

Minutes of the Annual
Joint Municipal
Meeting of
Fitch-Rona EMS District
Thursday, October 16, 2014

Attendance:

EMS Commission: Jason Williams, Nancy Bartlett, Dale Yurs, Craig Schneider, Bob Rego, Joan Sullivan, Jeff Schoenfeldt, Patrick Stern.

Fitch-Rona EMS District: Chief Brian Myrland, Deputy Chief Dale Dow, Deputy Chief Cindy Diedrich. Staff: Gary Salmela, Chanse Kaczmarek, Mollie Jesberger, Kristy Schnabel, Ryan Dockry, Casey Henthorne, Bryan Adler, Kyle Wells, Lon Schwartz and Michael Mancera, MD
City of Fitchburg: Tony Roach, Richard Bloomquist, Steve Arnold, Jason Gonzalez, Dorothy Krause, Becky Baumbach. – No Quorum

City of Verona: Mayor Jon Hochkammer, Bill Burns- No Quorum

Town of Verona: Gregg Miller, Amanda Arnold – No Quorum

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by EMS Commission Chairperson, Patrick Stern, at 7:02 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Public Comments: None

Approval of Joint Meeting Minutes from October 17, 2013. Motion City of Verona to approve the minutes from the Joint Meeting. Second by the City of Fitchburg. *Motion Carried with the City of Fitchburg and City of Verona and Town of Verona to discuss and approve the minutes at their next municipal meetings.*

2014 Annual Review by Chief Brian Myrland:

Chief Myrland began by discussing the ALS Consortium and all of the physicians and services that are participating. He then introduced Dr. Michael Mancera our Assistant Medical Director. Dr. Mancera spoke of his support of Fitch-Rona Ems and commented on the excellent work that is being done by our Administration and our Paramedics. Chief Myrland talked about the history of the growth of Fitch-Rona EMS starting with volunteer coverage and moving up to full-time Paramedic coverage. This growth was well-planned and met the needs of our growing communities. He thanked Rita Martin and Paul Jacobsen for their dedication to Fitch-Rona. Rita was a volunteer since 1977 and Paul served on our Commission and other advisory groups for many years. Call volume has increased this year over 4% from 2013. A copy of the monthly Chief's report was distributed with a discussion on the data we track from our run reporting program. The internal budget and monthly financial status was also discussed noting the aging receivables are in good shape and well within expectations of collections with insurance delays. We are happy with the work being done by 3 Rivers Billing. The Chief discussed stand-by ambulance coverage – dedicated vs. non-dedicated. Dedicated coverage is an extra ambulance above and beyond our two front-line ambulances. The crew remains on site to tend any potential injury/illness. If transport is needed, another ambulance will be called in keeping the dedicated ambulance on-site. Non-dedicated is when we will have an ambulance at a location that will leave to respond to calls within the district. This is common for football games and other sporting events. We continue to use our bicycle medics for stand-by events.

Call volume is up for the entire District. It is difficult to measure calls however for the Town of Verona due to the ever-changing boundary lines. We estimate that Town of Verona has approximately 3% of our calls

There was discussion on the cost of doing business and compared our numbers to surrounding EMS services. He emphasized that Fitch-Rona provides for 57% of the total budget. The remaining 43% comes from municipal support. It is important to remember that 84% of the budget is for salaries, over time and benefits for employees – which are dictated by the Local 311 contract in place. We are seeing less unscheduled over time due to an agreement with full-time staff/Local 311 that LTEs get first right of refusal on open shifts due to sick or vacation. Fitch-Rona's contribution to the budget comes from run revenue collected. We will be asking for an increase in base rate for 2015. Fitchburg brought up the idea of considering increasing the non-resident fee in order to have less of an increase for residents – similar to parks use fees. A comparison of neighboring ambulance service's fees was discussed. Fitch-Rona does have a fee for No Transports depending on how many times we are called for a patient refusing transport and care administered on- scene. Setting a budget is very difficult due to write-off and the widening gap in payments. This is especially apparent with Medicare and Medicaid patients. We currently receive approximately 51.5¢ for every \$1.00 billed. Currently we have billing agreements with several outlying ambulance services. We are working with all Dane County services on a billing agreement that takes into consideration Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement amounts. Our run revenue is higher than what we projected and will meet or exceed our forecast at year end. We put in place a policy that limits our un-assigned fund balance which outlines returning funds to the municipalities should we meet our goal for our District contingency fund. The fund goal amount represents payroll and operation costs for three months. Should we ever need to suddenly change billing companies, it is expected that we would not receive run revenue immediately while accounts were set up with all of the insurance companies and a new billing company. While this is not anticipated, our contingency fund protects us from any unforeseen issues with run revenue delays. There was discussion on how any additional money would be returned to the municipalities. More thought needs to go into the policy with input from each municipality

2014 Capital Budget included purchasing three new state of the art defibrillators. We were also slated to purchase high visibility coats for our staff. This has not been done to date pending vendor and product review.

