

**Financial Assistance Review Committee (FARC)  
Quarterly Meeting  
Embassy Suites - Richmond  
Richmond, Virginia  
August 5, 2021  
1:00 PM**

<b>Members Present:</b>	<b>Members Absent:</b>	<b>Administration Staff:</b>	<b>Staff/Other Guests:</b>
Kevin Dillard, Chairman	Donna Hurst	Luke Parker	Sam Burnette
JC Bolling			Tracy Mason
Tracy Hanger			Ed Rhoads
Bruce Stratton			Larry Bird
Joe Trigg			Michael Dover
			Byron Andrews

<b>Topic/Subject</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Recommendations, Action/Follow-up; Responsible Person</b>
<b>I. Call to order - Kevin Dillard, Chairman</b>	Kevin called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the Financial Assistance Review Committee (FARC) Quarterly meeting. Everyone introduced themselves and said who they represented. The Fall Rescue Squad Assistance Fund (RSAF) Grant Cycle just opened up August 1 <sup>st</sup> . The deadline for this cycle is September 15 <sup>th</sup> .	No further action is required
<b>II. Approval of May 2021 Meeting Minutes</b>	The May 6, 2021 minutes were approved as submitted.	No further action is required
<b>III. EMS Equipment Contract Follow-Up Discussion</b>	Luke Parker spoke about the update on the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Equipment Contract. The Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) had a discussion with the Department of General Services (DGS) about having an EMS equipment and vehicles contract. They assigned us a Procurement Manager to write a Request For Proposal (RFP). When Luke asked about an update on the RFP, he received an automated response. The original Procurement Manager, assigned to OEMS, no longer works with DGS. We were assigned another person to oversee this. We received our first draft yesterday. There are two particular parts Luke wanted FARC to look at. They were the Statement of Needs / Services Requested and Specific Plan or Methodology / Approach. Under the Statement of Needs/Services Requested are all of the specifications for EMS vehicles and equipment. You then have the equipment required for the base configurations which include ches compression devices, heart monitors and defibrillators, stair chair, cot and loading system. This RFP also includes remounting services and refurbishment services. Luke asks FARC if	Luke will provide an update on the status of the RFP at the next FARC Quarterly Meeting.

