

***Vermont Regional EMS Coordination Study  
Executive Meeting Notes  
Regional Stakeholder Meeting  
Brown Public Library, Northfield, VT  
October 11, 2023***

This meeting began at 6pm, with 29 stakeholders in attendance, and opened with remarks from Travis Howe, founder and CEO of Emergency Management Matters. A background of the Vermont Regional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) coordination study was given by Mr. Howe, and it was explained that while there would be ample opportunity for open-floor comments, the focus would be on the following objectives, which are listed within the contract.

- Issues related to costs of service, cost effectiveness of various current service models, and cost-effective alternative service models.
- Existing funding models and identify long-term sustainable funding strategies.
- Challenges and opportunities related to local and regional emergency response coordination.
- EMS district structure, authority, duties, and the number of districts.

After examining a handout of key takeaways and themes from other meetings, the audience was asked for possible solutions. was highlighted by the stakeholders present:

- There has been an increase in mental health calls for EMS. Many are treat and release patients or the call results in refusals, which creates a loss for EMS, as these calls lack reimbursement. There is a need for more mental health services in the State and the ability for EMS to adapt more easily.
- It was noted that elected officials lack knowledge of EMS and the associated costs and staffing problems. After decades of volunteerism, services must provide professional staff to ensure people are receiving high-quality pre-hospital care. When asked if they need help in this area (telling their story and planning,) services said they would welcome assistance. One EMS service Chief stated she does not have time to commit to leadership tasks due to needing to be on the ambulance a lot and focus on the day-to-day issues surrounding staffing and response.

- Many services seem to still rely on donations and small contributions but the cost of running an EMS system has increased. Coupled with the need for professional and competent staff, services are closing due to a lack of taxpayer support.
- A select board member who was present stated there is a need for more education on EMS for elected officials. She mentioned the struggles surrounding funding EMS after years of not having to worry about it.
- While it was noted that EMS must recruit younger people, it is difficult due to not being able to offer a living wage, benefits and retirement options. Many stated the need for State retirement benefits for EMS. As of now, EMS is being used by many as a stepping stone trade.
- There is a need for advocacy, education, business-level education, leadership education, and more for service Chiefs and board-level members.