

Richland County Joint Ambulance Committee

June 25, 2024

Minutes

Present: Brian McGraw, Kerry Severson, Julie Fleming, Mary Rognholt, James Lingel, Glen Niemeyer, Don Stanke, Gordon Palmer, Doug Duhr, Jean Nicks, and Mike Jessen.

Not Present: Todd Coppernoll, Tom McCarthy, Todd Stittleburg, Jerome Durst, Terrance Jindrick, and Tim Willis.

1. Meeting was called to order at 19:01.
2. Notification of the meeting had been made, and the agenda was posted.
3. Committee attendance was as noted above, with 10 members present.
4. A motion was made by Palmer to approve the agenda as posted; Fleming seconded it. Motion Carried; the agenda was approved.
5. A motion was made by Stanke and seconded by Palmer to approve the previous meeting's minutes as presented. Motion carried; the minutes were approved.
6. James Small, Rural EMS Outreach Program Manager with the Office of Rural Health, spoke to the Committee regarding the state of EMS in Wisconsin, recognizing the need for reliable and sustainable service. However, data suggests 41% of services are not able to provide reliable 24/7 service. His office is a free resource that works with services and municipalities to improve their ability to sustain coverage. Small had reviewed the Service's Business Plan last year and recognized the struggle for keeping wages in competition with the greater Madison area market. He stated their office has identified six different ways to pay for ambulance service including borrowing; some work better than others for each unique situation. He also stated there was legislation introduced that may grant the ability to municipalities other than solely Counties to levy a tax for ambulance purposes. Their office has the ability to look into call volume distribution in the area including neighboring areas is desired. He noted there will also be an increase in the Funding Assistance Program grant through the State to EMS agencies that is going to increase the Service's grant to \$30,000. This will be able to be used for training and related equipment, which Jessen stated a portion could be used to sponsor a member in the paramedic program. Ultimately, Small stated the number one priority for services is reliability: when someone calls, an ambulance needs to be able to respond. Once a service is reliable, it needs to focus on sustainability, then system quality (service license level). He stated Paramedic is not appreciably higher than AEMT when it comes to 911 calls, with roughly 5% of calls benefiting from paramedic level care. He also stated few services do 911 response and transfers well; most focus on one or the other as they require different skill sets.
7. In the Director's Report, Jessen requested to table the proposal he'd planned to discuss due to a need for more complete data. He also informed the Committee he'd been working with the Fire Department on several items including a hopeful conclusion to charging each other for services. He has also had conversations with several neighbors and is trying to address concerns. He informed the Committee of an issue with the garage doors, stating he had tried to work with Garage Door Express but was having difficulty connecting with them. Jessen updated the Committee that the new Unit 34 has officially gone into service. He also stated there was an open shift on the Sunday prior to the meeting due to staff unavailability. He is working to establish a hiring process which will include an assessment center. This will help vet candidates, and he hopes it will assist in creating an eligibility list moving forward as well. Jessen

- also information the Committee he was going to release his Director's Welcome the second week of July and is expecting to do a radio interview with WRCO at that time.
8. Jessen stated he had been meeting one on one with most staff and identified a need to clearly assign staff roles to the full time staff. The three full-time staff on 24 hour rotations will have the following duties: Communications/Fleet & Facility Maintenance, Quarter Master (handling inventory), and Training Officer. He recognized this is a lot to ask of the staff given their current wages and hopes these wages will be adjusted to reflect these responsibilities in the future.
 9. Jessen provided the following regarding response vehicles:
 - A. The 2016 Explorer provided to the Service for free from the Sheriff's Department was found to have several issues. The quote to repair was \$5,000 from Fillback Ford; they also estimated the unit was only worth \$2,000. He stated he did not feel it was safe to drive so was using the Emergency Management truck to respond to calls and meetings.
 - B. He will look into leasing a vehicle with the Committee's consent and will provide further information in a future meeting.
 - C. In order to ensure clear communication on the radio and in the dispatch log, he is looking to have a designation for the supervisor's response vehicle.
 10. The Subcommittee met the previous Tuesday to review the six received bids. These bids were compared to the scope as provided in the RFP. It was identified that only one contractor had matched the bid requirements; it was also the lowest bid received. After the Subcommittee review, Jessen met with this contractor to review the roof conditions and discuss their bid. They offered an additional option which included a 20-year warranty with no subcontractors and no possible additional costs at a flat rate of \$110,000. As this was not received in the original bid documents, Jessen was going to discuss the potential of accepting this offer. The contractor stated the total project would only require a few days' work and would be able to be completed in August or September. It was noted in reviewing the other bids, there was language to suggest the expectation of additional costs beyond their bid amount. There were some concerns raised regarding the costs of the project and the current financial state of the Service. Jessen is planning to meet with the County Administrator later this week. A motion was made by Fleming, seconded by Palmer, to move forward with a contract with Nieman Central Wisconsin Roofing Co with the project subject to further negotiation as to the scope and cost based upon how to best pay for it upon completion. Motion carried.
 11. It was recognized the County Board Rules state those participating in a meeting virtually would not be able to attend closed session proceedings. Due to lack of in-person quorum, the Committee did not enter closed session. This item was tabled.
 12. There was no need for this item.
 13. The next quarterly meeting is set for August. A special meeting was scheduled for July 23 to discuss the tabled items as well as budget review. Stanke made a motion to adjourn the meeting; motion seconded by Duhr. The motion carried; the meeting was adjourned at 21:27.