



TETAF Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, September 22, 2020
Zoom Meeting
1:00 p.m.

Present: Jeff Beeson, D.O.
Scott Christopher, BBA, BSN, RN, LP
Nilda Garcia, M.D.
Angela Gentry, RN, MSN, TCRN
Wanda Helgesen, RN, MSN
Lisa Hutchins, RN-NIC
Kathy Perkins, RN, MBA
Edward Racht, M.D.
Ricky Reeves, EMT-P
Craig Rhyne, M.D.
Kate Schaefer, RN, CEN, NREMT
Danny Updike, RN, CCRN, EMT-LP
Dudley Wait, EMT-P
Peyton Ware, BBA
David Weisoly, D.O.

Absent: Eric Epley, CEM
Kenneth Mattox, M.D.

TETAF Staff: Dinah Welsh, Brenda Putz, Carla Rider, Erin Moore, Kerri Reeves, Kathy Clayton, and Ramon Napoles

TETAF Contractors: Doris Heinen, accountant; Kevin Reed, attorney, and Ashley Morgan, and Janiece Williams, contract lobbyists

- 1) **Welcome and Introductions** – The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Craig Rhyne, M.D., chair. Dr. Rhyne welcomed those joining the meeting via Zoom and Dinah Welsh, president and CEO, introduced the newest employee to TETAF, Ramon Napoles.
- 2) **Approval of 2020-2021 TETAF Budget and Financial Update** – Kathy Perkins, TETAF Board treasurer, announced the July and August financials would be presented at the next board meeting. Perkins presented the FY 2020-2021 budget. TETAF did well until the pandemic hit, but the budget improved in June as surveys were rescheduled due to the pandemic. Survey expenses have been lower due to fewer surveys. There were no expenses as originally budgeted for the Governor’s EMS Trauma and Advisory Council (GETAC) in May. Administrative expenses are down due to less travel. There could be a negative balance overall, but net cash flow is higher than budgeted. If business

operations continue as they have in June, the budget could be better than the previous year. TETAF's financial and cash position are good. Survey income for the budget is projected to be \$2.2 million, which is about \$500,000 above the previous year. This is due to the amount of trauma, maternal, and neonatal surveys. Virtual surveys are not taken into account for the budget as a more conservative way to prepare the budget. A new position was added into the budget for a program nurse role that could be hired mid-2021. Additionally, a position was added for an office manager/bookkeeper position that would replace the accounting consultants. This role is anticipated to be filled in fall 2021. Expenses were also included to replace computers and office furniture. This year's net revenue of minus \$42,878 is an improvement over the previous fiscal year budget. Perkins stated this budget would put TETAF in a positive position. Ricky Reeves asked if the pandemic continues could TETAF live without the two new employee positions added in the budget. Perkins stated they could be put on hold and the current financial position of the organization would always be reviewed before posting a position. The office manager/bookkeeper role is almost the same as TETAF currently pays to contract the duties, so it would not be an additional expense. Perkins stated as surveys increase, the program nurse position is needed. Welsh also added that any hiring would be delayed if the pandemic affected surveys. Reeves asked if the budget was based on the number of surveys conducted this year, why are there an increase in surveys for the next fiscal budget. Welsh stated that maternal is in its first cycle and we are in the third year of that cycle, so hospitals are hurrying to meet the deadline. We are also in the neonatal cycle for surveys. The past year was a low survey year for neonatal. Trauma is more stabilized between the three-year period and TETAF occasionally has busier years for trauma. Reeves asked if the surveys were booked or projected. Most neonatal have been scheduled and some are projected. Lisa Hutchins added that she is hearing in the maternal community that some hospitals have not been pleased with the surveys from competitors and more may select TETAF in the Houston market. Hutchins said Carla Rider, TETAF perinatal program director, is doing a fabulous job. Dr. David Weisoly agreed that at the minimum there may be some partial re-surveys and agreed it is due to Brenda Putz, vice president of operations and Rider doing an excellent job. Putz added that we are exceeding what we expected for surveys and that hospitals have appreciated the way TETAF approaches compliance. Kathy Perkins motioned to approve the budget and Ricky Reeves seconded the motion. The budget was unanimously approved.

- 3) **TETAF Legislative Priorities** – Dinah Welsh stated that the legislature is focused on COVID-19 and elections at the moment. Welsh said it is still unknown what the legislative session will look like, but it is almost certain that the primary focus will be budget, redistricting, and COVID-19. Ashley Morgan, contact lobbyist from Erben & Yarbrough, stated that the session will have fewer items of focus and a smaller agenda than in the past and will focus more on needs rather than wants. There will be focus on the budget and redistricting and could potentially be at least one, if not more, special session for redistricting. There will be a COVID focus, even if it is only budget related, there will be a focus on COVID. Morgan mentioned that we need to be ready to defend the RACs once they hear the remarkable work they have done; more projects may be

tasked to the RACs. This may also be a positive to get at least some items funded or on the table for discussion. The advocacy team will focus on maintaining funding from the previous legislative session. Janiece Williams, contract lobbyist from Erben & Yarbrough, also stated that it is still too early to predict what the budgets will look like for 2022-2023 since tax revenues are unpredictable at the moment. Williams does anticipate a tough budget cycle and cuts will be required. Maintaining funding from the previous session will be a win. Kathy Perkins asked if the lobby team had heard when the Legislative Appropriations Requests (LARs) would go in and Williams said there was no plan yet and some LARs have been submitted. The lobby team continues to leverage relationships built through the years. Dr. Rhyme stated that many hospitals have taken a financial hit due to COVID and some that were not allowed to perform elective surgeries have been hit harder than those who were not restricted as long. Some hospitals may consider cutting non-essential programs and may not get relief from the legislature. Welsh stated that she has heard that through other hospitals and the Texas Hospital Association and believes it could be a threat to trauma. Dr. Rhyme has concern that some programs could be eliminated entirely. Dr. Edward Racht stated that he is seeing some smaller, non-governmental EMS agencies are going out of business or experiencing furloughs. Dr. Rhyme stated that TETAF needs to monitor what is happening and consider what could happen if a significant portion of our market disappears. Wanda Helgesen stated that at a recent trauma system meeting, there was discussion about how COVID would affect requirements and potentially backstepping the program back to where it was years ago. Reeves stated that his agency is experiencing more demands placed on hospitals in their ancillary areas. Dr. Rhyme inquired about a public service campaign to get the word out to inform people to not be afraid to go into hospitals during the pandemic. Dr. Racht agreed with the need to communicate to not ignore emergencies. Welsh agreed and also emphasized the legislative priorities. Data collection should also be a focus during the session. Welsh stated it is not a session to have a long list, but rather a handful of items to focus. Dr. Weisoly stated that while COVID may be mentioned consistently through the session, it is a good opportunity to put the focus on the RACs. He also stated it is difficult to improve anything if you don't have data to show how you are doing and where you are headed. Dudley Wait agreed that COVID is an opportunity to educate about what the RACs do. Helgesen agreed that data collection is important.

- 4) **Discussion and Setting of Future TETAF Board Meetings** – Dinah Welsh stated that the December board meeting will be a Zoom meeting and the General Assembly will also be a Zoom meeting. The board meeting may be held December 9, 10, or 11. The General Assembly meeting could be held the same day or another day. Kevin Reed, attorney, said a virtual meeting for General Assembly is allowed and the polling feature on Zoom can be used. Welsh will send a Doodle poll to the board to determine dates.
- 5) **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m.