Ambulance Advisory Committee Meeting
(AAC)
February 24, 2014

Call to Order
Roll Call

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, William Marvin, Dennis Keiser and Randy Bricker, Sr. Dr. Thomas Charlton was in attendance as a non-voting member of the committee.

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

Public Comment

Henry Singer, Emmet County and Cross Village resident, commented that there were still many questions the voting public had in regards to the ambulance service proposed funding. He stated that proficient emergency service is necessary in the county, but after reviewing all minutes from the AAC and the preceding Committee to Study Ambulance that it seems as though a needs assessment was never done. Mr. Singer expressed concern at the $100,000 allocated to Medical First Responder training and equipment; the county is already taxed at .25 mils and in Cross Village the residents are taxed 1.0 mils. Assurance was given to him by a local official that this was more than adequate to address first responder needs in that area. He does not see how the AAC arrived at the $1.3 million number for ambulance funding. Mr. Singer expressed concern about the Harbor Springs station and about Cheboygan County, as it is serviced by the Village of Mackinaw City. He stated that the public must be kept up to speed and the process must be transparent.

Public Comment

Bill Kanine, Emmet County resident and Allied EMS Board member, spoke on behalf of the Allied EMS Board of Directors. Mr. Kanine stated that the Allied Board was puzzled at how the AAC had reached the numbers it presented to the Emmet County Board of Commissioners. He stated that the number for facilities and equipment are inadequate and that Allied EMS could not support the AAC proposal. Allied believes that it would be unfair to go to the voters of the county for an unsubstantiated amount and the dollars generated would not be sufficient. At this point Allied thinks it would be better to request a renewal of the .25 millage from the voters for several years. Allied still believes that the best option for the long run is to ask the voters to approve a millage on a “not to exceed” amount in perpetuity. Mr. Kanine said that this way funding would only be for EMS services and would not affect other county projects. He stated that Allied never asked the county to use any money from the general fund for subsidizing ambulance service. He also said that Allied has no intentions of closing the Harbor Springs station.

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Fantini and seconded by Bricker to approve the agenda, as presented.

Motion carried in a unanimous voice vote.
Motion made by Bricker and seconded by Fantini to approve the minutes from the Ambulance Advisory’s January 27th, 2014 meeting.

Motion carried in a unanimous voice vote.

There were no communications.

Mackinaw City provided their monthly ambulance run and financial report. Thompson stated that runs for February were down, but January runs were doubled from the previous year. It looks as though the Village of Mackinaw Ambulance Service will end their fiscal year in the black, due to the subsidy from Emmet County. Attachment #1

Allied EMS provided their monthly ambulance run and financial report. There were fewer calls in January than last year. Chairman Cassidy gave credit to Allied EMS for turning a budgeted deficit for 2013 into a gain. Cassidy inquired as to why supplies and equipment were increased 50% in the 2014 budget. Korthauer explained that this was due to the purchase and replacement of training equipment. Cassidy also asked why the Administrative Allocation was budgeted at an increase of 24% in 2014 over 2013. Korthauer did not know why; he will check and get back to the AAC on this issue. Attachment #2

Chairman Cassidy stated that the Board of Commissioners approved the AAC’s request to support ambulance service funding requirements. Chairman Cassidy also reiterated that the funding source or sources had not yet been determined and that would be done by the Interim Controller, the Finance Director and the Finance Committee Chair person and perhaps, several other commissioners. The tasks still needing to be done will continue to be accomplished through the work groups.

Commissioner Atchison stated that the Equipment and First Responder Work Group had not met, pending the Board of Commissioners approval of the funding. He also specified how the work group arrived at the recommended number for this category. To get to the $350,000 the group looked at 10 year schedule that was provided by Allied EMS and the Village of Mackinaw City for vehicles, they looked at ambulance service in other counties in Michigan that are similar in size to Emmet County and arrived at a figure of $175,000 for the chassis and the box and $50,000 for the equipment inside. This allows for top of the line equipment. The 10 year program allows for an ambulance and a half a year. The $100,000 Medical First Responders Contingency Fund would be available for MFRs to apply for funds to apply toward training, equipment, certification, etc.

Chairman Cassidy asked George Korthauer when the two new ambulances that Allied EMS had ordered would arrive. Korthauer estimated in May or June. Cassidy had asked previously to see the quotes/invoices of the two Braun ambulances and restated this request. Korthauer replied that he would like to explain the quotes and Cassidy stated...
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that he could bring and explain them at the next AAC Meeting on March 24th, 2014.

