EMS Subcommittee
Monday, June 8, 2026

Matthew Stanley - Chairman

Supervisor Stanley called this EMS Subcommittee to order at 9:00 am with the following in attendance: Clayton Barber, Chris Clark, Ken Hughes, Mary Lamphear, Tracie McGill, Clayton Menser, Jim O'Bryan, Richard Preston, Matt Stanley, Davina Thurston, Ike Tyler, Joe Pete Wilson, Meg Wood, Mike Mascarenas, Josh Favro, and Michael LaVallie. and Timothy Follos had been previously excused

Deputies Present: Bill Tansey, and Dina Garvey

STANLEY: Alright, everybody, it is just after 9:00, we'll call this meeting to order.
I just want to let everybody know, the focus of this meeting is going to change. We're coming to the end of the EMS grant and we're, we have a system that works. It's works for us and I think with the new payouts and the new staffing models that we've been working with are starting to work well. I would like to keep that portion of this up just to get reports during this meeting. That way we know if we need to put a little more pressure on DOS, we can and it's in a meeting and there's minutes to say, hey, we're talking about you. But as we move forward the radio system is going to be a bigger and bigger concern, so this is a good time to probably meet and discuss those upgrades. It's probably a good place for any of the engineers to come and give us information or we can talk and give direction before it goes to Public Safety. So, I think with that need, after talking with Josh, we can probably move this meeting to every other month, unless needed, and we'll move from there. Are there any questions about that before we move on?
Alright, I'll turn it over to you.

FAVRO: So, I'll just run through, there's not a whole lot different from our last meeting with EMS. But I'll run through the small changes, or big changes, however you want to look at it.
As we all know, Jody was denied the retirement wavier, so he had to step down. Due to that, we made the change for senior paramedic, moved Michael from a 12-hour shift to a 10-hour shift to put him there during business hours, to try and fill some of that administrative responsibility. It seems to be working very well so far, and Mike and I are kind of steering the boat with that at this point.
Contract updates; still waiting for documentation from a few towns; North Elba, Keene, Chesterfield, Schroon Lake. I think what they're looking for is a cancelled check, a paid invoice or a budget spreadsheet before they can write the check.

STANLEY: And I know I reached out to Randi, our town we do quarterly checks, so we'll have to wait until after the 3rd quarter before we hit that threshold.

FAVRO: Yes

WILSON: Josh, just to make sure I am going after the right stuff, should I just contact Randi, directly?

FAVRO: That's the easiest thing I think, at this point.

MASCARENAS: It's an auditing thing.

WILSON: Oh, yeah, I am happy to do it. I just didn't realize that I was missing stuff.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, not a programmatic thing, but administrative.

FAVRO: Not a whole lot has changed on the grants. We're obviously working on #3.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, we're getting much closer. Jen has gotten involved in that and I signed a thing last week in trying to correct some of the issues with that, so I think we're headed in the right direction.

STANLEY: And it was also nice that they combined the last few years of the grant into one.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, yeah.

FAVRO: The only other thing EMS-wise that I wanted to point out and we checked and tripled checked to make sure that it was correct, but there was zero dropped calls through the month of May. So, every agency met all of their calls which is pretty amazing and it's hats off to them for doing that.

MASCARENAS: That is good.

STANLEY: Yeah, not bad out of 522 calls to not miss one.

FAVRO: Yeah, that tells us that the system is working and the agencies are doing well.

MASCARENAS: Just as a reminder and hopefully you guys are working in these communities. We've got two communities that accepted the waiver for 2026, are they working on being stand alone for 2027? Because the waiver ends at the end of this year and I want to make sure they can swim and make do without out personnel.

FAVRO: Yup, I talked to Ken, Willsboro/Essex is moving forward with paid on-call type of thing, like what Keene is doing.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, I saw his plan, he sent it to me. And what his plan really speaks to is why the program is set up the way it is.

HUGHES: It's not my plan; I want to be clear about that.

MASCARENAS: Not your plan, Town of Willsboro/Essex plan.

