

Charles County Department of Emergency Services

JEDI Council

Location: Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Date: February 22, 2024

Time: 9:05 am

Attendance

Kathryn Knott, James Garner, Caitland Kelshaw, Edward Schultz, Aldo Zambrana, and Myra Tayman

Discussion Items

1. Katie – I passed the script to Michelle for review, and she loved it. I haven't scheduled the filming, but it looks like March 11, 2024, had most council members available. I will ask for dates in May and June in hopes that most council members are back from leave.
2. Katie – Job Fair – DES is cancelling their appearance at the job fair at North Point.
3. Katie – 911 Communications is at a critical staffing level.
4. Caitland – Are we able to do anything if someone brings up a concern on equity about how policies and disciplines are handled?
 - Katie – we can take the concerns to Renesha. Anyone can go to Renesha at any time.
 - Ed – We are a go in between. We tell employees what options they have available to them for reporting such incidents.
 - Caitland – Does employees have protection if they make a complaint and don't follow their chain of command?
 - Aldo – EMS has multiple chain of commands they can go through. They can go directly to Renesha if they don't feel comfortable with leadership.
 - Katie – Going to Renesha is the same as going to HR. You don't have to go directly to your supervisor, you can go to Renesha for DEI issues.
 - Aldo – What would the union say?
 - Caitland – To follow your chain of command and follow policies.
 - Ed – employees are always worried if they go past their Lieutenant, they feel they're going to be reprimanded from Captain and Lieutenant.
 - Aldo – HR addresses that. If you complain and get reprimanded or retaliated, then HR is involved. This is illegal.
 - Katie – The issue is feelings. People went above me to my direct supervisor about me instead of coming to me. Leadership has issues with staff going above them. It's all about their feelings.
 - James – It's controlling issues.
 - Aldo – Feelings or controlling doesn't justify retaliation or reprimanding. It's illegal.
 - Caitland – Employees are losing their FTOs positions because they hurt their leadership feelings or complain about them.
 - Aldo – EMS has union representation that they can go to about these types of issues.

- Caitland – Union can only do something if leadership violates a policy.
 - Katie – If there is a SOP on chain of command (SOP 100.03), I can see how employees can feel that they can't report issues without going through their leadership. Setting policy is not what we are supposed to be doing but the policy is concerning. It doesn't look like employees can go to HR prior to chain of command.
 - Aldo – It's an EMS SOP based on rank structure. It refers to the PPM of Charles County Government.
 - Katie – read the PPM. We need more clarification on the SOP and issues of DEI concerns.
 - Ed – Renesha has always told us that employees can go to her.
 - Katie – bottom line – if an employee comes to us, we can encourage them to follow their chain of command and if they don't feel comfortable then they can go to Renesha.
 - James – I recommend telling employees – union representation, HR, Chief of DEI.
5. Cupcakes and Conversations – The topic is communications and scheduled for May 25, 2024.

Action Items

1. Next meeting will be March 28, 2024, at 9:00 am. **This meeting is virtual only.**

Other Notes

Meeting adjourned at 10:23 am.