

AMSA
Area Metropolitan Services Agency
LifeCare Ambulance Service
330 Hamblin Avenue
Battle Creek, MI 49037
Wednesday, June 10, 2015
10:00 A.M.

Members Present: Susan Bedsole, Andy Helmboldt, Susan Baldwin, City of Battle Creek: Nate Hennee and Terry Blaniar, City of Springfield: Steve Buller and Tim Hill, Emmett Township: Tom Sprau, Bedford Township: Troy Radcliff, Newton Township: Jason Farmer, Convis Township

Members Absent: Rebecca Fleury and Deb Owens, City of Battle Creek: Marty Uldriks, Bedford Township: Rob Behnke and Barb Phillips, Pennfield Township: Laveta Hardish and Doug Chapman, Leroy Township: Shirley Clutter, Newton Township: Steve Frisbee and Kelli Scott, Calhoun County

Others Present: Victoria Houser, Battle Creek City Clerk: Mike Olsen, Emmett Township, Public Safety Director

Call to Order/Recognition of Quorum: Mr. Buller called the meeting to order at 10:10 am, recognizing a quorum was present.

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Susan Bedsole, supported by Tom Sprau, to approve the AMSA Board Meeting minutes of March 11, 2015. All yes, none opposed. Motion approved.

Agenda Items to Add or Remove: Ms. Bedsole requested the Inspection Authority item be removed from the agenda, stating the City is working on improvements to the current process.

Board Business

1. Code Library Update: Steve Buller

Mr. Buller stated the Bureau of Construction Code acknowledged that any municipality in the State of Michigan may go to Lansing to use their library for research, stating he was unsure of the ability to copy documents, stating this may not be practical for most jurisdictions. Mr. Buller discussed a company named MADCAD, stating they have acquired all of the code standard data, digitized it and made it available online. Mr. Buller discussed the costs, stating that if Calhoun County was to partner with Jackson County, for a total of 295,000 residents, the estimated cost to participate may be recouped with a \$.50 per permit surcharge. Mr. Buller stated this may total \$1,500 for Battle Creek, \$275 for Emmett Township, and \$40 annually for Convis Township, noting the estimates are based upon the number of permits issued in 2014. Mr. Buller also discussed an organization in St. Joseph County who was charging \$3,000 to join their organization to review hard copies of the code documents, stating this may also be inconvenient.

Ms. Bedsole asked if this would provide access to the general public or just for the municipality, stating the municipality would still need to have the code books available to provide basic code information.

Mr. Buller stated the Code library would be most useful for larger jurisdictions experiencing commercial development. Mr. Buller stated Cornerstone Inspections Services would be interested in participating if Calhoun and Jackson Counties were to form a joint partnership.

Mr. Farmer clarified the municipalities could either add \$.50 to each permit, or absorb the cost in their administrative fee, to offset the cost of the library.

Ms. Bedsole noted Battle Creek would still continue to order hard copies of the code books, but may still want access to the digital online version.

Mr. Buller noted the more specialized books may no longer need to be purchased if AMSA members worked with a partnership. Mr. Buller noted the State is requiring all municipalities have the standards in place, providing access for all documents.

Mr. Sprau expressed concern the municipalities would not be able to provide documentation to the customer if they were not able to make copies at the state office, asking if all municipalities needed to be a member of some organization with a code library. Mr. Sprau stated it might be best for the smaller townships to provide a notice that they use the State resources.

Ms. Bedsole stated she would consider the City to be in compliance as the documents were available at the State, stating she would review the current costs and consider the online resources, noting a company would ensure the code references are always updated.

Mr. Buller stated the municipalities often have the resources they need, stating he often goes to Battle Creek for additional resources. Mr. Buller also provided an example of some standards that are burdensome or seldom used.

Ms. Bedsole recommended the AMSA Board members research the needs and potential benefits of an on line resource to discuss at the next board meeting.

Mr. Buller agreed to provide complete lists of residential and commercial resources. Mr. Buller noted the municipalities could report to their boards that they are currently in compliance as they could use the State's library resources.

2. Calhoun County Consolidated Dispatch Center update: Tim Hill

Mr. Hill expressed concern the dispatch costs to Emmett Township continued to increase, asking if other municipalities' fees were also rising.

Mike Olsen, Emmett Township Public Safety, stated Emmett Township's costs had increased 235% over 5 years, stating he had heard the costs were expected to decrease once all of the municipalities were being charged.

Ms. Bedsole stated the costs of the Dispatch Center, although rising, are still less than when the City of Battle Creek held dispatch, stating there may have been increases regardless of who was holding dispatch.

Comm. Baldwin noted the actual budget is flat or has gone down, stating the numbers have shifted based upon usage, noting there was a period of time when townships did not pay.

Comm. Helmboldt confirmed the actual expenses have not gone up, but what a township pays may have increased based on number of calls.

Mr. Radcliff stated the level of dispatching continues to decline, while the costs continues to increase, stating a lot of promises have not been fulfilled. Mr. Radcliff stated there are several agencies that are not required to pay for dispatch services, including MSP, Calhoun County Sheriff, LifeCare and Marshall Ambulance. Mr. Radcliff also stated the dispatching communication equipment is not adequate,

expressing concern the level and quality of dispatch service is atrocious, asking why there is not a separate group that is dedicated to intake, while another group does the dispatching.

