs regarding All-Hazard fund. This isn't a task for the Association at all. Understanding that the Association struggles to have a quorum, the intent of this policy is to bring people to the table for a common interest to support what their township trustees are sharing in cost allocations to support a countywide all-hazards team. As much as there is concern that the Association does not have a quorum, because of the purpose of the SOP, we want the Advisory Board to work. We want the chiefs to be a part of it because they should have a say independently, on behalf of each of their communities, based on their elected officials paying into the fund. The attempt is to give the All-Hazards Team credibility, under a council of government, which they think would be a benefit to the team, so that at some point in the future when we would want to ask the township, city, and village officials for additional money, we can say that we have a well-functioning advisory board that is a sub-set of Emergency Management, which would probably more agreeable to increase their cost-share than with the way All-Hazards operates now. There's more logic to it. We understand that the Fire Chiefs' Association doesn't have a quorum. We want the All-Hazards Team to be successful. This is their attempt for every individual fire department of every community that has a cost share to have a say, because at some point in the future we know that we're going to that to go to them and ask for an increase. With this policy being in place, and having it be a good working policy, it's the justification to go to them and say this is working, we're a subset of Emergency Management, we're viable, we're doing great things under the guidance of EMA, this is why we're



reaching out for additional funds. As much as this may be a challenge, there is a policy now that exists. There is complete thought-out logic to it. Its preplanning into five years from now. Grant funds are gone. The State is only supporting the USAR teams. If Medina County wants to be a viable technical rescue team, this is the most logical and reasonable way for them to be on the map, grow in their creditability, grow in recruitment, and be able to prove to the trustees, sometime in the future, that we need to present additional funds. We have a building the needs to go up, we have other equipment that likely needs purchased, and that's not going to happen on \$46,000 a year. The way that it has existed up to this point, there no question that Fozio, in good conscious, could not go to the trustees, and this Board, in good conscious, and ask for additional funds without having something in place that shows them that it is a working process. [With foundational documents, we can say] ...this works; we can prove it works. We can show that the sub-committee, as a subset of the EMA is working under a government entity. That's the logic behind the SOP. It's not too upset anybody. It's not intended to have anybody feel they're having power taken away from them. There is no motive behind the SOP other than to let the All-Hazards Team grow into what the team wants to be.

Haas said that historically and traditionally the TROT Board has been for operations and you guys have been for the financial end. Now we're part of the financial end, so that's a bit of a change. From what Haas is hearing, you need to get communications out. If Haas can suggest a different way to communicate, maybe we can get minutes out. We're not opposed to the SOP. Haas thinks it needs to happen. It needs to be spelled out. We think the numbers are onerous. It's going to be difficult to manage.

Fozio said that she would be more than happy to sit down with trustees to have them understand the SOP is a steppingstone to get Medina County on the map. She can't write Homeland Security Grants for the Team because we're not a recognized team. If we can tap into Region 5 USAR money, and show that we are a creditable team that benefits Region Five, no-one can necessary argue that, but she can at least try to make an argument to that [that Medina should receive Region V dollars].

Haas said the only way to get recognized by the State is to get typed.

Fozio said there is no doubt that is one way, but it doesn't mean she wouldn't argue something different. She has no motive other than to make sure Medina County's investment, to this point, is going to be sustained into the future and we don't have trucks being used because it (the TRT Team) just fell to the ground. And, it's not being supported by all the fire chiefs because the fire chiefs can't have a quorum. It's not a matter of if we can have a quorum or not, it's a matter of reaching out to all the jurisdictions that pay into the all-hazards fund and implore on them that in order for this to be a viable team ten years from now we need their input and we need their financial contribution to do that.

Haas said that we do need to have a quorum or we can't move forward because we can't purchase anything.

Fozio said that the reason some of the disgruntled feelings that she's hearing back about the SOP, and not being able to make a quorum, it seems to her that this is the perfect platform to reach out to the fire chiefs that don't come. It's a perfect platform to say that we want their voice to be heard. We want this advisory board to be successful, and we can't be successful without their independent voice that speaks on behalf of their township or municipality. We need them to participate in this because it has everything to do with the future sustainment of the all-hazards team. Fozio doesn't think that's the way

that it's been presented up until this day. Fozio thinks that its being frowned upon and that doing an injustice to what the Board is trying to accomplish for the future sustainment of the Team.

Baird asked Fozio what she thought was being frowned upon.

