

OFFICIAL MINUTES
Caldwell County Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting
June 21, 2023

In Attendance:

Randy T. Church, Chairman
Jeff Branch, Commissioner
Donnie Potter, Commissioner
Robbie Wilkie, Commissioner
Donald Duncan, County Manager
Abigail Rich, County Clerk

Absent:

Mike LaBrose, Vice Chairman

Chairman Church called the June 21, 2023, meeting to order at 11:38 AM.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for being in attendance.

EMS Director Jonathan Cook introduced the Caldwell County Emergency Services Medical Director Dr. Garrett Snyder. Director Cooke told the Board that Dr. Snyder is currently an ER Physician at Caldwell Memorial Hospital and he approached Caldwell County EMS before UNC Caldwell because he wanted to come to Caldwell County for our EMS program. Director Cooke provided that Dr. Snyder has previously worked as a paramedic and was the assistant Medical Director for Richland County South Carolina. Director Cook continued by saying that Dr. McClinton has stepped back and is now serving as the Assistant Medical Director for Caldwell County. Dr. Snyder handles quality assurance on all medical calls and has revamped the Q & A system for EMS. Director Cook told the Board that Dr. Snyder oversees the yearly RSI training for the EMS staff as well. The RSI success rate has improved from 78% to 90% since DR. Snyder has began serving in this position. Director Cooke said that Dr. Snyder is very hands on with this process. Director Cook continued by saying that the most successful implementation of Dr. Snyder so far is the blood protocol.

Dr. Snyder began by thanking the previous Medical Director for all of the work that she did for the County. He continued by expressing that he did not come to Caldwell County for Caldwell UNC Healthcare, he came specifically for Caldwell County EMS. Dr. Snyder stated that Caldwell County has a bright and brilliant EMS team with young and knowledgeable leaders.

Dr. Snyder continued by explaining how RSI is done by EMS. Commissioner Potter asked if the process of RSI would change if there was a local trauma center added to the area. Dr. Snyder told Commissioner Potter that he does not see this process changing and he feels that this is a skill that most paramedics should have.

Dr. Snyder turned the conversation topic to emergency services employee retention. He stated that Caldwell County is losing paramedics to our local competitors. He mentioned that some of this loss is a natural churn, but he is concerned about losing a large number of paramedics. Dr. Snyder said that it's important for Caldwell County to stay competitive in order to retain EMS employees.

Commissioner Potter asked how EMS could be made a more professional career in Caldwell County and across the Country. Dr. Snyder said there is an education deficit in EMS. There was a discussion about the education paramedics must complete and it was noted that most of the training and education resulted in certificates rather than a degree. The discussion continued with Dr. Snyder explaining that he was spending time retraining some of these EMS employees because they were lacking important skills for the job. The training these workers are receiving from their schooling is not adequate to prepare them for the job. Dr. Snyder also noted that COVID-19 limited the opportunity for clinical training for EMS students.

Commissioner Potter stepped out at 12:07

Commissioner Branch mentioned that the whole education system has suffered from COVID-19.

There was a discussion about the promotion process and the availability for EMS employees to be promoted into higher positions. Dr. Snyder said that it would be beneficial to have more layers of the EMS promotion process, adding in more clinical responsibility.

Commissioner Potter returned at 12:11

There was a brief discussion about the administering of RSI and education/training for all emergency responders, including law enforcement.

Dr. Snyder continued by discussing drug usage within Caldwell County. Recreational use of Methamphetamine and fentanyl is high within the County. Those who overdose on meth and are given Narcan become violent. There was a discussion about how to address this from the EMS perspective. The current overdose rates are high and Chief DiBernardi said that data shown at the State level is not accurate compared to the data that the County has collected.

The next discussion consisted of Dr. Snyder stating that he would like to do a physician field response program. This would include doing simulations above and beyond that the EMS employees are currently doing. A field response program would allow Dr. Snyder to do spot-checking in the field. Dr. Snyder stated that he would like to be integrated into the response structure for emergency calls.

Commissioner Wilkie stepped out at 12:47.

Dr. Snyder continued by saying that he is passionate about a field response program and would like to incorporate a pre-hospital ultrasound. If Caldwell County implemented this, then we would be one of the first rural counties to do so. Dr. Snyder also mentioned that a field response would be beneficial for highly complex incidents.

Commissioner Wilkie returned at 12:50.

Dr. Snyder told a story of an incident where there was potential for field amputation due to entrapment. If this were to happen now in Caldwell County, a surgeon would have to be called to the scene to do the amputation. Dr. Snyder told the Board that the field response would be similar to a community paramedic position and his malpractice insurance already covers the cost of this practice. Dr. Snyder told the Board that he is open to how this could be accomplished.

The conversation shifted to a discussion about non-emergency transportation of patients from the hospital. Dr. Snyder stated that the operations of non-emergency transport have recently been better.

Dr. Snyder asked if there were any questions from the Commissioners.

Chairman Church asked Dr. Snyder how the on-call field response program would work on the days that he is working at UNC Caldwell. Dr. Snyder said that he would be unavailable during those times, so the on-call program would be an "as available" program.

Commissioner Potter stated that he would be in favor of this program but would like to see more information concerning the costs first.

Commissioner Wilkie provided thanks to Dr. Snyder for the update and all the other Board members in attendance provided thanks as well.

The next item was an approval of modifying the recently adopted Resolution for Tax Certification. The amendment will change the effective date to September 1, 2023. Chairman Church made the motion to approve this amendment. The motion carried unanimously.

The last item was a fireworks application for Tri-County Motor Speedway on July 1, 2023. Commissioner Branch made the motion to approve the application. The motion carried unanimously.

With there being no more business to attend to, Commissioner Wilkie made the motion to adjourn at 1:21 PM. The motion carried unanimously.