

Richland County Joint Ambulance Committee

June 26, 2019

Minutes

Present: Brian McGraw, Kerry Severson, Mike Kaufman, Mary Rognholt, James Lingel, Verlin Coy, Glen Niemeyer, Steve Chupp, Brian Clarson, Gordon Palmer, Doug Duhr, Bob Holets, Jean Nicks, Terrance Jindrick, Darin Gudgeon.

Not Present: Marc Couey, Scott Wallace.

1. Meeting was called to order at 1900.
2. Notification of the meeting had been made, and the agenda was posted.
3. Committee attendance was as noted above, with 13 members present at the start of the meeting and one joining as the meeting progressed.
4. A motion was made by Holets to approve the agenda as posted. Nicks seconded it. Motion Carried; the agenda was approved.
5. The minutes for the previous meeting were silently reviewed. A motion was made by Niemeyer and seconded by Clarson to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried; the minutes were approved.
6. There were no comments from the public.
7. There were no comments from the EMT delegation.
8. Gudgeon presented the proposed 2020 budget, with the document being projected on the screen and amended as voted upon in this item. Gudgeon explained that the budget is a guideline and that should the cash-flow not be as predicted, then there wouldn't be the money to spend regardless of what the budget states is allowed to be spent in any line-item. Anticipating the needs and having the appropriate amounts in each line will ensure smoother function in the next year. The budget presented included the raises as voted upon in the previous meeting. Despite the ambulance crew pay drop shown in actual costs, the amount was left the same to ensure the raises are covered. If it is not used, the remainder would not go into the County's general fund, as may be the case for other departments, but would stay in the Ambulance account. McGraw asked about planning for retirement payouts and how much should be planned for, wondering if it needed to be addressed at this time or if it could be later without it being irresponsible in delaying. Gudgeon stated that currently, he as the director is the closest to retirement and would have nine years before he would be eligible. He estimated his payouts through the ambulance would be roughly \$17,000. Back on the budget sheets, it was noted that the actual of cost for medical supplies was less, partially due to inventory monitoring. For Ambulance Maintenance, Gudgeon stated that this line item would increase. A replacement ambulance was found but it was noted that the 2003 ambulance (second out) has rust developing that needs to be addressed. The 1997 ambulance will be sold on auction and the money from the sale will go back into the Ambulance Outlay. The Claims Clearinghouse line is the line used to pay Cvikota. Gudgeon again noted that Cvikota is paid 7% of the collected

payments on bills. He used 2018 figures to guide the budget. \$20,000 was placed in contracted services for building inspections and code corrections, as is expected to be necessary in purchasing a new building. Gudgeon noted that it doesn't need to be spent but it needs to be budgeted for in the case that it is needed. The Committee would know about any need and vote upon this spending prior to its use. The money budgeted for salaries and the related lines is for current staffing levels. Gudgeon suggested the addition of a fourth full-time position with three 12-hour shifts per week. The entire package for this position would cost \$53,768.97 with no overtime unless necessary. This would help in the ability to provide transfers and could help to cut down the overtime for the other full-time staff. Gudgeon reinforced that there has not been an open primary shift since January 3rd, 2015 and that currently, four days of out seven have a full-time member on a 24-hour shift. The other full-time/part-time or paid-on-call staff fill the other necessary positions. In order to provide a transfer, there must be four licensed members (two for the transfer and two for covering 911 calls). So far in the year, only 32 days had a second crew available. Recently, there was a transfer that was lost due to the lack of a second crew not being readily available. Gudgeon stated that he could not fill the fourth position without the Committee's approval but that by filling the position, it would help to offset the other staffing costs. Under Ambulance Maintenance – Municipality, as discussed in previous meetings, the money was given to other community EMS services serving the County, however it was noted that there were other services that covered part of the County but never received money. Gudgeon also stated that since 2015, the Service's budget was made up of billing income and monies paid only by the municipalities covered by the Richland County Ambulance Service. He also stated that the other EMS services were able to bill for their services. Therefore, he proposed continuing to support only the First Responder groups, which cannot bill and are vital to providing rapid medical care to the rural communities as the ambulance is responding from the City. Gudgeon stated that most of the money given to the first responders has gone to training, and the service also supports them in replenishing supplies and equipment. He proposed ending the provision of money to the other EMS services. Palmer made a motion to approve the proposed changes and increase the amount for First Responder groups to \$1,000. Motion seconded by Kaufman. For expenditures, Gudgeon also noted that the uncollectible bills are included as an expenditure to balance for the County's accounting system. Revenue for the Service is made up of the municipality payments and invoiced bill amounts (not necessarily able to be collected in total). Gudgeon stated that there will have to be an increase in the estimated invoices to balance the increased payment for First Responder groups as voted upon. In the end, there is a total of \$98,000 difference from 2019's budget. Gudgeon reminded the Committee that when purchases are being made, the line items budgeted amount is referenced as well as the cash on hand. Though there may be money left in the budget for a line item, it does not mean that the cash on hand can support a purchase. Budgeted amounts under \$5,000 can also be transferred from one line to another; in the end, it will simply show that one line is overspent while the other is under budget. Holets made a motion to approve and forward on the Finance and Personnel the presented budget with the one voted upon amendment, seconded by Nicks. Motion carried.