Fozio said the idea of the Advisory Board and that because the fire chiefs can't make a quorum it means the Advisory Board can't make a quorum. They are there for two different things. The Advisory Board, being a subset for Emergency Management, they're functioning under the guidance of a county government entity that is maintaining tax dollars for the benefit of an all-hazards team, for the benefit of a county-wide team. This advisory board is for strictly just the All-Hazards Team so that it has its own branding; It has its own name; It has its own purpose; It has its own credibility. And, that it can keep expanding beyond what we have today. The idea that we don't have a public safety building, for Fozio that is not acceptable. And, if there's a way to get all the townships on board because we're a good working unit together, that's when we can go to townships and ask them for more money. Fozio doesn't think we can go to townships right now and ask them for more money without having any foundational documents that support what the all-hazards team. Fozio's motive, and she knows the motive of the Board, is to be able to promote and support the Team to the best extent possible. She said there are some people that don't like the SOP, the way that its written. The SOP is intended to be a supportive document and nothing else.

Haas said we are supportive of an SOP. We just don't think the numbers will be easy to manage.

Friedrick asked Haas what he meant. Baird said he believed the assumption Fozio is making is that because now it's a COG/EMA/TROT association that now we will get more attendance. He doesn't believe that that's the case. The Fire Chiefs' Association sends the minutes out to all the fire chiefs, whether they attend or not. We do our best to communicate. He said that we all know that if you are going to be engaged, you are going to be engage; and if you're not, you're not. He doesn't believe that this SOP and making it an official committee is going to increase engagement.

Friedrick asked how many fire chiefs they have. Haas answered that since there are eighteen, there would be a quorum of nine. Haas said everyone was asked to be here today.

Baird continued saying that there were only eight. He said that a lot of the chiefs are only part-time and he doesn't believe that the pressure getting a quorum is going to work. He thinks the unforeseen circumstance will be that the team will be bogged down and there will be financial decisions that won't be made because the Board will not have a quorum. He agrees completely with the need for an SOG and for financial accountability, but he doesn't see this format as producing the results that it is thought to produce.

Fozio asked the group if anybody has attempted to try. When Fozio looks back on it at the start of January, she wishes she would have approached it a little bit differently. Fozio's approached would have been for her to call each fire chief and try to promote this in a different way. Fozio doesn't look at it like it's going to fail from the get-go, she just doesn't have that kind of personality. So, for people to say automatically that is not going to work, she doesn't think that anybody is even trying to do justice to what we're trying to accomplish. If there was an attempt for the next two or three months, at least on honest attempt, to have this advisory board work and then someone would come back and say "We've tried. Emergency Management Executive Board, we tried to make this happen." She thinks that would be much more understandable other than it not working right out of the gate saying. That is where she

is having a hard time. That we're trying to make improvements, and that nobody has even made an effort of a step towards even trying to have the advisory board work and having it kind of be a disgruntled idea from the beginning from the fire chiefs side. It would be much better received, she thinks, from everybody, if in three months an honest, sincere attempt was made that the advisory board was tried and to come back and say "We've put every effort for it, and it's just not working." There is no doubt that somebody would consider an alternative solution, but for that to not even happen she finds it hard to listen to why it won't work when no one has ever tried to make it work, has even tried to set a foot forward on why it should work.

Barrett says he believes that all the fire chiefs have had an opportunity to participate in this because they all are offered the opportunity to sit on the various committees within the Fire Chiefs' Association. So, if someone feels that they have been slighted and not been included, then everyone has been included, so we can't go that route. Certain people feel that they haven't been included. Everyone is included. Meeting minutes are shared. There are notes that have been taken at the meetings we've had. So, for someone to feel that they're not included, if they don't come to the meetings, like we have some that don't come very often, we do distribute those meeting minutes to them. If individuals don't take that information back to their entities, that's not going to change by having this SOP.

Baird said that as a case-in-point, this is the formative committee meeting where everybody was told when it was. They were informed that this is the big meeting. This is where we make the decisions. And, you have pretty much, with the exception of a couple of guys that have commitments they simply can't get out of, this is the group you get. And, even in this critical meeting, we don't have a quorum. He thinks that speaks for itself.

Fozio responded that something needs to change with the Association. It's unfortunate that we want to have a county-wide team and you can't get a quorum of chiefs. She asked if it is a county-wide team then. She said back when the county-wide team was formed, it was supported by all the chiefs. And, if you're saying the chiefs can't get a quorum within the Association, are we really considering this to be a county-wide team then? It's not being fully supported the way that it was in 2005 when it was organized.

Baird said that he thinks there is another way to look at that. This is that it's supported financially by all the chiefs in the county and by all the entities in the county. Fozio said its supported by all the elected officials in the county. Baird continued that the chiefs that don't show up are relying on the chiefs that do show up to essentially do the work.