HUGHES: Yeah

MASCARENAS: I apologize for that. It gives you that local control to be able to be somewhat flexible, where what we were dealing with before, did not. We simply couldn't meet the need of every agency in every community with some of the stringent controls that we had. So, just so you remember all of the in

terms of contract and being able to offer per diem rates that are different in every one of your communities, or on-call rates. We don't have that flexibility with our current set up, it doesn't work and what you guys, and in your communities were able to come up with speaks to it. The same in Keene, where they were able to be able to be a little more flexible and meet the needs of their constituency in a creative way, that's why we did what we did and it's a good thing. So, yeah, I just wanted to get that out as a reminder, get that out on the record that the waiver does end at the end of this year. Mr. Menser, so I did check, we do have employees in the community that you're contracting with. Which means Essex County's already paying quite a lot for that community. So, next year I would say, yes, you are absolutely in. You can get that, because they will be stand alone at that time, but for now we're already subsidizing, not only that community, but any community that contracts with them through personnel. Does that make sense to you?

MENSER: Yeah, so that means there won't be no money coming back.

MASCARENAS: Not for 2026. Yeah, so we have ALS providers in Ticonderoga, currently. How many do we have?

FAVRO: Off the top of my head, I think there was 3-4.

MASCARENAS: So, it is a substantial amount of their staffing.

MENSER: Because I am going to be preparing to budget for 2027, soon and the way it has been done in the past, the fire department had been budgeting for that and they shouldn't have been. It should have been the town.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, everybody does it a little different.

TYLER: in my town, the fire department budgets it and sends it to me and here's nothing I can do about it.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, and that's why we did what we did. We said, we're pushing all our money through the towns, because that is what we do. But in terms of whether you have an ambulance district, whether you have a fire district, whether you have contracts with the town, you can do it whatever way works in your community, but we're pushing the money through the town no matter what. Those were sales tax dollars that we got from the legislature allowing STRs, so to the tune of $1.8 million that I budget to push out to the towns for this purpose. So, however you do it, again, everybody's a little different. We kind of standardized it at the county level of how we're pushing the dollars out and how you get it to them is really up to you. Or how you use it, if you're a contract. There's towns that spend an awful lot of money that contract. So, for them they see a reduction on the levy based on it, for other towns they don't, but they don't see an increase on the levy because of it, because it offsets whatever they were spending before. It all depends on your personnel situation and how you were handling that service prior.

O'BRYAN: Mike, is this strictly the fly cars that we're talking about?

MASCARENAS: No, sir.

O'BRYAN: We're talking about my contract?

MASCARENAS: Yeah, you have Ticonderoga has 4 county employees that are working directly for you.

O'BRYAN: In the squad?

MASCARENAS: In the squad.

O'BRYAN: Yes, but that is going away, I thought.

MASCARENAS: That is going away. So, the fly cars, the County is going to continue to support through out budget, on top of the money that goes out.

O'BRYAN: Right

MASCARENAS: So, yup, there's two separate things there. So, next year, Ticonderoga, unless we decide to do something different in our budget would be eligible for $125,000 to come to them to support EMS. Now, I don't know how you currently have it set up, if it's a large town contribution.

O'BRYAN: It is

MASCARENAS: Okay

O'BRYAN: $400,000

MASCARENAS: So, that would offset either your budget, it depends on what their operations are. That is a debate for you to have, I am going to stay in my lane.

O'BRYAN: Well, it makes us two have to sit down, because I have contracts with him and I have a contract in Putman with Washington County.

MASCARENAS: And that is why I want to talk about it now, because like you, I am going to be starting my budget process really soon and I want everybody to understand that those people will be leaving, and you've got to figure that out. There's three communities, I said two, but there's three.

WOOD: So, what Schroon does, we have a taxing district along with North Hudson, we, through that our emergency squad gets $350,000. We got the full $125,000 on top of the $350,000 we gave them $75,000, we retain $50,000 in our general fund and we're using that to pay for stormwater assessment recommendation thing, and we just got 9 proposals for that, and I am not an engineer. So, it doesn't have to go all to them.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, you shifted the dollars that you spent somewhere else and used it in other areas. So, if you reduce the amount locally that you were contributing, you can then utilize.

WOOD: We kept our regular allotment and didn't add to it.

MASCARENAS: Right, so it all depends on how that accounting looks.

THURSTON; I have a question on the fly cars and because the grant, you know, is going to be over soon, I am concerned about the expense of the fly cars. Do you have any idea, and I see these numbers and I see a lot canceled on route, canceled on scene, do we have how many times the fly car is the first one on scene? Do you have that number anywhere?

FAVRO: We can probably pull that. I can talk to Travis and get that.

THURSTON: I would be curious to know. Just the long term sustainability of the fly cars for the County, because they are very expensive and while I understand, you know, we want to make sure we're providing the best service, if the fly cars aren't really being utilized as much as they should I think we need to reconsider maybe hot that is laid out.