Mr. Hill asked if anyone contacted the Technical Board to discuss the issues.

Mr. Radcliff stated it is common knowledge the Dispatch Center is difficult to get through to, stating he does not understand how the Dispatch Center operates. Mr. Radcliff stated Newton Township does not have a billing mechanism like LifeCare Ambulance does to recoup the costs, stating LifeCare does not pay for dispatch service, but can bill for the service.

The LifeCare representative discussed the costs they are able to bill to Medicare, Medicaid and commercial insurance, stating they seldom receive the costs that they invoice for, noting they also receive no payment for patients without insurance.

Mr. Hill stated his issue is that the costs continue to increase, stating they could hire an officer to manage their own dispatch center for the same or lower cost.

Ms. Bedsole asked why the charges are increasing if the budget has not been increasing.

Comm. Baldwin noted the fees are based upon the number of calls, stating the number of calls will increase as the population increases.

Mr. Radcliff stated that if someone calls dispatch to report a tree that has brought electrical lines down, the township is billed for the call, although the County road department takes care of the problem, the township is billed, stating the problems continue to be compounded.

Mr. Hill stated the number of calls is immaterial, the issue is the costs that seem to be going up, stating they thought the costs would decrease once all of the jurisdictions were being billed, also expressing concern Emmett, as the 3rd largest municipality in Calhoun County, did not have a seat on the board.

Comm. Baldwin stated that if someone dials 911, someone at the Dispatch Center must answer the call, stating there is a cost associated with this.

Mr. Hill questioned the background of the Dispatch Center's director, stating the person should have some type of police or fire experience.

Ms. Bedsole recommended all of the municipalities become more engaged with the Dispatch board to better understand the costs and the service, stating people do not have to sit on the board to be engaged.

Ms. Bedsole recommended the issues be presented to the CCCD Board.

Chief Olsen stated he had met with Steve Frisbie and Derek King, stating the concerns needed to be taken to the Technical Board as they were the vehicle to then take the issues to the Administrative Board. Chief Olsen stated the discussion should be the way the service is funded, stating the per device charge needs to increase, stating all of the municipalities and the County needed to work together to ensure the proposal is approved by the voters.

Ms. Bedsole stated they expected the surcharge to pass, but when it did not pass, there was a huge loss of anticipated revenue.

Mr. Radcliff stated he did not feel the townships should have to pay for a driver who calls Dispatch due to a flat tire, which is then serviced by a wrecker, who is paid for the service, but pays nothing to be the vendor who is called by dispatch.

Comm. Baldwin recommended the Board meet with Dispatch representatives to discuss the technical issues. As an example, Comm. Baldwin stated some Fire Departments want a secondary tone, stating the

Dispatcher will have to call a second time, stating it is a complicated system, stating she does not know if the second tone is charged for.

Mr. Radcliff stated there has always been a second tone, at least for 2 years now, stating they ask the department to stand by for a medical on the first tone, then they are required to wait for the second tone to receive the needed information.

Ms. Bedsole recommended the AMSA Board request a representative of the CCCDC come to the next meeting to discuss the fee structure, the general costs, who is paying for the service, and how the service is delivered, allowing board members to have their questions answered.

Comm. Helmboldt asked if the person making a call for 911 assistance pays for the wrecker, asking if the wrecker service pays a fee to be on the CCCDC list for wrecker services.

Mr. Buller asked how the County pays for dispatch services, asking if it is a flat fee.

Chief Olsen stated the County had a cap of \$300,000.

Comm. Helmboldt stated the municipalities needed to understand what they are charged for and to ensure the fees are fair to everyone.

Comm. Baldwin agreed to request CCCDC representatives attend the next AMSA Board meeting.

Comm. Baldwin also stated there was a provision that if municipality costs go up more than 10% per year, the costs can be capped upon request, stating 2 municipalities did this in the last year.

Mr. Buller stated the municipalities should not have to ask for costs to be capped, it should be automatic.

Reports

1. Treasurer's Report

Nate Hennee, Treasurer, stated he consolidated the AMSA savings and checking accounts into one checking account, stating he added Steve Buller as signatory, as the checks require 2 signatures. Mr. Hennee discussed the transactions on the report, noting there have been increased expenses in printing, while legal fees have dropped.

Mr. Hennee presented the 3rd quarter 2014/2015 AMSA Treasurer's report.

A motion was made by Susan Bedsole, supported by Andy Helmboldt, to approve the quarterly Treasurer's reports as presented. All yes, none opposed. Motion approved.

2. 2015/2016 Budget

Mr. Hennee presented the 2015/2016 AMSA Budget.

A motion was made by Andy Helmboldt, supported by Tim Hill, to approve the 2015/2016 AMSA Budget. All yes, none opposed. Motion approved.

Board Comment - There were no additional Board Comments

Next Meeting Date: City of Battle Creek Department of Public Works, 150 S. Kendall St., Wednesday, September 30, 2015 at 10:00 am.

Adjournment: Mr. Buller adjourned the meeting at 11:25 am.