

November 29, 2022s

A Special Joint Work Session with the Danville City Council and the Danville Life Saving Crew was held on November 29, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at the Danville Area Training Center located at 630 Randolph Street, Danville, VA. The following Council Members were present: James B. Buckner, Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo L. Jones, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle (5).

Staff Members present were: City Manager Ken F. Larking, Deputy City Manager Earl B. Reynolds, City Attorney W. Clarke Whitfield, Jr., City Clerk Susan M. DeMasi, Assistant to the City Manager Amanda Paez, Public Information Officer Arnold Hendrix, and Danville Fire Department Chief David Coffey.

Mayor Jones presided.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Odell Tate, Danville Life Saving Crew Chaplain and Life Member.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Mayor Jones asked Council Members and City staff to introduce themselves, thanked everyone for being there, and introduced Chief Robbie Woodall.

Danville Life Saving Crew Chief Robbie Woodall stated he appreciated City Council, City staff, and everyone else for taking the time to come out tonight, and introduced the Board of Director members for the Life Saving Crew: Board President Mr. Wade Collins, Vice President Mr. Chris Eastwood, Ricky Dix, Lawrence Eldridge, Chris Elliott, Bill Harville, Barry Richmond, Sheriff Mike Taylor, and Keister Whitt. He introduced Advisory Board members Thomas Gay and Brian Wilson, Training Center Board members President Chief Neal Morris, Vice President Jim Bebeau, Bill Hastings, Brian Wilson, and himself. Staff members in attendance included Deputy Chief of Operations Brian Fox, Division Chief of Community Health Johnny Mills, Director of the Training Center Brian Alderson, and Administrative Consultant Martha Walker.

Mr. Wilson reviewed his PowerPoint presentation, noting in 1945, sixteen businessmen in the City of Danville came up with the idea to start a rescue squad; they were one of the first in Virginia. Roanoke was the first, they followed that model and created the Danville Life Saving Crew. Their mission was to provide prehospital care to the sick and injured in the community. Over the last 75 years they have continued to redesign the organization, meet their mission, and continue to grow their vision. Mr. Wilson explained they have visited and studied other rescue squads and fire departments, not only to learn what to do but what not to do. They were able to design a program they feel was going to be state of the art, and were already getting questions from other rescue squads in other localities about how they combine volunteer and paid staff, and still accomplish what they want to accomplish.

Mr. Wilson explained the Danville Area Training Center was not a Lifesaving Crew operation, they have a board of directors and not everyone on that board was Life Saving Crew associated. The idea behind the Danville Area Training Center was so they can train with the Fire Department, Pittsylvania County, and those areas can send people to be trained. They provide services to everyone including Danville Community College, and have entered into a partnership with DCC to provide EMT training.

Mr. Wilson noted for years, the Life Saving Crew was all volunteer. Now, recruitment has become one of their biggest things. Their system was designed to have no intention of doing away with

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volunteers; volunteers were good for the City. It gives people the opportunity to give back to their community, and it was great for the young people. They bring young people into the Life Saving Crew at 16 and 17-years-old, they can take EMT classes and be trained. They introduce them to healthcare, and they make career choices based on that training. Mr. Wilson noted the organizational structure of the Life Saving Crew was comprised of volunteers and career staff.

Life Savers consist of fifty-six EMTs and about 50% of their membership was now Advanced Life Support trained. They were working with Chief Coffey to start a program in January 2023 to train some of their responders in Advanced Life Support as well. Their goal was for every EMT to move to an ASL level. Ultimately, they want as many EMT paramedics and intermediates as they can get. Mr. Wilson reviewed the dispatches handled in 2021 from their three locations in the City: Clayton T. Lester Crew Hall located at 202 Christopher Lane, Northside Station located at 121 Maplewood Street, and the Danville Area Training Center located at 630 Randolph Street. Their average response time was seven minutes; they want to improve that because of population and needs.

Community Paramedicine was a unique and innovative model of care that allows EMTs to operate on a broader scope. With this program, providers can reach out to area residents to help them live more independent and successful lives. This program also helps to reduce the abuse of the 9-1-1 system where people were calling in nonemergency related calls. These were people who need help with no one else to turn to. Last year, the crew provided fifty-eight standby operations free of charge for the community at locations such as G.W. home football games, Averett University home football games, various rugby tournaments, and other various community events. Most of these events were covered by volunteers.

The Danville Lifesaving Crew maintains five special operations teams designed to respond to specific incidents. The Dive Team provides specialized search and rescue operations in water environments. Divers were certified at all levels from open water through dive master as well as having members certified as diving instructors. The Drone Program expands the crew's service capacity by providing location mapping, locating patients and missing persons, identifying hot spots during fires, and supporting large events. Their drones were now equipped with thermal imaging, drop systems, and laser pinpointed location systems. There were five members of the crew who were certified by the Federal Aviation Administration as drone handlers. Last year their Heavy Rescue truck was used for 642 individuals facing dangerous situations. Heavy rescue operators were men and women trained to drive and operate the crash trucks which house the equipment used to safely remove the individual from the entanglements. Rescue Task Force was a team of specially trained personnel equipped to partner with law enforcement on high risk calls in which there may be an active threat such as drug raids. The Swiftwater Rescue Team works hand in hand with the Danville Fire department. This team responds to incidents involving watercrafts in distress, man overboard missions, flooding events, and more. They typically receive five to seven calls a year.

