

**CONSOLIDATION OF SERVICES STUDY COMMISSION
FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: January 23, 2006

Location: Agenda Conference Room, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 400 S. Orange Avenue, Orlando, FL 32801

Members in Attendance: Jimmy Goff, Chairman
Kathy Putnam
Don Ammerman
Frances Pignone

Members Absent: Jim Kallinger

Staff in Attendance: Denny O'Neil, Executive Director

Others in Attendance: Commissioner Monty Knox, Consolidation of Services Study Commission
Mark Oakes, Assistant Chief, OFD
Kathy Miller, Deputy Chief, OFD
Jim Reynolds, Deputy Chief, OFD
Mark Gregory, OFD
Shannon Raybon, OFD Local 1365
Steve Clelland, OFD
Jim Fitzgerald, Deputy Chief, OCFRD
Virgil Kent, OFD
Ron Glass, OFD Local 1365
Dan Tracey, Orlando Sentinel
Daniel Molina, UCF/VCC
William Sturgeon, OCFRD
Linda Akins, Orange County Government Relations Director
Ed Rose WESH-TV
Tim Brown, WESH-TV
Mark Wechsler, Seminole County EMS
Dr. George Ralls, Orange County EMS
Dr. Todd Husty, Seminole County EMS
Linda Rhinesmith, City of Orlando Economic Development Manager
Robert Gonzales, OFD Local 1365
Kathy Russell, City of Orlando Director of Intergovernmental Relations
B. Matt McGrew, OCFRD

Eryka Washington, WESH News
Tanja Gerhartz, City of Orlando Economic
Development Department Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Goff called the meeting to order at 3:04 p. m.

PRESENTATION BY DR. TODD HUSTY

Dr. Todd Husty, EMS Director for Seminole County, Maitland and Winter Park addressed the Committee. Dr. Husty's approach to solving the "wall time" (EMS Emergency Room off-load) problem by urging the problem to be defined as an "internal disaster" for hospitals, by instituting a 15 minute "wall time" goal for EMS personnel to turn over transported patients to ER staff, and by establishing 45 minutes as the maximum time. He also discussed the Incapacitated Patient Act which identified three circumstances when patients can be taken to the hospital against their will: when there is a medical emergency, when the patient is incapacitated, and when the patient is unreasonable. Discussion ensued.

PRESENTATION BY DR. GEORGE RALLS

Dr. George Ralls, Orange County Medical Director addressed the Committee. Dr. Ralls said that "wall time" is a national problem. He pointed out that the Orange County and Seminole County EMS systems are greatly different. The call volume is substantially greater for Orange County because Orange County has more residents than Seminole County and about 35 million visitors to Orange County who also use EMS services. Plus, the sickest patients come to Orange County because of the type of services Orange County hospitals are able to provide. Seminole County transport numbers are about 5% of Orange County's numbers. Of the 450,000 Orange County ER patients in 2005, 76,000 were transported. Of the transported patients, 50% are admitted, versus 15% for walk-ins. Dr. Ralls said transport volume isn't the issue, but rather throughput is the problem. Once the patient is admitted, an ER bed is taken until a ward bed becomes available and the patient can be moved to a ward. There is no rapid process to get them out of the ER. In response to a question, Dr. Ralls also said that there's extensive literature that states paramedics directed refusal (to transport) can't exclude bad outcomes. Problems in refusal decision making rise to the surface very quickly. There is a tremendous need in the community for unscheduled care. The argument that the system is over loaded by patients who don't need services is a seductive argument. The fixed costs in the ER are there regardless and treating these patients takes little time. Discussion ensued.

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT COMMITTEE REPORT & SIDE-BY-SIDE

Commissioner Ammerman made the motion that the Committee adopt the recommendations in the Draft Fire and Emergency Services Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Putnam. There was discussion about whether the recommendations could be adopted without resolving conflicts in them and

whether the Committee wanted to address them individually. After the Committee decided to address them individually, Commissioner Ammerman withdrew his motion and Commissioner Putnam withdrew her second.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The next Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2006 at 3:00 p. m. in the Agenda Conference Room, 2nd floor, Orlando City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p. m.

Jimmy Goff
Committee Chairman