

Richland County Joint Ambulance Committee

August 26, 2024

Minutes

Present: Brian McGraw, Kerry Severson, Julie Fleming, Todd Coppernoll, Mary Rognholt, Cheryl Dull, Todd Stittleburg, Glen Niemeyer, Don Stanke, Jerome Durst, Gorgon Palmer, Doug Duhr, Jean Nicks, and Terrance Jindrick. Absent: Tom McCarthy and Tim Willis.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7 pm.
2. Notification of the meeting was made and the agenda was posted.
3. Committee attendance was as noted above and a quorum was present.
4. McGraw amended the agenda to remove items 6 (Public Comment), 7 (EMT Delegation), and 16 (Closed Session) due to anticipated length of meeting. A motion was made by Stanke and seconded by Nicks to approve the amended agenda. Majority ruled and agenda was approved.
5. A motion was made by Nicks and seconded by Rognholt to approved the minutes of the previous meeting, and approved unanimously.
6. This item was removed per approved agenda.
7. This item was removed per approved agenda.
8. A. Jessen reviewed financial reports for June and July. June started with a balance of \$136,625.14. There was \$35,049.88 in revenue and \$47,161.05 in payroll and \$7,454.82 other expenditures, leaving an end balance of \$117,059.15. It was noted the report from the Clerk's office did not match the information from the financial system print out; more information will need to be gathered from the Clerk's office. For July, there were revenues of \$26,611.11 and expenditures of \$45,942.88 in payroll & benefits with \$11,691.63 to other expenses, leaving a remaining balance at the end of the month of \$86,035.75. The Committee requested the financial report be emailed out ahead of meetings for review. An Item to be included on the next agenda per Committee request is discussion on the County and Municipality Relationship regarding the JAC.
B. The billing report from EMS|MC was shown on the screen, with Eric Kiefer from the company present via Zoom to explain the report and discuss billing. He stated the report is a cumulative report where the payments billed and received are shown in the total for the month, which means it will change over time. He also stated Medicare and Medicaid will only pay a set amount with the remainder being written off; these write-off adjustments are not accounted for until the payment is received. There was \$10,270 more than 90 days post billing to Medicare, which normally would take 21 days to receive payment for. It was noted the account did appear to be behind in received payments. After further investigation, the issue was identified and the account has been made a priority. All trips were processed up to the date of service of 8/17. The 142 trips identified as not fully processed had been in various stages of the billing process. He offered to meeting with Jessen weekly until no longer desired. The Committee voiced concerns over this situation sounding similar to the way things began to unravel with the former billing company. Kiefer gave his personal guarantee they will do better moving forward as this was a process change that allowed things to initially be missed. Kiefer apologized for the situation and promised better.

C. There were 294 calls for service between May 1 and July 31, with 12% going emergent to the hospital. It was noted that call volume continues to be behind recent years. The Committee requested information regarding average call response times to be added to these reports moving forward.

D. Jessen updated the Committee on staffing, notifying them that four staff had resigned their positions. The Service is working hard to ensure 24/7 coverage. Active recruitment efforts are underway, noting advertisement via social media and fliers to highlight why to work in Richland County. Jessen noted the best recruitment is retention. With starting wages, low, the goal is to increase these to ensure no further staff seek employment elsewhere. Jessen also requested Committee members let him know when municipal boards are meeting so he can try to attend.

9. Regarding lamResponding software, Jessen stated he was working with Dispatch and MIS to ensure more reliable mapping. lamResponding is able to assist crews with locations as well as providing consistent paging notification. The Service has reached the end of its 90-day trial; the one-year subscription is \$860. Nicks made a motion, seconded by Fleming to approve payment for the one-year subscription at the presented rate.
10. Jessen stated he had come across an ad for a new service which he felt may be worth consideration from the Committee. Unified Solutions has the ability to manage inventory, learning/training, scheduling, report writing, peer QA, and billing, as well as a CAD system that would integrate into Dispatch. It would cost \$625/month if the billing service is not utilized; if using the billing service, the other items are complementary. At this time, Jessen had reportedly been assured they would be able to at least meet if not beat the 7.5% rate seen by EMS|MC, though no exact number has been quoted yet. Jessen has spoken with three services that highly recommend the product. Jessen intends to get more information on the agreement to provide to Corp Counsel and the Committee if interested. It was requested the information be provided to the Committee ahead of the next meeting for it to be read through and considered. Coppernoll stated he would like more information to reach out and have conversations with some of their clients as well.
11. New proposed billing rates were shown on the screen. He noted Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates will not change with the adjustment, as they are fixed. However, it will increase reimbursement from commercial insurance. All rates were found to be acceptable apart from the BLS Treatment/No Transport (TNT) rate, which Jessen counter-proposed be set at \$100. Stanke made a motion to increase the billing rates as proposed with the adjustment to BLS TNT, seconded by Palmer. Motion carried.
12. Discussion for collections was tabled.
13. Discussion regarding Command vehicle acquisition was tabled.
14. Discussion regarding the Director's salary was tabled.
15. For the staffing update, Jessen introduced new full-time EMT Ralfi Lamourt.
16. This item was removed per approved agenda.
17. This item was not necessary due to no closed session.
18. Additional items for the next agenda per Committee request are revisiting the roofing project and the County levying a tax for ambulance. A motion was made by Stanke, seconded by Fleming to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:49pm. Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 23 at 7pm.