Guccion questioned why don't they show up. Haas replied that this is a second job.

Barrett question how many members are on the EMA Board. Christina informed that there are eight. Barrett continued that the other thing is we originally asked for a COG, and we were told that the EMA Board said, "No." They wouldn't be the COG for us. Christina explained that when the Ohio Attorney General gave an opinion that it could fall under emergency preparedness under EMA, that's where we are today. We're working within the Ohio Attorney General's guidelines that they submitted back to us.

Baird said what he is suggesting is that he supports the financial oversight of the committee, but he is suggesting that there is a different way to give every fire chief an opportunity to give input into the

TROT Team, and if they choose to take it, they take it; and if they don't, they don't. Baird that if there is a more streamlined way we could do this it would satisfy all parties.

Copley said that's not a problem of the EMA Board, that a problem of the Fire Chiefs' Association to create that process and bring it to the Board to look at. Baird replied that he is prepared to create that process.

Friedrick asked if the chiefs were having a quorum every time, would this be a problem? Baird said, "No." He expanded that the primary issue is that they are afraid that given the numbers that are mandated they will not be able to make the Team run efficiently because they won't have a quorum. Friedrick raised the question could any number be created for a quorum. Matt Hiscock said that you can. Fozio clarified that the policy is not based off what the Association bylaws say, the quorum is number of the members in attendance. Baird said that if the quorum is nine, they're going to have trouble hitting that every time especially when they are talking finance.

Guccion asked what the number should be. Baird stated that there are times when they don't hit the quorum when people are on vacation or they're doing family things. Most of the guys are part-time fire chiefs, they have lives elsewhere. Baird recommends that the Fire Chiefs' Association have the authority to appoint the TROT Board. Haas replied that it is the EMA Board's sub-committee. Baird said that if you want to give all the fire chiefs input, make that our absolute input into the system. He said its delegation, its nothing more than that. If you want them to have financial input have them give financial input on the overall budget for the year. He said that all of the fire chiefs or a quorum of the fire chiefs will agree to the overall budget. Then, they will entrust the TROT Board to make good decisions on their behalf, and those decisions can be reviewed and approved by the EMA Board.

Petrone said that is what we have been doing for two years. We came up with a solution that was workable for all of us and it worked fine. Now all the sudden we have a second entity and a third entity dictating how we work when we don't do financial; we do operations. He thinks what needs to happen this that the County Commissioners need to look into the financial running of the TROT Board. He said this is a county team. He asked why trustees are getting billed for something the entire county runs. Why doesn't the County Commissioners fund this team? Why doesn't the county pay? Why do the townships pays? He says the theory of if you want to run a county team running by a quasi-county organization, why is not the County Commissioners involved in this? Why do you have a bunch of trustee and firemen sitting around a table going, "Well we should have five people, or two people, or three people running this." That makes no sense what-so-ever.

Fozio replied that if the Commissioners sent down a policy that everyone didn't like, we would be in the same room. Petrone said we do operations. Fozio said the TROT committee also talks about budgets, so when Petrone says that they don't do finance, they absolutely do. She said that Rob receives a budget from each of the team leaders and reviews it whether it's a viable budget for the year.

Baird said all he's saying is that he has no problems with the SOP other than the quorum numbers, especially in the summer time. He's been doing this for nine years with the Fire Chiefs' Associations, and he knows what the pattern is. He knows that regardless of what we say or the County initiatives that we have, when we did the RIT county training we got the numbers same that we have now. The ones who didn't want to get involved, didn't get involved. This won't be the push that will get the attendance

you're looking for. He thinks that the format can be altered to make the team efficient and represented, and give the Board what they want as far as accountability financially.

Friedrick raised the question about why the EMA Board cares if the quorum is nine. Fozio said it was what Mike Lyon came up with. Guccion explained that he thinks it goes back to when the TROT Board would make a decision and half the chiefs didn't agree with the decisions. Fredrick said that Chief Baird's point that he agrees with is if the people who aren't going to participate in the Fire Chiefs' Association aren't there, then they have nobody to blame but themselves when it comes to voting on how dollars are spent. Fredrick said from our prospective, we just want the accountability of the dollars. He says that there has to be some quorum, but a number that is workable. Then, the EMA Board goal is met because the Chiefs are deciding on how money is spent based on the EMA Boards SOP.

Baird added that the current TROT Board, which the Fire Chiefs support, regularly has a quorum, regularly has the input that they need. They develop the budgets on time. They get it to the chiefs on time. So, his take on this is allow the Fire Chiefs to have influence on who is on that board, and then give that board the authority to give recommendations to the EMA Board because the Chiefs trust the members that they put on that board.

