

Richland County Joint Ambulance Committee:
Strategic Planning for EMS Subcommittee
July 28, 2020
Minutes

Present: Brian McGraw, Sharon Schmitz, Mary Rognholt, Glen Niemeyer, Bob Holets, Darin Gudgeon.
Not Present: N/A

1. Meeting was called to order at 19:00.
2. Notification of the meeting had been made and the agenda was posted.
3. Committee attendance was as noted above, with a quorum.
4. A motion was made by Schmitz to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Holets. The agenda was approved.
5. A motion was made by Niemeyer to approve the previous Subcommittee meeting minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Rognholt. The motion carried.
6. McGraw introduced a prospective building plan. After it was recognized that the ambulance building on industrial drive was not available, the building's owner, Bob Simpson, stated he was willing to build an approximate 8000 square-foot stick-built building with steel siding and a steel roof with a firewall between what would be the garage and the offices/living space. The JAC would need to procure a lot and finish the design and construction of the building. Upon completion, Simpson intends to donate the building to the Service. There has been a verbal indication from Jewell that it should be within the budget. The original lot being looked at is already in the process of being sold; however, there is another lot that may be available. The City may be willing to donate a lot for the facility.

At the City/County ad-hoc committee meeting Monday, conversation started about having the Ambulance and the Fire Department build a new facility together. McGraw stated that he had been in contact with the Richland Center Fire Chief about a year prior to gauge interest in a shared facility, and there appeared to be no interest at that time. Todd Coppernoll, Richland Center Mayor, stated there may now be interest in a new fire facility based on recent conversations with Fire Department leadership. McGraw stated that it may be less expensive to co-locate overall but at this time, no one has looked at the savings or how much money it would truly cost to build the joint facility. The other issue is that the Ambulance Service's need is now, where the Fire Department may not immediately need a new facility. Gudgeon stated that it is possible to do what needs to be done to meet the Ambulance's facility needs now but anticipate a potential future sharing a location. Coppernoll stated his understanding is that the Fire Department wants to move but doesn't need to move at this time. Schmitz stated Simpson has agreed to purchase the building now and that starting a conversation about adding the Fire Department to the picture would disrupt the progress made and may stall it out indefinitely.

Coppernoll stated, in light of that concern, the potential lot on Orange St at the corner of Union may be available. It is currently being used by the Parks Department, but they may be able to relocate easily enough. The lot is 0.601 acres and would have to be investigated by the DNR to ensure it is a clean site. However, it is possible that it has a closure letter from the DNR already. The City Clerk Melinda Jones and Economic Development Director for the City and County Jasen Glasbrenner are looking into it. Holets felt it was a workable idea but wondered whether the sizing of the lot would support the size of the proposed building. It appeared by simple math that it may just fit the space. Niemeyer clarified the process to be that the JAC acquires a lot,

then Simpson will go through the process of building the to-be-agreed-upon structure with firewall, which he will then donate to the Service via deed or contract in such a way as to ensure it would follow the Service if it became a District. Rognholt felt it to be a good fit and the committee should continue working through the details. Schmitz agreed. McGraw asked Coppernoll what would need to be done to obtain the City lot. Coppernoll stated that the JAC would need to work with Jones and Glasbrenner to begin that process. It would then be brought before the City Council and Redevelopment Authority, which had been done as a joint meeting for processes like these in the past. McGraw thanked him for explaining the process with the City, then acknowledged the need to understand the process with the County to be able to ensure the funding will be available to finish the project. Coppernoll stated his belief that there will still be people wanting an explanation for not pursuing a joint facility with the Fire Department at this time. Gudgeon stated that he had discussed with the County Administrator Clinton Langreck about a meeting between the Ambulance Service, Fire Department, and Law Enforcement to determine needs and timelines of each. The Subcommittee members encouraged that meeting to take place, preferably before the August 19th JAC meeting. Once it is ensured all stakeholders are on the same page, the City and County will be more confident in moving ahead with these plans.

McGraw pointed the Subcommittee members' attention to the possible contract with Jewell and Associates for schematic design to ensure the sizing and configuration will fit the Service's needs. The proposed contract was reviewed. It was noted that site remediation was not included, which may be another issue to address if there is not a closure letter already in hand. There was discussion on what contracts must be approved by the County Board. The current proposed contract is less than \$25,000 so it would not need to be taken to the County Board nor will it be subject to the bidding process. However, it is anticipated that some future contracts will. Jewell had provided the potential contract for other necessary services to this project, totaling approximately \$35,000 and was not all-inclusive due to the current unknowns of the situation. If things begin to line up, members felt it would be wise to prepare for that contract to go before the County Board in September. Schmitz was appointed to keep Simpson apprised of the situation.

McGraw also stated that letters had been sent to the owners of the REC building and the Vetesnik building to thank them for working with the JAC and informing them of the recent decision not to purchase either building. He stated he had received a call from Shannon Clark with REC, who understood and shared his surprise at the estimated cost to remodel the REC building into an ambulance facility.

Subcommittee members all agreed on the need to keep the JAC membership informed but not having a full committee meeting until there was more information and decisions to be made. It was determined a letter would be sent to the members to keep them informed.

7. Holets made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Rognholt. The meeting was adjourned at 20:30.