Commissioner Wonnacott reported on the Facilities Work Group, which also had not met, pending the Board of Commissioners approval of the Annual Funding Requirements. Wonnacott stated that the AAC never intended to close the Harbor Springs Allied location, as it is not theirs to close. When the Facilities Work Group met with George Korthauer and Mike Wolf of Allied EMS it was indicated that if a new facility was built on M-119, that the Harbor Springs location may not be needed for response times.

Korthauer stated that if they had to operate without the Harbor Springs location, they could, because they were told they had to “sharpen their pencil”. Allied recently signed a new five year lease with the City of Harbor Springs. Korthauer did indicate that this location is not up to par and needs to be replaced. Both parties agreed the details were never hashed out between Allied and the Facilities Work Group. The AAC was not aware that there was a lease for that location.

Wonnacott requested that the AAC seek approval from the Board of Commissioners to send out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for design services for the three locations indicated in the Annual Funding Requirements. Attachment #3

Motion made by Bricker and seconded by Fantini to recommend to the Emmet County Board of Commissioners that they approve the Building and Grounds Committee along with the Facilities Work Group of the AAC to send out a RFP for design services for ambulance facilities.

Wonnacott noted that this would be a local project and the county would not be using their usual engineering consulting firm.

Karla Buckmaster inquired whether the county would be putting money into a leased property. Chairman Cassidy indicated that the AAC agreed that they would either own the buildings/property or enter into a long-term (i.e. a 99 year) lease with another municipality.

Commissioner Atchison inquired about the M-119 property and the Allied lease. Was the AAC considering remodeling that building, buying that building or building a new building altogether. What would Allied’s regional operations that currently operate out of that building do? There are still many items to be discussed, so it makes sense to start with the Petoskey location.

Chairman Cassidy indicated that the Facilities Work Group still had many of those details regarding the M-119 location to work out.

Motion carried in a unanimous roll call vote.
It was noted that the individual municipalities and entities would work with the Building and Grounds Committee. Discussion indicated that the City of Petoskey location would most likely be the first location to be done.

Chairman Cassidy reported that the Operational Work Group has met with Allied EMS several times and also with the Village of Mackinaw. The county will have to continue to subsidize emergency services, though the level may drop, since the county will be paying for other items, such as equipment, vehicles and buildings. A monthly billing to the county is a system that is used in other counties that makes sense to the Board of Commissioners. There is not an urgency for the current year subsidy, as the providers have recently received a lump sum payment.

Karla Buckmaster asked if the Harbor Springs station was manned. Korthauer indicated that it is. She asked if the county would be paying for that station one way or another through its operational subsidy. Chairman Cassidy indicated that these were items that the work group would need to address.

Keiser thought it should be considered that a possible proposal may have to be put on the ballot for November, instead of August. There is a May deadline for the August ballot wording; with an RFP still to be done, there may not be enough time.

Wonnacott pointed out that the Facilities dollar amount is not set in stone, it is a starting point.

Committee member Fantini clarified that the county Board of Commissioners did not just decide to take over ambulance services, but that Allied came to the county and wanted them to create a taxing authority, with authority to go up to 20 mills (which would be $40 million). The county decided against this and Allied indicated that they were in dire straits. That was when the county began studying the ambulance service issue.

Chairman Cassidy stated that the reason Dr. Charlton, as the Medical Control Authority Medical Director was at the AAC meetings was to address issue of ambulance coverage and response times.

Dr. Charlton indicated that the majority of the response times are fine, due to the coverage and locations of the buildings. There continues to be an issue in the center of the county and that is why a fourth building was considered in the Pellston area and why the AAC began looking at the Medical First Responder issue.

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Mackinaw City, indicated that training of first responders is not an issue, what needs to be addressed is recruitment and retention. He stated that 75% of their calls were handled by two retirees. The people who are trained usually hold down jobs that may be 30 miles or more away. Duncan also noted that first responder treatment is not reimbursable through insurance. He stated that consumers of first responder services are often non-residents and that the consumers need to somehow pay for these services, not just the local taxpayers/landowners.

The next Ambulance Advisory Committee meeting will be on Monday, March 24th, 2014 at 8:30 A.M. in the Board of Commissioners room, 200 Division Street, Petoskey, MI 49770.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.