Our assigned funds are being managed well. Currently the ambulance sale line contains \$8334 from the sale of our back-up ambulance. Proceeds will go towards purchasing another ambulance in 2015. Our re-chassis plan will begin in 2019 with the ambulance we purchased in 2011. This re-chassis plan will save the District \$40,000 per ambulance purchase.

Extra funds from 2013 went to the sick leave conversion to health insurance fund for retirees. A chart was displayed to the group that outlined our plan for managing this employee benefit. The chart showed fund amounts and anticipated use of the benefit based on employee age and years of service. The District plans on adding to the fund over the next several years to ensure there is enough money to cover the liability.

Annual Medical Director fees were discussed. A chart was displayed that showed our use of budgeted amounts in addition to a designated fund we put in place several years ago. This fund is used to ease in the annual cost of medical direction and staff training over several years. The fund will be depleted by 2019 and all medical direction costs will be managed through the operational

budget.

In reviewing the next five years, we will need a 3rd front line ambulance. This is based not only on increasing call volume but also on the expansion of our District with the Town of Madison property accumulation. If another station is built in the City of Fitchburg to the east of our District, we will be asking for funding for a third frontline ambulance which includes the hiring of seven medics. This expansion will also require a re-structuring of our staffing model. An organizational chart was displayed that shows up to three Captain's positions being added. These positions are to be phased-in as necessary and should coincide with the addition of stations in the District.

Budget Discussion

Capital Budget: Chief Myrland reviewed the Capital Budget requests for the next 5 years. We will be purchasing a replacement ambulance in 2015. Computer upgrades for run entry and Dane County communications and offices are replaced on a rotating schedule. 2017 is a big year with new staffing, a replacement ambulance and all set-up supplies.

Chief Myrland discussed equalized valuations for each of the communities. The City of Verona will realize a larger increase than the other municipalities at 12.29%.

Operating Budget: This budget includes a request to raise the resident and non-resident base rates to \$900 and \$950. We are also asking to increase our dedicated ambulance stand-by rate to \$100/hour and a one-time mobilization fee of \$50 per request. In anticipation of increased staffing in the next few years to bring on a third ambulance, we are proposing a phased-in hiring of Captain's positions to assist in management of the duties required of the District. These Captain's position are proposed to start in July of 2015, in 2016 and potentially 2017. These positions will be used to help manage staff, act as liaisons to the Communities, assist in training, QA/QI of ambulance calls, vehicle maintenance, facilities maintenance and supply ordering and inventory management to name a few. Fitch-Rona covers 57% of the Operating Budget with run revenue. This remains higher than past years due to aggressive billing and effective management by Chief Myrland. It is difficult to estimate what income we will receive due to all of the factors that affect payment. If we were able to achieve 100% of what was billed, we would have a break even budget costing the municipalities nothing for ambulance service. This is not the case with write-offs for federal programs, hardship cases and decreased run volume. 84% of the budget is locked into employee payroll and benefits which is bargained for with Local 311. The 2015 budget has an overall increase of \$94,552. The Captain's position is for half of the year so it was noted that a full-year will cost \$106,000. The bulk of the non-personnel operating expense lines were reduced as much as possible as well as the District removing \$20,000 from the sick leave to health insurance conversion fund to afford the new position

Convene Municipal Caucuses: Due to the City of Fitchburg, the City of Verona and the Town of Verona not having enough members for a quorum vote the attendees met in caucus but were unable to officially vote. Meeting attendees from Fitchburg and the City of Verona and Town of Verona will take the minutes, budgets and request for base rate increases and Stand-By increase back to their communities and discussion and approval will occur at a later date.

Re-Convene to Open Session at 8:50 p.m.

Due to no quorum, the attendees all approved the following pending official council and board approval at their next meetings:

Fitch-Rona EMS Annual Joint Municipal Meeting Minutes
October 16,2014

Approval of increasing the resident base rate to \$900 and non-resident rate to \$950.

Add a mobilization fee for dedicated ambulance stand-by to be \$100/hour with a onetime charge of \$50 per incident.

Approval of the Unassigned Fund Balance Limit Policy concept with more discussion needed.

Approval of the 2015 Operational Budget with an amendment needing to go to the City of Fitchburg for the additional position.

Approval of the 2015 – 2019 Capital Budgets

Other Business: All three municipalities stated that they felt Fitch-Rona EMS was well managed and thanked staff for a job well done.

Adjournment: *Motion City of Fitchburg to adjourn. Second City of Fitchburg. Motion Carried.* The Joint Municipal Meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Submitted:

Patrick Stern, EMS Chairperson

Handouts: Agenda, Chief's Report, Budget, Capital Improvement, Apportionments and Itemized budget lines, Unassigned Fund Balance Limit Policy and the Draft Annual Report.

Addendum: Verona Common Council approved the minutes from the October 17, 2013 annual meeting along with the Operating and Capital budgets for 2015, the increases for resident and non-resident base rates and the increase in dedicated ambulance stand-by rates on November 24, 2014. The City Of Fitchburg Common Council approved the same on November 11, 2014 and the Town of Verona approved the same on December 2, 2014. Post approval noted in minutes as passed once these meetings were held. *Motion carried.*