Mr. Wilson noted in 2021 they helped 15,770 neighbors; they do standbys, convalescent transport, and all of those were reportable events. They had 266 helicopter transfers this past year where they take the patient to the helipad and back. This was not a billable service and they do not get paid for it. With all the changes coming to the City, they were looking into what they can do to improve services when more people and industries come into Danville. The Advanced Life Support transport truck, fully stocked, cost \$475,000. The Medical Transport, or convalescent transport, was around \$225,000 fully stocked. The difference was that the ALS truck was basically an emergency room on wheels. You can get four to five people in the back working on an individual if needed where you cannot do that in a medical transport. Response vehicles were

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running at about \$100,000. They currently have two ALS that run full time and six other response vehicles. The crash truck now runs about \$1.6M with no equipment and a thirty month wait time. They have two crash trucks that ran around \$1.2M fully stocked. They have a lot of boats that they can pick up and carry in addition to their regular boats stocked with equipment, totaling around \$250,000. Trail rescue was something relatively new; they use Kubota's that were fully stocked to go onto trails and community events where a normal sized vehicle cannot. Keeping trucks on the road cost around \$2.6M in staff, \$276,000 in facilities, and \$454,000 in fleet vehicles. Additional fleet costs includes gas and oil at \$85,000, special operations at \$22,000, medical supplies at \$139,000 and vehicle maintenance at \$210,000. In 2021, over 29% of calls were answered by their volunteers resulting in an in-kind donation of time and service totaling over \$750,000.

Mr. Wilson reviewed the geographic distribution area of patients noting the Eastside was where they want to go now because it was an underserved population. The Eastside would be North Main up into the northside section and across Halifax Road and back around towards the Institute. They do a lot of things in that area especially with community paramedicine; the challenge was economic. The Eastside Station will also service the River District with a shorter response time. Increased costs were a challenge as they were aware, just like with everything the City was doing, costs were going up. They feel like response to need and call demand were going to be a large number moving forward with more going on in the City, and that was going to be a challenge.

The Rescue Squad has secured the property for the Eastside Station; the cost was \$605,000 to purchase the buildings and property on 58E. They have to renovate those buildings to accommodate the services; that was what they wanted to talk to Council about tonight and how they may be able to help. The Life Saving Crew Eastside Station and the Community Health Division were the two services that will be at that location. They were planning to move the community paramedicine to the Eastside station so that they have room to grow. They work with a lot of agencies within the City, and they also project that number to grow. The other renovations needed included putting in three double truck bays, bedrooms, a locker room, and restrooms. Onsite they will be able to do 24-hour service as well. Mr. Wilson reviewed the designs for the community health center including patient areas, offices, reception, conference rooms, and restrooms.

Mr. Wilson reviewed the funding and grants they receive to operate and stated their objective was to ask the City of Danville to consider \$1.2M for renovations at Eastside station. The investment was minimal compared to what was going to come out of that; the rescue station, and the paramedicine facility, were meeting the needs of the community. Also, with all the new industry and business coming to the Institute, this station will be much needed.

Mayor Jones thanked Mr. Wilson for his presentation and for all that they do, and stated that today would be part of their budget discussions with Mr. Larking and Mr. Reynolds. Mayor Jones noted Mr. Wilson talked about DCC and all the standbys but was there anything moving forward with Danville Public Schools. Mr. Woodall stated that Mr. Wilson frequently goes into the schools for a "Stop the Bleed" program as well as CPR certification classes for teachers.

Council Member Vogler thanked them for a fantastic presentation and for the work that they do day in and day out. Council Member Hood noted that he also looked forward to reviewing the budget and the \$1.2M for the Eastside Station. Council Member Buckner thanked Mr. Wilson for his presentation and stated they always do an excellent job, they appreciate it, he was interested in taking a look at this and seeing what they can do. Council Member Whittle thanked them for a

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good meeting. What this all comes back to was what it was going to save the City and when they look at that number it will reflect in the budget.

Assistant to the City Manager, Amanda Paez asked them to speak a little more about the Community Paramedicine program and how does that interact or compliment the community health worker program that was going on in the City. Mr. Mills explained they were partnered with the REACH foundation which was part of the community health workers program. They have two other employees who will start their training the first of the year; they work hand in hand together.

Danville Fire Chief, Chief Coffey stated that it has been a good relationship with Mr. Wilson and the Training Center. They mentioned that it was about what was best for the community and a lot of times the Fire Department was the first on the scene and it was a helpless feeling when to get there and not be able to do anything. They were looking at sending City staff to advanced EMT classes and Mr. Wilson stepped up; Chief Coffey noted he thought it was going to be a good working relationship.

City Manager Ken Larking thanked them for their presentation, and stated that he appreciated the relationship that the City has with the Life Saving Crew. Mayor Jones thanked them for hosting Council tonight and for the excellent presentation.

Mr. Woodall thanked them for coming out and invited them to walk through the facility and engage with staff. Mr. Wilson once again thanked everyone for coming out and encouraged them to tour the facility and learn about what they do.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK