

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
of the NEBRASKA
BOARD OF Emergency
Medical Services
Friday, December 13, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, & DECLARATION OF QUORUM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Nebraska Board of Emergency Medical Services was called to order by Dr. James Smith, Board Chairperson, at 10:32 a.m., Friday, December 13, 2024, at the Nebraska State Office Building, Lincoln NE 68508. Copies of the agenda were emailed in advance to the Board members, emailed to interested parties, and posted on the Department of Health and Human Services website. Smith announced the location of an available copy of the Open Meetings Act within the room.

ROLL CALL

The following board members were present to answer roll call:

- Ryan Batenhorst
- Dr. Noah Bernhardson
- Randy Boldt
- Karen Bowlin
- Joel Cerny
- Ann Fiala
- Todd Hovey
- Linda Jensen
- Jonathan Kilstrom
- Brent Lottman
- Dion Neumiller
- Dr. James Smith

The following Board members were absent:

- Dr. Shaila Coffey
- Dr. Prince Harrison
- Carolyn Petersen-Moore
- Leslie Vaughn

The following staff members from the Department and the Attorney General's Office were also present during all or part of the meeting:

- Regan Blackwell
- Tonja Bohling
- Melissa Johnson-Wiles, *Assistant Attorney General*
- Diane Schoch
- Wendy Snodgrass
- Sharon Steele
- Tim Wilson

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present, and the meeting convened.

10:34 Shaila Coffey joined the meeting.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Batenhorst made the motion, seconded by Fiala, to adopt the agenda for the 12/13/2024, Board of Emergency Medical Services meeting.

These minutes have been approved by the
Board of EMS on 2/7/2025.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: Bowlin made the motion, seconded by Jensen, to approve the minutes of the 9/9/2024 meeting.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

CLOSED SESSION

MOTION: Boldt made the motion, seconded by Bowlin, for the Board to go into closed session for the purpose of reviewing and discussing investigative reports, licensure applications, and other confidential information, and for the prevention of needless injury to the reputation of the individuals.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

10:37 *Meeting went into closed session.*
11:33 *Meeting returned to Open Session.*

LICENSURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Amanda Jarchow – EMT APPLICATION

MOTION: Batenhorst made the motion, seconded by Bowlin, to recommend denial for EMT application for failure to cooperate with investigation and previous convictions.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

Dr. Smith Introduced Shaila Coffey to the Board and had her tell a little about herself.

AGENDA ITEM: OFFICE OF EMERGENCY HEALTH SYSTEMS

Program reports were submitted for Board review prior to the meeting and were in the portal.

- a. Licensing: Wilson gave an update in addition to the written report submitted report. There are 13 EMS Services issued to date in 2024. There are a couple pending (one new service and one upgrade from a BLS to an ALS service). 696 licenses were issued in 2024 (501 EMTs, 106 paramedics, 25 Advanced EMTs, 25 EMRs, and 39 EMS Instructors). He also reminded everyone, with the regulatory changes, license renewal for Paramedic, Advanced EMTs, EMRs, EMT Intermediate, ALS Services, BLS Services, and EMS Instructors will be renewing by March 31, 2025. Renewal notices will be sent out in the beginning of January 2025. Information will be sent out for ALS and BLS service licensure renewals because those will not be renewable via the online portal. The licensing software system will be upgraded in February 2025. The Department is not sure how this will affect the renewal process.

Wilson also gave an update on the progress of LB1108. LB1108 was passed in the Legislature this past year, transferring \$1.27 million to the Fifty Cents For Life Fund. This will almost double the budget for the OEHS Program. Administration wants an implementation plan on how funding

will be used. This is preliminary depending on review by the Board and Department administration. There are 3 categories for the use of the money.

1. Support the EMS Practice Act, the statute that sets guidelines for the use of the 50 Cents For Life cash fund and support the LB1108 additions to it. The intention is to continue support for the EMS and Trauma registry systems. The five-year contract for this is just starting from the request for proposal process, after which it will go out to competitive bid. The average annual cost of this is \$296,826. The program is also requesting, along with the registry system, Epidemiology support to evaluate EMS data from the PCR and Trauma registry system.
2. Financial support for recruitment, retention, and sustainability of Nebraska EMS. The EMS statewide assessment has been incorporated into this. This assessment will be used along with information regarding EMS services to establish a broad stakeholder group to help facilitate coordinated effort for the future of EMS in Nebraska. Funding will be needed to support this stakeholder group. A shift will be made in the role/functionality of the EMS Specialist. The number of EMS Specialists will be increased from four to five, dividing the state from four into five regions. Staff training will be provided as well as the development of an EMS Service At-Risk Assessment Tool to determine which services are at-risk and prioritizing them; and develop the EMS Workforce Assessment to assess the actual EMS workforce in Nebraska.
3. Training, education, accessibility of initial and continuing education. The Department has worked closely with the State EMS training agencies to market EMS education, increase communication to local departments of course offerings and locations, increase the number of students completing the course, and increase pass rates for the certification exam. One of the collaboration projects is the development of a software application for training so people have quick access to potential classes, locations, times, remote versus in-person, etc. This app could then be expanded with other program offerings. Other ideas are to utilize an aptitude exam for EMS, a certification preparation exam mobile application, and assisting with in-person skills training and psychomotor exams with the training agencies. OEHS would also like to work with the training agencies to get students the technology they need to take some of the online courses.

11:49 *Batenhorst left.*

11:50 *Batenhorst returned.*

Wilson reminded everyone this funding is to support the EMS Medical Services Practice Act, the State Trauma System Act, the activities related to the maintenance and enhancement of the Statewide Trauma system (this includes an assessment statewide of the trauma system through the American College of Surgeons (ACS)), EMSC program, OEHS training, maintaining an EMS statewide model protocol application, Physician Medical Director (PMD) training funds, and for marketing education and conferences for EMS, Trauma, and CISM. Department administration has done a preliminary review and would like to make sure the Board agrees with this implementation plan. A motion and approval from the Board would help to support the plan.

MOTION: Cerny made the motion, seconded by Fiala, to support the LB1108 implementation plan.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

- a.
- b. EMS Program: Carol Jorgensen virtually gave an update in addition to the written report submitted. The total number of Licensed EMS services changed from 426 to 427. The telehealth project is nearing the end of the first year with a few services trickling on. The number of volunteer services is around 380.

- c. Education and Training Agency Compliance: Wendy Snodgrass gave an update in addition to the written report submitted. She is in the process of getting a contract established for leadership training course to be held at Mid Plains Community College, North Platte. Once this is done, the registration information will be coming out. She also reminded if anyone has topics or names of potential presenters for 2025 Zoom continuing education classes, please get ahold of her.
- d. Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) Program: Blackwell gave an update on the EMSC program in addition to the written report submitted. She is working to get all the programs and activities up to speed. Three hospitals have been updated and there is one EMS Agency to go. Pushing out all the programs is her priority. She is updating all those programs to reach the performance measures that were updated recently. PECC promotional and informational materials out to services and pushed out and PEP courses out. The EMS Recognition program is being revamped. Changes with hospital designations will be made to incorporate Pediatric designations so Pediatric Hospital will be melded with Trauma designations. Blackwell will work with Schoch on this.
- e. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program: Becka Neumiller virtually gave an update in addition to the written report submitted. CISM course dates are decided on but attaining the venue is in process. Once these are solidified the information will be posted to the website.
- f. Stroke/STEMI Program: Becka Neumiller virtually gave an update in addition to the written report submitted. B. Neumiller has been putting out reference materials onto the website. The Task Force has filled the EMS Paramedic position.
- g. Trauma Program: Diane Schoch gave an update in addition to the written report submitted. 2025 is a high designation/redesignation year. The Avera Creighton redesignation has been completed. Winnebago Comprehensive Healthcare System will look to apply for designation in 2025.
- h. EHS Data Systems: No updates in addition to the written report submitted. Work on the NEMSIS transition from 3.4 to 3.5 continues. A regrouping session was held yesterday. The goal is to have preliminary work done by January 17, 2025.
- i. Statewide Physician Medical Director Update: Dr. Ernest gave an update. Protocol updates: two Zoom sessions were held throughout Nebraska with approximately 500 in attendance. The protocol revisions are being finalized and Dr. Ernest will have these out in the next week or so. There will be a required check box for protocol training for EMS Services. Fiala asked about color and layering for those with color blindness. This will be evaluated. There has been one training for the protocol mobile application so far. There are 73 users of the application currently. Dr. Ernest encouraged doing an application training first. Technical issues should be reported to the Department. Board members not on services can join the application via DHHS. The Department is checking into access for, hospitals, the Department, and training agencies. Working on PMD protocols and training is the next order of business.

