The Ambulance Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 8:30 A.M. by Chairman Cassidy. Present were: Larry Cassidy, Shawn Wonnacott, Les Atchison, Louis Fantini, Dennis Keiser, and William Marvin. Randy Bricker, Sr. had an excused absence. Dr. Thomas Charlton was in attendance as a non-voting member of the committee.

Also in attendance were George Korthauer (Allied EMS Systems, Inc.), Fred Thompson (Village of Mackinaw City), Dr. Peter Olson (North Central Michigan College), Kathy St. Pierre (McLaren Northern Michigan) and Marty Krupa (Emmet County Assistant Controller).

There was no public comment.

The agenda for the meeting was presented; there were no changes or additions.

A motion to approve the October 28, 2013 Ambulance Advisory Committee meeting minutes was made by Fantini and supported by Keiser.

Motion carried in a unanimous voice vote.

Mackinaw City provided their October 2013 Report. Fred Thompson commented that their run numbers for November were down, without any known reason. Their budget was not good due to reimbursements being down; 2014 also looks tight due to changes and additional charges in reimbursements from insurance providers/federal government. Dr. Charlton commented that reimbursements are expected to go down across the board. 

Attachment #1

Allied EMS Systems, Inc. provided their report for October 2013. 

Attachment #2

Chair Cassidy provided the AAC Update that was given to the Board of Commissioners on November 12, 2013. The Board of Commissioners reaffirmed that the AAC should move forward with the current process, with the assumption that Emmet County would own the buildings, vehicles and other capital equipment. 

Attachment #3

Chair Cassidy reviewed the following:

- Once the recommendation is taken to the Board of Commissioners, if approved, the Emmet County Building and Grounds Committee will take the lead and handle the process of designing and construction of the buildings, with input of service providers.

- The Equipment sub-committee will handle the procurement of the vehicles with input from the service providers. A replacement schedule
Ambulance Advisory Committee Meeting
(AAC)
November 25, 2013

will have to be approved and recommended.

- There will still have to be some level of operational subsidy from Emmet County, with amounts to be determined. The amount of subsidy may go down, if the County is purchasing all vehicles and facilities.

- Subsidies may be needed for various agencies for medical first responder training and retention. This may help with coverage in some of the outlying areas of the county that do not have favorable response times.

The next step is for the AAC to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, James Tamlyn, stated that the Board needed a number (of cost to fund this ambulance service model).

Commissioner Wonnacott reported that there were a few questions outstanding on the Facilities sub-committee:

1. Living quarters - with Allied possibly going to 12 hour shifts the living quarters may not need to be as elaborate as they would for 24 hour shifts.
2. Maintenance
3. Center of the county location - this should be planned for, even though it is not clear if it is needed at this time.
4. It was determined that the Curtis Ave property (a probable satellite location) that the City of Petoskey owns could be expanded, if needed in the future.

A motion was made by Fantini and seconded by Marvin to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that Emmet County will own the ambulance service facilities or lease them from another municipality, as the sub-committee recommends.

Motion carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Commissioner Atchison reported on the Equipment sub-committee and stated that Dr. Charlton had shared that there may be grant money available for AEDs, but only $200,000 for the whole state.

Emmet County Assistant Controller Marty Krupa received a report from Mecosta County of their vehicles purchased, however it was five years old. Mecosta County will be bidding out for a new vehicle(s) and when they do that they will share the information with Emmet County.

Commissioner Atchison stated that the next step for this group is to invite vendors to meet and discuss the vehicles to be considered. Allied was invited to be a part of this process and George Korthauer stated that Allied had already done this and did not want
to meet with anymore vendors. It was stated that Allied had funds and would purchase two vehicles.

Chair Cassidy expressed his disappointment in Allied’s unwillingness to come to the meeting and discuss the vehicles with the sub-committee.

Committee Member Marvin stated that Mackinaw City may be needing a vehicle sooner than originally thought. Thompson (Mackinaw City Fire Chief) elaborated that their back up vehicle was over 10 years old and was not dependable.

*A motion was made by Fantini and seconded by Marvin that Emmet County would own and license (register) the vehicles and any capital equipment in them. This Equipment sub-committee would handle the procurement of the vehicles with input from the service providers.*

Dr. Charlton expressed frustration that this vehicle/equipment research and recommendation had been done and he had provided much information already. He is concerned about patient care.

*Motion carried in a unanimous roll call vote.*

Chair Cassidy stated that the most urgent need at this time is to get service providers to the sub-committee meetings.

Korthauer said that they had been working with Emmet County staff and had a good process.

Chair Cassidy stated that was the problem; they were working with the County staff and avoiding the Ambulance Advisory Committee.