Fozio added that both Mike Lyons and Bill Thorne have said is that whatever sub-committee is working as an advisory board to how EMA spends the funds, it cannot be noted as the Association. It still has to be something that is separate, that adheres to the Sunshine Laws, and is a public meeting. She said that with whatever changes with the SOP, the one thing that can't change is the Advisory Board is still a separate entity from the Association.

Guccion said Haas said that with the SOP, the TROT Board became financial versus operational. He doesn't think the TROT Board is anymore financial then they were before. Haas said that according to the SOP they would be approving every expenditure over \$1000, which is basically what five people do now, not the entire Association. Baird added that what changed was any expenditure over \$1000 has to be approved by a quorum of nine. Then two or three months can go by if we need to make purchases when we don't have a quorum. Guccion asked if there were meetings couple of years ago, representing 2-3 chiefs. Crumley answered that if there isn't a quorum, they don't have the meeting. Guccion commented that chiefs complained that they didn't have input, but that is because they didn't go to the meetings. Petrone said that that is why the committees got together and did the budgets. Baird added that Christina has been very diligent about getting TROT board meeting minutes out to the fire chiefs, so to say that they aren't informed is not true. Barrett said if the trustees and governing bodies aren't getting the information than they need to go to that chief and say, "Why aren't we getting that information?"

Guccion commented that there are some townships and cities who don't know what their cost shares are for. Painter said that the TROT team leaders are technical experts. Guccion said that no one is debating that. He thinks we need to go back to what we said six months ago: the chiefs are the operations and we just buy what they need. He doesn't think anything has ever been turned down.

Sarnowski said that while some of the chiefs are part-time, the Board meets once a month and they are asked to put their name on spending thousands of dollars, and they're asking, "Who said you could spend that?" Baird said that they are willing to give documentation, they just want it to be reasonably functional. He thinks that it would be reasonably functional if the document was modified to say the Fire

Chiefs are the group that forms the TROT Board and the TROT Board is the one that gives the overall budget for the year, and the Fire Chiefs would approve the overall budget with a quorum of nine. Then, the fire chiefs from the TROT Board would have the authority to make the expenditures, as long as they didn't go outside the budget.

Fozio thinks something could have been created that was simplistic a long time ago, we could not have kept going the way we were, that there had to be something set that everybody could follow, and there were no solutions that were presented. The idea that the Assistant Prosecutor sat down with the draft of policy that eventually became approved, the Board has no other option but to create something because nothing has existed, and the request has gone out for a year and a half or two years. She has minutes that go back to 2012 that are asking for the chiefs to look at a restructure of what's going on. Haas replied that the Association updated their bylaws. Fozio said she knows that, but the prosecutors are saying that the Fire Chiefs are not an entity of authority for spending money. Guccion raised the questioned about the Association's bylaws, which allow counting non-present members as yes votes.

Painter said that it operates well, so can we just say it's going to be the six person board and every January we just approve the six members and then they have the authority for the rest of that year. That way they can just keep functioning the way they are, because we'll never get the quorum. He doesn't go to a lot of the meetings because he's go so many others during the day and some many other commitments.

Guccion asked what is the number for the quorum. Haas replied that they are asking to lower it. Guccion clarified that he is asking what would work. Baird said five would work. Barrett said the currently there are five chiefs, Christina, and Wally.

Crumley said there a two separate things on the table. You can either do where the Fire Chiefs, as a group, get to vote, or, as the Association, we give that right to the Board and then we set the quorum for the Board. So, if there is a six member board, the quorum is four or five, but it's not five for the Fire Chiefs' Association. Baird said that is the process that he supports. Christina reminded that this advisory board is not working off the bylaws of the association. Haas said that by redoing the bylaws they thought they fixed the problem.

Friedrick said that one point he thought everyone was discussing whether or not a quorum of the fire chiefs no longer being nine, but five, would determine what could or couldn't get spent over \$1000, then it changed to, that goes away and the Advisory Board makes all the decisions regardless as to how many ever show up to a fire chiefs meeting. Haas said that he thinks Friedrick is right, but to understand that there are people in the Fire Chiefs' Association who work on teams who are familiar with special operations and those are the people who are on the TROT Board. So, he would like to see people who have an interest be appointed to a board. Christina added that the Board is a subset of EMA, where the Association is its own entity. Friedrick asked if the chiefs were asking to reduce the quorum of nine to a quorum of five fire chiefs, or is the Board deciding purchases over \$1000. Baird responded that the fire chiefs are asking for input on who is on the TROT Board and they will put the best people on it. The TROT Board will make a recommendation on an annual budget to the membership of the Fire Chiefs' Association, the TROT Board will have the authority to approve purchase that are in the budget. Then, the need for a quorum of nine only once a year to approve the annual budget and the give input on the TROT Board.

