

Richland County Joint Ambulance Committee  
Strategic Planning for EMS Subcommittee  
March 29, 2017  
Minutes

Present: Jeanetta Kirkpatrick, Bob Holets, Ryan Keller, Darin Gudgeon, Amber Burch, and Sharon Schmitz

On the Phone: Rick Manthe, Wisconsin Towns Association Legal Counsel

1. The meeting was called to order. Rick Manthe joined the meeting by conference call. Introductions took place, and discussion took place regarding the status of the Richland County Ambulance Service. It was pointed out that this is not a county-wide ambulance service, as parts of the County are covered by other ambulance services, and that the problems Richland County Ambulance Service is facing are not just specific to this service but to many other EMS services around the State.
2. Rick provided background to the subcommittee regarding a proposal that had initiated by a Senator from a different region which would have given authority to an ambulance district to function as a governmental body, similar to utilities, in order to stabilize a funding source. This was shot down due to the lack of control or oversight for townships.

He stated that fire districts are able to place a special charge against a property for the fire service however an ambulance district does not currently have the authority to place any such charges on a property.

Rick proposed that this be changed and that the district be able to split the costs to run such a service across a township as a special charge. He stated that the more consolidated, the lesser the levy would be. The negative adjustment to the levy would be reduced. This would be contingent upon consolidation, so the more municipalities involved, the better the bonus. This would be municipalities based, with oversight by the towns. It would not be its own government.

Rick stated that a test case could be created for Richland County Ambulance Service to organize such a district with the support of legislators. Currently, the legislative budget is of main concern for legislators. Prior to meeting with the legislators, such a plan would need to be discussed with all municipalities interested in participating in the district. It was clarified that this would simply be a full committee meeting. He stated that this would need to be done this year to get ahead of the campaign season. Jeanetta recognized the need to have such a plan formed prior to September, when budgets are determined locally. She suggested the current contract be extended for one year with the goal of having this plan set by the summer of 2018. Rick stated that Senator Marklein and a member of the Assembly would need to be on board with this to sponsor it. Rick stated that this would need full legislative support, which may be difficult as this

may be construed as raising taxes. He stated that this would simply allow for raising money for a specific purpose.

Jeanetta invited Rick and Mike Koles, Wisconsin Towns Association Executive Director, to meet with the Committee regarding this matter. It was decided that the committee would try to be flexible around their schedule, but they would try to shoot for the next regularly scheduled meeting of May 17<sup>th</sup> for this. This meeting would be used to build consensus with the municipalities involved and then another meeting would be set to meet with the legislators.

Darin suggested for that meeting, a two-year contract be written up with a statement saying the County will back out of the Service to form a District after that time. He stated that he was not sure things would be able to move that fast politically and that, if done right, this model could be a great foundation for Regional EMS in the future. In order for that to happen, it would need to have the political foundations and funding sources stabilized.

Rick requested Jeanetta email him the contacts for the group for further communication. Darin stated that he will also invite Josh Kowalke, President of the Wisconsin EMS Association (WEMSA), to the table.

Rick informed the group that they will likely mimic the language on this to the current budget and refer to it as "consolidation dividend". Rick also provided the committee with his cell phone number should they need to reach him and he is not in the office.

- For the next meeting, Darin will work on a two year contract as well as invite WEMSA. Jeanetta will contact Jon Hochkammer of the Wisconsin Counties Association regarding County Tax Levy limitations.