The Board took a short break to get lunch at 12:15 p.m., resumed at 12:33 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM: ANALYSIS OF EMS STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

Ryan Batenhorst reported on the EMS Statewide Assessment. They want to make data-informed decisions. There are eight themes: 1) Workforce Shortages & Volunteerism 2) Funding Challenges 3) Public & Governmental Awareness 4) System Integration & Planning 5) Provider Wellbeing 6) Leadership Development 7) Data Driven Simulating 8) Systemic Change & Technical Assistance.

Models, suggestions, and strategies need to be shared. There is a need for public awareness and to leverage relationships with stakeholders. Discussion was held. Smith requested to have the full document available on the website and sent to the Board along with Batenhorst's summary. It was suggested the Board produce a Board summary regarding this assessment. Jensen asked what can the citizens and community do? Other suggestions were to put a hyperlink to the document and/or summary, developing an EMS Board brief/summary and get it to the Senators along with Batenhorst's summary of the assessment. Wilson and Smith will discuss the suggestions together after the Board meeting. This topic will be addressed again in the next Board meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: EMS BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee reports were given by committee members.

- a. Legislative/Rules and Regulation Committee
 - i. Approve committee members to interact with government officials and stakeholders. Discussion was held.

MOTION: Kilstrom made the motion, seconded by Batenhorst to approve the Legislative Committee members to interact with government officials and stakeholders during the upcoming Legislative session.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

A reminder was made regarding Senator open houses during the holiday season. Board representation at these open houses is encouraged but should not exceed a quorum.

- b. Scope of Practice Committee
 - i. Model Protocol Revision – The Revised EMS Skills Comparison chart will be handed out at the next meeting for a vote for Board approval.
 - ii. Proposed changes/additions/deletions – Fiala presented a protocol for the LifeVac Anti-Choking/Suction Device that was discussed in the Committee meeting. Coffey reported about issues and studies in Iowa with the conclusion the benefit does not outweigh the risks. The device is registered with the FDA but not approved by the FDA. The Scope of Practice Committee recommended to leave it up to the individual services and their Medical Directors for approval for use, stating, “the Board neither strongly supports nor opposes its use.”

MOTION: Fiala made the motion, seconded by Bowlin to approve the position that the EMS Board neither strongly supports nor opposes the use of the LifeVac anti-choking/suction device and this decision will be deferred to the individual services and their respective Medical Directors. Discussion was held.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

Smith, Wilson, and Hovey commented on an electrical vertical takeoff and landing of drones with EMTs. Smith will send out a video to any Board members interested.

Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) and Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) forms in EMS were discussed. Formerly there was not just one form that everyone could use that was universal. Currently this is in an online platform that is accessible for the people on-scene that give patients DNR status and their Advanced Directives. It is sent via email to dispatch, and information can be relayed to the responding units. Smith offered to invite POSLT to come and give an update on this.

Discussion was held regarding collection of blood from deceased patients for medical/research purposes and if this falls within a paramedic’s scope to do intracardiac aspiration on a deceased person. It was suggested to table the discussion until legal weighs in on this topic.

MOTION: Bernhardson made the motion, seconded by Jensen to table the discussion regarding if it is within the scope of practice for a paramedic to do intracardiac aspiration on a deceased patient to obtain a collection of blood.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

- c. Education Committee – Hovey gave an update. There are grant options for 2025. If you have suggestions on ways to get interest for that let Hovey know. Pass rates for 2023 are available. These utilized individual training agencies pass rates. The Comparison Chart is in an email to Board members.
- d. Workforce Committee – Cerny gave an update. Retention issues were discussed as current providers are aging out. Discussion was also had in relation to retention regarding increasing a tax credit. Leadership training was also discussed with the suggestion that training needs to be available weekends or evenings.

AGENDA ITEM: NEBRASKA STATE VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION (NSVFA)

Cerny gave an update. The NSVFA Fire School committee met December 7, 2024, to start setting up classes for the 2025 Fire School which will be held May 23, 24, and 25, 2025. There will be a three-segmented EMS classes with one group a paramedic-level training.

Cerny, Troy Shoemaker, and Daniel Chapek were sent to the VCOS Symposium in the Sun in Clearwater, Florida on November 13-17, 2024, where they attended classes on Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers. All their expenses were covered by the NSVFA SAFER Grant 4. They are now tasked to start going out to departments and teaching what they learned. A group of people will also be sent to the NVFC Training Summit in Utah in June 2025 with the same stipulations.

The NSVFA's Recruitment & Retention committee has been working on applying for the next SAFER Grant 5. The grant application is due mid-January 2025.

The NSVFA will be seeking legislation to increase the tax credit amount individual Emergency Responders can receive, from the \$250.00 level it is at now.

He also gave an OSHA update. Cerny and Micheal Dwyer were among around 400 people that virtually testified with OSHA. They will be opening for public comment on Jan.18, 2025. With the election results, the chance of the new standard, Seeing the Light of Day, are slim but we still need to keep on top of it as it will never go away. Anyone needing more information please go to NVFC.org/OSHA-standard. Even though Nebraska is considered a non-OSHA state, fire departments are business-based 501C based and they will need to follow this standard.

The NSVFA's breakfast with the senators will be at 9:00 a.m. January 21, 2025, in The Nebraska State Bar Association, Ruska Conference Room, 635 South 14th Street, Suite 130, Lincoln.

AGENDA ITEM: NEBRASKA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION (NEMSA)

Marlene gave an update on NEMSA. The NEMSA Super Conference is being held on March 7-9, 2025, at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney, NE. The Senator's breakfast will be from 8-9 a.m. on March 25, 2025, at The Nebraska State Bar Association in Lincoln.

AGENDA ITEM: TRAINING AGENCY DIRECTORS

Cherri Fuehring reported. A focus workgroup has been formed to put out a statement of what Emergency Medical Services are and how EMS is related to the medical field. January 14, 2025, is the due date. The Training Agency Directors are looking at getting connected with the Legislature. Data and numbers may be needed, and they will reach out to the EMS Board and the Department if necessary.

AGENDA ITEM: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Smith entertained a motion that pro tempore be enacted to make Joel Cerny chair during the executive committee elections.

MOTION: Bowlin made the motion, seconded by Boldt to enact pro tempore and make Joel Cerny chair during the executive committee elections.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: Cerny. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

Cerny called for nominations from the floor for Chair. Dr. James Smith was nominated to continue as EMS Board Chair. No other nominations were given.

MOTION: Boldt made the motion, seconded by Neumiller to cease nominations and re-elect Smith as Board Chair by vote of acclimation.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, and Neumiller. Voting No: None. Abstain: Smith. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

Cerny called for nominations for Vice-Chair from the floor. Ann Fiala was nominated to continue as EMS Board Vice-Chair. No other nominations were given.

MOTION: Boldt made the motion, seconded by Bowlin to cease nominations and re-elect Fiala as Board Vice-Chair by vote of acclimation.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: Fiala. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

Motion carried.

Cerny called for nominations for Secretary from the floor. Brett Lottman was nominated for EMS Board Secretary. Noah Bernhardson was also nominated for EMS Board Secretary. No other nominations were given. Cerny called for nominations to cease and for a ballot vote for EMS Board Secretary. Noah Bernhardson was elected as the EMS Board Secretary by a ballot vote of 10 to 2.

AGENDA ITEM: 2025 BOARD MEETINGS

Smith announced the 2025 Board meetings.

- a. Proposed 2025 Dates. Friday, February 7; Monday, May 12; Friday, July 11; Monday, September 8; Friday, December 5. Discussion was held. The Monday, May 12, 2025, date was changed to Friday May 9, 2025. Point of Privilege was raised by Boldt. He will be turning 80 years old on February 7, 2025. Chair acknowledged this.

MOTION: Lottman made the motion, seconded by Bowlin to accept the updated proposed 2025 dates with the change of the May date from Monday, May 12, 2025, to Friday, May 9, 2025.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

- b. Smith reminded the Board the next year's postings locations need to be voted on: Current postings are on the OEHS website, public calendar, sent through OEHS contacts, and through the newsletter.

MOTION: Bowlin made the motion, seconded by Hovey to continue with the current meeting postings locations mentioned above for the 2025 meeting year.

Voting Yes: Batenhorst, Bernhardson, Boldt, Bowlin, Cerny, Coffey, Fiala, Hovey, Jensen, Kilstrom, Lottman, Neumiller, and Smith. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison, Petersen-Moore, and Vaughn.

AGENDA ITEM: PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Dwyer commented on the new task force of the Nebraska Hospital Association. This task force is small and focused. Smith asked about the makeup of the task force. Dwyer spoke on LB338, the hospital bill. He gave a plug for the need for data. He was interested in the conversation about preEMS services.

Smith will be putting together Board committees.

John Bomar commented he sent the 90-page EMS Report to all Senators and met with Congressman Flood. During their discussion they agreed Washington DC was not contacted often enough about rural EMS issues. This is not just a Nebraska issue but is a national issue. He also commented on the use of EMRs.

CONCLUSION AND ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 1:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tonja Bohling

Tonja Bohling

OEHS Administrative Technician