Friedrick asked if anyone recalls if this solution was allowable. Hiscock stated that he doesn't recall this type of solution being discussed. He also stated that there is not a set rule that a quorum has to be a majority. Hiscock said it can even be a majority of those in attendance. Hiscock added that he thought the quorum was based on having representation of all departments, and he doesn't think the TROT Board solves the issue, if there is one. He does think they can make a different rule on what the quorum is, meaning the quorum of those present. Fozio added that the Mike Lyons's original opinion was that all the chiefs should have a say on what goes on with the All-Hazards Team. Petrone said that won't work because everyone is not going to be involved.

Guccion questioned what happens when a chief doesn't show up to meetings, but complains. Baird said then said chief has proven he doesn't need to be listened to. Guccion said that they still have to answer to the residents who pay the bills. To which, Baird replied that the residents should be told that their chief is non-participative.

Hiscock suggested that the SOG be changed so that the majority of those present at a meeting is a quorum. Fozio said that Lyons wrote the initial SOG to be ideal, so if it won't work we can come up with a viable solution.

Baird stated that his concern with the functions form of the fire chiefs' committee is that there would be a time when they would have seven people there, and four people would vote and everyone would say that's not very many people voting. That's why he likes the TROT Board. Because it's a quorum of the experts who all the chiefs have agreed to have on that board. While it's the same number of people, he thinks it's a more powerful quorum because it's the experts. Friedrick referenced the makeup of the NOACA board in which there is representation among the different types of communities. Baird said that he would recommend keeping the TROT Board as it is, because there's a slot for EMA, the three cities, and EMS.

Crumley asked how the EMA board was set up. Copley answered that it's by ORC and includes township, villages, and cities. Crumley also asked who Sarnowski represented. Sarnowski represents the Mayor of Seville. Crumley brought up that they report back to the communities because the problem with the chief's association has been there for a long time, and at some point, a letter needs to be sent to notify the townships and chiefs whose chiefs don't come to the meetings. He has no problem with the policy because it gives him a designee. He mentioned that, with no disrespect to Wadsworth, all the chiefs were asked to be there, and their chief wasn't there. Everyone has assistant chiefs so there is no reason why they should ever not have a quorum. He is said that he's walked through the process from the beginning because of how long he's been here. At some point it was a draft, and never really got finalized, so his question is how is this team actually put together legally? Fozio presented that she is working on contractual agreements for every entity that pays into the cost share to the All-Hazards team. The team was set up with an initial dollar amount that was supposed to be revisited in 2005. In 2010, the funding was supposed to be revisited to talk about whether the funding needed to be increased or not, and in another five years it should have been talked about again. We're two times past opportunities to increase funding to the all-hazards team. And the reason why is it has merely been discussed. Nothing was finalized. Nothing was established, and nothing was given to the township trustees, the cities, or the villages that pay into the fund. She's coming up with a draft that solidified the All-Hazards Team and actually gives them a standing document of who should be on the team, and what municipalities need to pay. It's being developed from a template from Lorain County.

Baird complemented the effort and the EMA Board. He stated his only concern was that the nine-person quorum would bog the system down. Crumley said that he still thinks it's the chiefs' fault because it's their association. If they're not having a quorum, the Fire Chiefs' Association Board should send a letter to all the communities of the chiefs who aren't showing up. Painter said that it's not part of his job to be on the Fire Chiefs' Association. It's a personal, private thing. Crumley said that he is only saying that because there have been county-wide policies, even before he was chief, that were approved by the association. Barrett said that the Chiefs' Association doesn't set policy for individual departments.

Petrone said that he thought the budget was straightened out, because he thought the TROT Board should have oversight of the fiscal stuff. Christina said the team leaders submitted budgets to Rob and compiled them for Christina. Petrone said they thought it was solve because that was going to be the conduit so they didn't have to vote on each item so the teams could function. Christina explained that when she creates the budget for each year, it's just her best estimate. Individual invoices still need approved every month.

Fredrick asked if everyone was comfortable making the changes to the SOP.

Fozio said the Board will discuss it at the next meetings. She reviewed the discussed changes to keep advisory board as sub-set of EMA who makes recommendations to the Board. The members of the Board will be approved by the Chiefs. It will consist of three cities, EMA, and a representative of townships.

Painter motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Copley, and approved by all.