9. McGraw informed the Committee of a meeting between himself, Gudgeon, and Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC), a possible consultant, to study inter-facility transfers and their impact on the Service's budget to assist in making decisions about the future of the Service. This would provide the Committee with a tool to give the actual cost for providing the service and to determine best rates to charge for the services based on vetted empirical data. It would look at billing codes used, staffing levels, billing rates, and license level. The report would be expected to be completed for presentation to the Committee at the last meeting of the year, with the data tools developed being provided to the Service. As this would cost more than \$5,000 and is not in the budget, it needs to be voted upon by the Committee and taken to Finance and Personnel. Once the report would published, it would become open record, however it would only pertain to the Service and not be relevant to others. The tool developed would be for the Service only; only the report would be able to be accessed by the public. The estimated cost for the consultant would be \$6,000, which would be a one-time cost to develop the tool and create the report featuring solely Richland Hospital data. The tool would allow for running figures in house for transfers from other hospitals as well. Outside of this contract, SWWRPC is also planning to provide a plot map for addresses of calls to show the coverage of the low to median income area for grant eligibility. It will also help to show response times or possible station location needs to cover highest call volumes. The data exchange will not include any protected health information, just physical addresses the Service responded to. SWWRPC is a quasi-government commission to provide services to contracted counties so the plot map would be within the normal business however the Inter-Facility Study would fall outside the normal request and therefore need to a contract for such services. Through this report and tool, the Committee would be able to know based on actual data rather than assume. The contract would start in August and have a completion date of November. Quarterly invoices would be submitted for payment. Palmer made a motion to approve the contract with SWWRPC to look at the feasibility of establishing an inter-facility transfer service. Motion seconded by Nicks; motion carried. Gudgeon stated that it would go before the Finance and Personnel Committee at the next meeting.
10. McGraw informed the Committee on a meeting that took place with the Richland Hospital regarding the goals set and requested access to data in order to have the previously discussed study completed. Access was granted, with additional discussion on who decides which service to call for a transfer. Hospital staff stated that it is common that they will go to the service who can solve their transport problem the quickest. At the meeting, they also discussed the ability to partner on community trainings like Stop the Bleed and CPR. McGraw felt it was an encouraging meeting and helped to show that the relationship had grown stronger in recent months with some work still remaining.
McGraw also discussed a meeting he and Gudgeon had had with the County Board Chair to inform her of the list of goals. McGraw reported that she had felt the Committee was functioning well and the goals set were ambitious. He also relayed a possible source of funding for a building, which the County will have the ability to propose projects to access the funds. At this time, based on the income of population served, the Service appears it would be eligible. There is \$1 million available with other projects likely to receive funding from it as well. In order

to be successful, committee members will need to help encourage support for the request for an EMS facility. At this time, it is unclear if the funds would be eligible for new construction or purchase/remodel of an existing building. The County is eligible to bring three projects for proposal with the funds given in a forgivable loan.

Regarding the wage increase as voted upon at the last Committee meeting, McGraw updated that the Finance and Personnel Committee had tabled the item due to an issue with the established step increases that were set to take place every other year. It was later proposed that the full-time/part-time position be reclassified to put it closer to the previously voted-upon wage. Currently, EMS is caught between two grades. The starting wage is the same as a life guard at Symons. In order to have it reclassified, it will need to be taken back to the company conducting the wage study and will cost \$250 per position reclassified. Gudgeon estimated that the wages would increase by \$1.30. The County Board would have to approve the reclassification but this approach would better fit the goals of the Committee within the set parameters. Gudgeon included the grade-increase figures in the budget rather than the step-increase, as this would accomplish the goals of the Committee. It was also noted that there are some potential changes coming that could affect the implementation of the wage-study step increases that would hopefully lead to smoother wage increases moving forward.

11. Palmer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Niemeyer. The motion carried; meeting adjourned at 20:28.