

Peninsulas EMS Council CISM Team  
Special Called Meeting  
January 15, 2008

**Members present:**

Faith Smagalski  
Hershel Kreis  
Barbara Vest  
Dawn Linton  
John Gleason  
Ralph Worley  
Jeff Hammack  
Ellen Vest

Ellen began the meeting at 7:08 by explaining the proposal by the Office of EMS to redistrict the 11 existing regional councils into 7. The proposal eliminates the Peninsulas EMS Council, dividing the region at the Piankatank River. The northern neck and all of the Middle Peninsula with the exception of Mathews and Gloucester would be with the central Virginia region now known as ODEMSA, and the Peninsula with Gloucester and Mathews would align with the region now known as TEMS. She explained the recent council study and new legislation and how these paved the way for this. While the regional councils knew that this was in the planning, no one expected it at this time. There is a public comment period through the end of February. The time that this is scheduled to go into effect is July 1, 2009.

The approach that the Council is taking is resistance – at least through the comment period. Contacts are being made to municipal and agency leaders to inform them of this proposal. Included in the handouts at the meeting was a letter sample for those leaders to send to their representatives. Other handouts at the meeting included a map of the current council boundaries, one of the proposed redistricting, and a list of the objectives used by OEMS to support the plan. (Links to these are available on the PEMS webpage at [www.peninsulas.vaems.org](http://www.peninsulas.vaems.org).)

Ralph pointed out that this is probably already to go in the General Assembly, or it can be put into place by the Commissioner by Executive Decision. Too much time and money has gone into it for it to be very optional.

Ellen explained that the team itself may be faced with some options. 1) It could be divided and merged with the other regions, or 2) It can remain intact as the Peninsulas CISM Team and serve both other regions. In that case, what is lost is the administration offered by the PEMS Council. No decision was made nor does one NEED to be made at this time. The overall attitude is that the members of the team will remain available for whichever agency or individual in public safety has a need. Ellen went on to explain that there is a lot of fear,

anger, and insecurity in parts of the region. Already there has been a report that someone did not call the team because “it no longer exists.”

Ralph focused on making it clear to a few of our legislators that if this comes across their desks, to look at it carefully and with caution. Money and power is usually behind moves like this. He suggests that focusing on the primary goals of education, marketing, standardization, and inspection would do the same and possibly more at a lower cost. Jeff explained that the regional councils are involved in facilitating, not regulating and that the final step of Ralph’s focal points needs to stay in Richmond. Ralph also expressed concern over diminishing the resources should there be a disaster or terrorist event. By downsizing to seven regional councils, you lose the leadership and infrastructure that currently exists in the other four.

Ralph said that the first thing to do is find out where this “ball” is in the process. He suggested writing emails, not letters. He will write one to Phil Hamilton. Barbara will send one to Harvey Morgan (if Ellen will write it) and John offered to send one to the new York County representative.

After other discussion not directly related to the matter at hand, the meeting adjourned at 8:30.

Submitted by Ellen Vest  
January 17, 2008