MASCARENAS: And for me, personally, Davina, seeing how this new plan that we're under works, understand the fly cars are really your guaranteed ALS provider, if you can't provide it. So, we're seeing who's taking advantage of the $25,000, who's not taking advantage of it and where we can go from there, because on a call where you only have an EMT, but you need a paramedic they're critical.

THURSTON: Right

MASCARENAS: All of a sudden, they matter, right and how many communities we have now, we need to get a report, the majority are taking advantage of the bonus dollars that we set aside for ALS, because they have those providers in house, until they don't.
The other key part of the fly cars is second calls. So, when you are out of service for a period of time, our fly cars are heeded in your direction. So, if Ti does a run, that ambulance is out of service for a certain amount of hours, we're going to get a fly car down in that area until they're back in service. So, there's some of those things, too, but it really comes down to that level of certification that we need available to provide for all of you. But, if you can provide it locally, you're absolutely right. We need to look at a little future now that we have a year under our belt, I agree with you.

THURSTON: Right, just laser focused on you know what is actually needed for the fly cars and perhaps that expense, because it is very expensive, you know, we might be able to reduce the cost of that by focusing on just those areas that need that additional service.

STANLEY: But, just looking at the numbers for May, about 40% of the calls were canceled for the fly car.

THURSTON: Right

MASCARENAS: Yeah

STANLEY: But that would have still left about 35-40 dropped calls, last month, if that fly car didn't fill out that crew.

THURSTON: But, maybe not though, not necessarily, you know what I mean? I think we need more data, I guess is what I am saying, Matt.

STANLEY: Yeah, but I guess what I am saying is, if that fly car is assisting in providing ALS service for 18 or 78 calls, they treated or transferred to another care 5 calls, they were standby or completed a crew; completing a crew would have been a dropped call. So, I mean you're looking at a level of care, yeah, there's a cost, but none of our agencies are able to respond 100% of the time to everything.

THURSTON: I am not suggesting to do away with the fly cars, I'm not saying that. I am saying let's look at where they're being utilized the most and maybe focus on those areas. That is all I am trying to say.

FAVRO: Yeah, I will say that we've gotten them to look at, we have IAM Responding, which is that computer program, the cell phone app. Dispatch is looking to see who's on call, who has ALS, so we're not putting a fly car, in so, like Ticonderoga, if they have two providers that are ALS between Lamoille and Ticonderoga, we're not going to set a fly car in Ticonderoga, we're going to take it to Moriah or somewhere. I am not saying that if something big happens that they won't go to Ti, but we're trying to shift them around to where they're getting utilized more efficiently.

THURSTON: That is all I am trying to say. Let's focus on where they need to be.

FAVRO: Yup

WOOD: I just had a little bit of a statement, I get exactly what you're saying, and I approve of getting that information, but if you think of the fly cars like an insurance policy, if you don't use it, fine, but if you need it and it's there. You know don't go to the Travelers at the end of the year and say, I didn't have an accident, give me my premium back. You know, so I just think maximizing our information is great, but I think it's a wonderful extra step.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, and the other thing, too, is you've got to think about the economics of it. Nothing is done in a silo; we sometimes look at it like it is. Where there's events happening in our County, which the Number One economic driver is tourism, it's all hands on deck. We're sending people everywhere. People don't see it, people don't know it's happening, but there's an awful lot of work in the background to make sure that the Ironman is staffed, those things are staffed and a lot of different agencies involved, all of our fly car people are involved, those types of people, getting them. So, we just want to be careful that we don't cut something that look somewhat trivial on paper, but that then leads to the loss of economic development and growth on the back end of our tourism industry. So, those are all things that we want to look at.

STANLEY: And I think it's a great thing to bring up, because also then to know that they're monitoring where things are, so it's a good conversation that we are on board. I know that when I drive around, I usually see a fly car every day, somewhere. Not necessarily in my town, but I see Essex County Emergency Services somewhere in the County. So, they're on the move and like very rarely see one that's sitting somewhere.

THURSTON: I hear about it when they sit.

STANLEY: Of course

FAVRO: I do, too.

MASCARENAS: And I tell people, thank you, they're doing their job.

STANLEY: Any other discussion about EMS? Okay, we want to touch base on radio, real quick?

