

Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 19, 2025

Location: Northshire Rescue Squad, 64 Jeff Williams Way, Manchester Center, VT 05255

Attendance: Drew Hazelton, Adam Heuslein, Jim Finger, Leslie Lindquist, Matthew Parrish, William Moran, Bobby Maynard, Joe Aldsworth, Paul Stagner, Dan Wolfson, William Fritz, Courtney Newman, Donna Jacob, Chelsea Dubie, Tepin Delaney, Bill Camarda, Connor Dunn, Vince Robbins

Meeting Called to Order

Drew Hazelton called the meeting to order and conducted a roll call. A brief technical note was made regarding duplicate screen displays, after which quorum was confirmed.

Updates from the Office of EMS

William Moran provided a key update regarding the division director position, noting that third-round interviews were scheduled for the upcoming Friday. Once the position is filled, he expects to return to his EMS Chief role full time, potentially within four to six weeks. He also reported that the EMS data team is currently experiencing a high volume of data requests, resulting in a backlog of approximately one month for comprehensive data submissions. Despite the team's efficiency, the complexity and volume of requests—coming from EMS organizations, advisory committees, and other state government entities—have led to delays.

Update on EMS Buprenorphine Project

Dr. Dan Wolfson presented an overview of the EMS Buprenorphine Project (PREVENT), which enables EMS providers to administer buprenorphine in the field to patients experiencing opioid withdrawal, particularly following naloxone administration. The initiative aims to provide immediate care and facilitate referrals to local treatment services. The project, initially rolled out in a handful of Vermont towns, is expanding to include seven additional communities. Dr. Wolfson emphasized the collaborative support received from EMS agencies and the Division of Substance Use Programs. William Moran praised the project as part of a broader, well-supported statewide effort and commended Dr. Wolfson's leadership.

Drew Hazelton raised concerns about potential impacts from federal and state funding changes. William Moran noted that while the PREVENT program does not receive state funding, it is partially supported by a grant from the Leahy Institute. Most participating EMS agencies are currently relying on their own resources. Though there have been no direct impacts to EMS funding yet, Moran mentioned that other Health Department programs have already experienced funding lapses due to delayed federal notices, which may signal future challenges.

Dr. Wolfson added that, based on information from the university, existing grants are expected to be funded through the end of September. However, uncertainty remains beyond that point. As a result, a hiring freeze has been implemented to avoid onboarding staff for positions that may ultimately go unfunded.

Phase 2 Planning and Fiscal Agent Discussion

The committee resumed discussions on Phase 2 of the project, particularly regarding the appointment of a fiscal agent to streamline access to funding. Due to delays with the state RFP and contracting processes (taking up to 8 months), a fiscal agent would allow the committee to expedite spending under a grant framework.

No volunteers had come forward prior to the meeting despite outreach, including an inquiry to the University of Vermont, which declined due to administrative complexities.

A fiscal agent would serve as a financial conduit only—without decision-making authority—handling invoices and reimbursements. This would also support long-term goals like hiring an administrator for the committee, funded by an annual \$40,000 allocation.

Leslie Lindquist raised key questions around potential conflicts of interest, the feasibility of current members serving in this capacity, and compensation for the agent. William Moran clarified that the agent's role is strictly transactional and does not involve influencing committee decisions.

After discussion, Rescue Inc. (represented by Drew Hazelton) was proposed as the fiscal agent. Drew confirmed the organization would not charge administrative fees and anticipated only a few transactions annually. The committee emphasized transparency and the perception of conflict, but given no other organization volunteered, a motion was made and passed to designate Rescue Inc. as the fiscal agent. Drew abstained from the vote to avoid a conflict of interest.

The motion passed with 7 affirmative votes, no opposition, and one abstention. The committee confirmed a quorum was present. The group will now move forward with establishing the structure for Phase 2 using Rescue Inc. as the fiscal intermediary.

Analyzing the Cambridge Consulting Group Report

The Vermont EMS Advisory Committee continued their discussion on the upcoming Cambridge report, emphasizing the need for a clear process to digest and act on the findings. Drew Hazelton noted that during a recent regional public safety telecommunications task force meeting, inaccuracies in dispatch information were immediately flagged, underscoring the importance of having a skilled facilitator manage the forthcoming discussion around the Cambridge report. The group agreed the report would be delivered at the April meeting and that members would take it home for review. A facilitator will be hired for the May meeting to guide a more in-depth, structured conversation based on the report's findings.

There was consensus on involving a professional facilitator to help the group develop a comprehensive EMS plan, especially considering the emotional and complex nature of the discussions ahead. Members debated whether the facilitator could also help with writing the plan or if another entity, such as a municipal planning group, could be involved. It was clarified that although Cambridge could potentially be asked to continue with a second phase of work, other consultant options should also be explored. With approximately \$220,000 in remaining funds available (until July 1), members leaned toward hiring professional support for both facilitation and technical writing to ensure a high-quality plan is delivered to the legislature by December.

There was also interest in public outreach sessions following internal review of the Cambridge findings. Drew confirmed that public discussions should follow, not precede, the committee understanding of the report. Lastly, the group reaffirmed that while the committee should develop the content, professionals should handle the technical writing.

Facilitator Suggestions:

- Sid Pollack – Vermont Emergency Management
- Keith Cobb – Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
- The Center for Public Safety Excellence – currently working with Williston Fire Department
- Gary Hansel – suggested via chat

Drew Hazelton will reach out to the Planning Commission and school system contacts to identify suitable candidates. Joe Aldsworth offered to share contact information for Sid Pollack and Keith Cobb. Drew will return in April with a facilitator proposal for a vote.

Meeting Minutes and Documentation

The committee is working to centralize and publish all EMS Advisory Committee-related documents on the Vermont Department of Health website. This will include:

- The dates, locations, and times of future meetings
- A Teams link
- Advisory Committee meeting minutes
- Related reports and documentation

Voting Clarification

A clarification was made regarding the vote count taken earlier in the meeting. There are nine voting members:

- Drew Hazelton
- Adam Heuslein
- Jim Finger
- Leslie Lindquist
- Matthew Parrish

- William Moran
- Bobby Maynard
- Joe Aldsworth

The vote resulted in:

- 8 votes in favor
- 1 abstention
- 0 opposed

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Adam Heuslein and seconded by another member. There was no opposition. The meeting was adjourned.

Action Items:

- Drew Hazelton to confirm April/May meeting details via email
- Committee members to send facilitator recommendations to Drew
- William Moran to distribute draft minutes and begin web publication process

Upcoming Committee Meetings

- **April 16, 2025 – Regular Meeting**
 - Location: Microsoft Teams only, no in-person option
 - Time: 1 - 3 PM
- **May 7, 2025 - Workshop**
 - Location: Waterbury State Office Complex, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, VT (Vermont Department of Health, Linden Conference Room).
 - Time: 10 AM - 4 PM
- **May 21, 2025 – Regular Meeting**
 - Location: White River Valley Ambulance, 3190 Pleasant Street, Bethel, VT
 - Time: 10 AM - 4 PM
- **June 18, 2025 – Regular Meeting**
 - Location: Waterbury State Office Complex, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, VT (Vermont Department of Health, Ash Conference Room)
 - Time: 1 - 3 PM