Korthauer stated that the Antrim County and Rogers City model which had been mentioned earlier in the meeting utilize Allied to purchase their vehicles. These municipalities own the buildings and vehicles, but Allied purchases them. Allied explained that they handle procurement and purchasing for the other entities that they serve. In the proposed replacement schedule (put together by Allied and Mackinaw City), they put a limit on the County’s contribution for each vehicle. The Allied Board of Directors has directed Allied staff to proceed with purchasing two vehicles with their own funds.

Chair Cassidy stated going forward, he hoped that Allied would be willing to work with the sub-committee, because it sends a negative message if they do not.
Korthauer thought that what the AAC was doing was major steps back for them, because Allied had already met with vendors and done analysis.

Chair Cassidy stated that he hoped that Allied would come to the next meeting.

Chair Cassidy discussed some estimated numbers for each category of the ambulance service model.

- Facilities $1.5 million total
- Equipment $300,000/year
- Operational subsidy $380,000/year
- Medical First Responders/Contingency $200,000/year

This is an estimated total of $1.1 million per year for the ambulance service that would need to be funded.

Chair Cassidy explained that once the recommendation was made to the Board of Commissioners, if passed, the Board would go to Emmet County staff to seek out the best way to fund the ambulance service.

Committee Member Marvin stated that the AAC needs more specific motions, quickly.

Chair Cassidy replied that the issue with getting too specific at this time is that design costs add up quickly (for buildings) and at this point there is not any funding. If the Board of Commissioners decides to go the millage route and it was passed by voters, the soonest funding would be available is December 2014 (estimated by Assistant Controller Krupa).

Committee Member Marvin thought that between the broad motions that had been made and the very specific, detailed motions that they would get to, there was middle ground that should be reached.

Chair Cassidy noted that they weren’t quite there yet. But that is what the sub-committees recommendations should provide. This is not necessarily needed for December’s Board of Commissioners meeting.

Korthauer indicated that this has gone on for months and Allied had not been consulted on any of it. He stated that he did not know where any of the numbers came from. He also said that they could lay out an entire program including the first responders component, if given the opportunity. He commented that the three sub-committees have not tied this all together. He stated that the AAC members have talked to everyone, but not talked with Allied.
Chair Cassidy clarified, “The control of the capital is going to lie with the County.” He added that the AAC will control and drive the process.

Committee Member Marvin noted that what was important now was to schedule some meetings, involve the service providers and get going.

Bridget Brown Powers, attorney for Allied EMS Systems, Inc. stated that George Korthauer did want to attend sub-committee meetings and had not been invited. She stated that Allied does not need to meet with vendors, as this has already been done. Powers said that Allied had provided a replacement schedule at Mr. Johnson’s request. She felt that the AAC has had a condescending approach with Allied and Korthauer that is not warranted. Powers explained that Allied was frustrated because no one wanted to receive their information or meet to talk about it.

Chair Cassidy commented that it might be necessary for the AAC to find a third party expert to facilitate this process, which may slow things down further.

Committee Member Fantini expressed that this process should not be rushed, because the ambulance service model would be in place for a long time and if the AAC makes a mistake the tax payers would be paying for it for a long time.

Commissioner Atchison noted that if had Allied ordered trucks, the sense of urgency may be eliminated.

Committee Member Marvin asked Allied why they would order trucks in the midst of this process. Korthauer stated it was because they need them. Marvin asked would the vehicles purchased by Allied now then revert to county ownership?

Korthauer replied that it would depend on what was worked out between the parties as the model was developed and finalized.

Committee Member Fantini commented that he was frustrated because the AAC was formed because Allied came to the County with a need for money and now they were buying the most expensive ambulances. Korthauer replied that Allied is looking for a long-term solution to an ongoing problem. They have cut some costs and increased revenue in order to get over the immediate hump.

Commissioner Atchison thanked George Korthauer for fixing Allied’s bottom line and noted that things seemed to have improved since he has been there and the cash flow had gotten fixed.

Korthauer thanked Atchison, but stated that it was not due to him that Allied was in
better shape.

Comment from Allied EMS Board Chairperson

John Smith, Allied EMS Systems, Inc. Board Chairperson addressed the AAC and specifically Commissioner Atchison stating that he did not know that Allied had been broken.

Chair Cassidy asked that the sub-committees meet between now and the December 30th meeting and start working on the details. He asked that Allied and the Village of Mackinaw City send an appropriate representative to those meetings, based on what was being discussed.

Public Comment

There was no further public comment.

Announcements

The next Ambulance Advisory Committee meeting will be on Monday, December 30th, 2013 at 8:30 A.M. in the Board of Commissioners room, 200 Division Street, Petoskey, MI 49770.

Adjournment

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.