FAVRO: I can, a few things, nothing too deep this time, but like Matt had said earlier, there's a lot of information that will pass through that is better in a smaller setting, if possible, with somethings I would like to go into executive session, because we don't necessarily want our radio system information getting out to everybody. So, I think it will be much more beneficial to have a nice conversation in this room than out there with everybody else.
We have a Motorola maintenance contract for our system; it was up a month ago. We've filed with a 3-month extension with them. We've been, along with Jim, Mike, myself, have been working close with them to try and dig through that contract and see what we need and what we don't need and since we've got people with more knowledge or we have more knowledge ourselves, onboard, we're looking into maybe taking a little bit of that role that we were paying Motorola to do. It's a super expensive contract and it goes up every year. So, if we can try and take some more responsibility on for ourselves, now that we have the knowledge base, we're going to do that.
I'd like to see what everybody thinks, maybe after Ways and Means or whenever it works for everybody to go to the Belfry Mountain Radio Site. I would like to bring everybody up there and then have Nate and Mike, kind of walk everybody through what the site is and how it operates. You know, there was a question about lightening protection a couple of meetings ago, we can show exactly what's put in place to prevent lightening strikes and whatnot. I would also like you to see the radio equipment and know that there's a piece of equipment that is that size that's about $30,000.00, just to get a better grasp of what we're talking about.

STANLEY: Just thinking that it might be good to do after the next Regular Board, because have a housing meeting after Ways and Means.

FAVRO: I was actually going to talk to Jim about possibly getting a bus, if that's easier for everybody and taking a field trip. But I think it's going to benefit everybody to have some sort of understanding for yourself, to when we say, we just got hit by lightning, and that little gizmo that I showed you up there is broken, you at least have an idea of what we're talking about. Ken and I was it, Thursday, went to Terry Mountain, so he's got an idea of what that site looks like.

HUGHES: That was awesome.

FAVRO: And I open that offer up to anybody, I encourage you guys to get to know the infrastructure and what we have invested, so that we can have more of a collaborative discussion moving forward.

MASCARENAS: And Belfry is one of your easier ones to access, but you still will need some hiking boots or proper attire is necessary, let's say that. Terry not so much. It's a different one and I think when you

see some of the sites in person, you realize the enormity of, because it's one out of many and the job is huge. Just as we get that kind of response rate, the success rate that we get now is kind of crazy.

THURSTON: I am just speaking for myself, because I live so far from here, sometimes it's difficult for me to go on these trips, because then I am out of the office all day and Monday is always stuff. It would be wonderful if you could do a video of the sites and you know give us, send us an email with the link to the video so we could actually see it, but not necessarily spend 3-hours going through it. If that makes any sense.

FAVRO: Yeah, we can do something like that. There's also, we have a site on Mt. Pisgah, that for you would be more of a logical trip.

THURSTON: Sure, yeah.

STANLEY: Any other questions?

HUGHES: I just have something I would like to contribute. I think when you're talking about, we talked to Josh about, not just radio communication and technology, but also security around the radio sites. What the County is doing to protect these assets from any type of terror threat or any type of outside, you know, somebody gets drunk with a shotgun or something like that. You know, just having some eyes on our sites or barriers or whatever that is, whatever's best, I think that should be explored and implemented. These are too important to fail for any reason.

FAVRO: Yeah

HUGHES: It's an aspect of perimeter security that I think is really important.

FAVRO: Yup

STANLEY: Any other questions?

TANSEY: When we were talking about the radio towers, the radio towers are also a source of revenue for the County. We do make these individuals pay rent. If you have a contact, you know somebody that's an expert on renting radio towers, can you let us know, please. Josh and I have been kind of working in a bit of, he's going to hate for me to say this, but in a bit of a vacuum, as to how much we're charging.

STANLEY: So, there was a contact, I can look through my stuff, there was somebody who talked at an Emergency Communications thing at Association of Towns, because that is what they do for a living.

TANSEY: That would be great. We have a town that has a highway access antenna, and they want $100 a month.

WOOD: That's too cheap.

THURSTON: That is way too cheap.

THURSTON: Verizon is paying $2,300 with a 3% escalator, again, I think that's well under the market value.

HUGHES: I will share my stuff with you, because we do that in Essex.

TANSEY: Fantastic.

STANLEY: Awesome, any other questions? Alright, if there's none, we're adjourned.

AS THERE WAS NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS SUBCOMMITTEE, IT WAS ADJOURNED AT 9:27 AM.

Respectively Submitted,

Dina Garvey, Deputy Clerk
Board of Supervisors