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	<p>there is anything else that needs to be included in this RFP. JC stated that the way the RFP looks now, the ambulances would be required to have all of the equipment that's listed on the RFP. Joe said we need to be careful and make sure we have options to choose from. Luke said the equipment list would be optional. They could pick and choose what they needed. Tracy asked about the refurbished/remounting specifications. Luke said we haven't gotten to that point yet but it is part of the RFP and is still a work in progress. Luke next spoke about the Specific Plan or Methodology Approach. It asks the firm to describe its approach to turnkey vehicle delivery, remounting and refurbishment and how it plans on meeting the needs of this contract on a statewide basis. The Specific Plan or Methodology Approach also asks how firms will approach handling multiple customers on the contract with diverse needs. Additionally firms should answer the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. What the firm's base box is;</li> <li>B. Location of the firm's facilities;</li> <li>C.-Chassis the firm can source broken out by manufacturer. Any relationships with manufacturers should be included here as well. A complete list shall be attached to the proposal and will not count towards the page count. This complete list shall include estimated availability and;</li> <li>D. Medical Equipment the firm can source and any strategic relationships it has with manufacturers of the equipment. A complete list can be provided alongside the proposal and will not count towards the page count;</li> <li>E. What wheel drive variants the firm can provide and what engine options it provides that meet the requirements in the statement of needs;</li> <li>F. The firm's interior and cab options.</li> </ul> <p>Luke stated that the timeframe for the DGS contract is the end of this year or the beginning of next year (2022). The earliest we would be looking at using this would be the 2022 RSAF Spring Cycle next year. At the last FARC meeting, FARC voted that anyone asking for hardship funding would be required to buy off the State EMS Equipment Contract. Kevin asked if the grantee asked for 100% funding, which is also hardship, would they be required to buy off the State EMS Equipment Contract the same as the 80/20 hardship requests. Luke said yes. We will continue to base the award price off of the RSAF Price List. Luke will keep everyone up to date on how this is going.</p>	
<p>IV E-GIFT Enhancements Discussion by Tracy Mason</p>	<p>Luke gave a little background on how enhancements are made to E-GIFT. Enhancements are projects that we work on in the E-GIFT system that are put in as defects in a project management system called Defect Tracker. Right now there are 9 requests for application enhancements. Four of those enhancements relate specifically to the functionality of E-GIFT with respect to FARC graders. They are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Customizable award and denial letters - Through our review of applications, FARC may say we want to include this not as a condition but something to put in the award or denial letter specifically indicating something about the application.</li> </ol>	<p>Luke will log defects related to the enhancements requested by FARC and provide an update at the next meeting.</p>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Conflict of interest (COI) disclosure forms within E-GIFT – that way there’s a snapshot of all of the COI disclosures</li> <li>3. Grade override functionality - We have discussed in the pass with all of us sitting here about changing the grade for an application. We would use a change of grade form. We would put the agency name, previous grade, new grade, reason for changing our grade and sign the form. This would allow us to do this on our computer.</li> <li>4. Discussion flags for the meeting results screen – that way you don’t have to go into great details but can see this on the meeting results page.</li> </ol> <p>Tracy Mason was explaining the way the defect tracker generally works. A defect identifies the problems you have and what we need to do to fix it. She had examples to show FARC. The first defect was number 99. It was put in in 2020. Obviously it’s been sitting there awhile. There are so many defect trackers in the portal. Gary and Adam prioritize which ones are completed first. Due to the nature of our business, the priorities change from day to day. This past year, we were down a lot due to the Covid-19. This slowed our timelines down for our EMS projects. They are trying to address some of the issues that have been out there a long time. Tracy said her guess would be that the enhancements that Luke listed would probably be completed by the end of the year. JC asked Tracy what was the possibility of enabling the system to allow us to download all of the grant applications as a batch file? JC said he likes to download grants and take his time to read them without having to worry about the portal going down or losing broad band connection. He goes through and makes his notes and decides what grades to assign to it. Then he logs into the system and cuts and pastes his comments back in and then adds his grades. Downloading each PDF separately is very time consuming. Doing this as a batch file instead of having to download each PDF application separately would save a lot of time. Is there a keystroke you can enable that would allow us to download all these grant applications? Tracy said her concern would be downloading all those files at once would be difficult. The file would be huge. She said she doesn’t know how they would do that. She asked FARC on average how many grants do we get a cycle? Luke said we get around 114 grant applications on average per cycle. Tracy said she can look further into it. Her concern is the size of the file and how it would be broken up. This would include all sections in the grant and all of the attachments. It is possible but would it be feasible? She will pose that question to her IT group. FARC flags the grants that they have a question about or that they want to discuss. Joe said the discussion flags should be a priority. It directly impacts our ability to discuss things at our meeting. At our awards meeting in June, things got funky real quickly trying to identify who had put in special flags versus who hadn’t. Joe believes a defect had already been put in to address this problem. FARC wants all the flag items to be condensed so they could see and review all flagged items beforehand. Luke said he can go through and create a report of all the different flagged items. He would give this report to FARC before the meeting. Luke said that 60 to 70 percent of the things</p>	

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<p>V. Senior Compliance Specialist Presentation</p>	<p>FARC flags is out of the funding range. The stuff in the funding range is stuff that you generally agree upon. It's generally an all around good application.</p> <p>Michael Dover, Senior Compliance Specialist spoke to FARC. He does compliance checks on grant awardees. He said the process he's using right now is to randomly choose grants awarded in the last 5 years that are typical grants. He checks to be sure that the grants awarded have been satisfied according to what has been awarded and the conditions placed on the grants. He sends an introductory email from Adam and himself to the agency in a Word document that gives directions on filling out the compliance stuff. He has a spreadsheet that covers the assets an agency has available by what has been put on the grant. It also provides a list of separate documentation for the assets. What's important is this is not too much to ask and it's not singling or pointing anyone out. It's to make the grant audit or check-up goes better. He was asked if the compliance checks were done remotely or on-site. He said he would be doing physical or in the field inspections. He will also be checking to see if they have the OEMS stickers that say this was funded by RSAF. He will be taking pictures of the vehicles and their Vehicle Identification Number to see if they match what OEMS has on record. He was asked if he had uncovered any compliance issues. He stated no. At least not any compliance issues that were done outright on purpose. Kevin asked him when he's reaching out to an agency are you reaching out to the contact person that completed the application or to someone else in the agency like the director? He said he reaches out to the Chief or Director of the squad. Kevin asked if he or the committee has any questions or concerns throughout the year, do we just contact you? Yes. Tracy Hanger asked if compliance investigations would need to increase the amount of time awardees would need to keep grant documentation after the award date. Luke said that the period of time for record retention is six-years per the regulations governing the program. Kevin asked what happens if an agency is applying for an ambulance, lets say, and they have a vendor set up with the paperwork and even signed the application, how do we look at that as far as a compliance issue? If the person applying for the grant is also the vendor, is that looked at as a conflict of interest? Michael said that this is indeed something that would be looked at in a compliance investigation. Tracy Hanger asked if this sort of relationship between a vendor and applicant would be looked at as a conflict of interest or viewed negatively from a general accounting perspective. Luke said that in terms of general accounting practices it would be looked at as something to not recommend for funding, and FARC generally does not grade such requests favorably anyways. Michael concurred with this statement. Bruce told Michael that the OEMS Program Representatives should serve as a great resource for compliance investigations.</p>	<p>No further action is required</p>
<p>VI. Communications Coordinator Presentation</p>	<p>Sam Burnette is the OEMS Communications Coordinator. Sam said that whenever an OEMS agency applies for a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) license, the FCC sends OEMS a request for a letter of support. 99.9 % of these are okayed without any problems. The regulations state "An EMS agency shall maintain appropriate FCC radio licensure for all radio</p>	<p>No further action is required</p>

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	<p>equipment operated by the EMS agency. If the FCC radio license for any radio frequency utilized is held by another person, the EMS agency shall have written documentation on file of their assigned authority to operate on such frequencies". There was a condition put on the radio grants that stated they had to produce a copy of their FCC license or authorization to use someone else's license. Most of the dispatch channels are covered very well. The statewide mutual aid frequency is 155.205. This frequency is not covered by an FCC blanket authorization. So, by FCC, either the jurisdiction has to have a license or those agencies have to be licensed. Sam found 144 licenses in the State of Virginia for that frequency. Out of those, 70 or 80 were actually issued to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). From a grant perspective, as we are going to be putting out more radio equipment, Sam wants to make sure we are not granting radio equipment to agencies that are not licensed to use it. We don't want to add more problems by awarding equipment to agencies that aren't authorized to use it.</p>	
<p><b>VII. Regional Reviewer Training Discussion</b></p>	<p>Luke wanted to give an overview of the regional reviewer training. This includes the review process, procedures and practices. He covered the topics as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I) Overview &amp; Timeline</li> <li>II) Review Process</li> <li>III) Review Criteria</li> <li>IV) Roles &amp; Responsibilities</li> <li>V) Grading Scale</li> <li>VI) Review Procedures</li> <li>VII) Comment Writing Guidelines</li> <li>VIII) Resources</li> </ul> <p>Luke's introduction stated the goal of the Rescue Squad Assistance Fund is to provide financial assistance to support EMS programs, projects, and equipment throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. RSAF is a multi-million dollar matching grant program for Virginia governmental, volunteer and non-profit EMS agencies and organizations to provide financial assistance based on demonstrated need. RSAF has 2 grant cycles a year with approximately \$9 million available annually. There are 5 special priorities. They are: Emergency Medical Dispatch, Emergency Operations, Innovative (special) Projects, Multi-Jurisdictional/Agency Projects and Recruitment and Retention. Applicants must be a Virginia non-profit agency/volunteer or governmental organization involved in EMS. An applicant can only submit one application per grant cycle. There is no limit what an agency can ask for as long as there's one application. Requested items may not be under \$500.00. There are several reviewers for the RSAF grant cycle. These include the Regional EMS Councils, OEMS Program Representatives, OEMS Subject-Matter Experts and the EMS Advisory Board subcommittees which include the Transportation Committee. There are 6 members of FARC. They are nominated by the Regional EMS Councils and appointed by the EMS Advisory Board. FARC reviews all applications, comments, and grades from a macro level,</p>	<p><b>RSFAF Review Processes, Procedures, and Practices Webinar to be provided on September 14, 2021.</b></p>

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	<p>identifying priority projects for the entire Commonwealth. There is a grading scale from 1 to 5.</p> <p>Grade 1 - Immediate Funding Need  Grade 2 - Definite Funding Need  Grade 3 - Project Needed Eventually  Grade 4 - Project Can Be Delayed  Grade 5 - Project Not needed / Incomplete Applications</p> <p>The grants unit does webinars where we go over the grant application and let everyone know what we are looking for and how to write a better grant. Luke wanted to share this information with FARC too.</p>	
<b>VIII. Unfinished Business</b>	None	No further action is required
<b>IX. New Business</b>	<p>Luke said that Adam had mentioned to him there was confusion as to what Regional EMS Council came up next in the FARC rotation. Adam suggested that each quarterly meeting, this is brought to FARC's attention so that everyone is aware as to who is next in the rotation.</p>	FARC's rotation schedule will be included as a standard agenda item for future meetings.
<b>X. Next Meeting Date &amp; Location - TBA</b>	<p>The next quarterly meeting was scheduled for October 28, 2021 at the Embassy Suites in Richmond at 1:00 pm.</p>	No further action is required
<b>XI. Adjournment</b>	Kevin adjourned the meeting.	No further action is required.

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