

## **EMS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

**February 3, 2020 @ 6:30 p.m.**

River Falls City Hall

222 Lewis Street

River Falls, WI

Call Meeting to Order 6:30 p.m.

Advisory Board Members Present:

Gary Donath, Judy Edgar, Jeanne Wespetal, Scott  
Morrissette, Kent Kittleson, Carole Mottaz, Ken  
McNiff

Absent: Jessica Delwiche

Also Present: Jason Stroud, assistant city administrator;  
Scot Simpson, city administrator

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes from January 6, 2019.

**MSC Edgar/McNiff to approve January 6, 2020 regular meeting minutes. Unanimous.**

### 1) Public Comment Period

There was no public comments.

### 2) Annual Report

Stroud updated the Board on the annual report. There was a slight uptick in calls this year. Calls to Hudson dropped dramatically. Saved \$13,000 on expenses. Employee wages/benefits are the largest expense.

Stroud said the ambulances put on 60,000 miles in 2019. 19 FTE's total for the department this year. In 2015 the department had 13.5 FTE's.

Stroud said there could be more revenue than the \$1.4 million at end of year 2019. Transfers went down this year. Payer mix 63% Medicare/Medicaid in 2019, 56% in 2016.

2019 Operational deficit of over \$500,000. 90 percent tile of response times. Feasibility assessment in 2019.

Carol Mottaz asked what the 57% increase in expenses. Increase directly related to labor.

Ken McNiff asked if staff will do something for retirees/employee recognition. Stroud said there are plans to do something for the employees.

### 3) Recommendation to transition to Allina Health EMS

Mottaz said she went to the Council workshop last week regarding EMS and provided some of her thoughts on what the service would look like under Allina. Mottaz reached out to the communities that are contracting with Allina and she said they have been satisfied with the services with Allina. Mottaz mentioned that she will be writing an article for the River Falls Journal. McNiff asked if that could be placed in the Prescott Journal as well and Mottaz said she will send it over to McNiff for him to work out on.

Stroud said he had a conversation with the City Administrator with Apple Valley and he said that they have been pleased with Allina's service. In his conversation with the Apple Valley Administrator, they said they have been impressed with how the City has handled the process so far.

Stroud gave a presentation to the overview of the process so far. Stroud said it would be difficult for him to see that expenses and revenue would ever be neutral again. Stroud talked about Allina's proposal and some of the details it entails. Stroud brought up the financial impact of Allina's proposal and how the City's finances would be improved under this deal.

Stroud talked about the town's way of contracting through the City on this measure with details still being figured out. The Board asked to formally pursue the resolution.

**MSC Morrissette/Edgar to send the resolution to Council. Unanimous (Kittleson Abstained)**

Morrissette asked if we are "handling the master contract" what if there is a false call type situation, are we the mediators between the town, City, Allina? Stroud said that to some degree we would be playing the peace maker in that role but we would want to protect our interests. Mottaz said Allina would not charge back bad bets, but that was not protected, which Stroud clarified the intent of the statement and would make changes.

Scot Simpson asked to clarify what Mottaz said in regard to assessing a per-capita fee. Scot Simpson went over some of the differences between doing a short-term and long-term contract with Allina and that it would be modeled in part on some of the relationships the City has currently. A five-year contract like the one proposed is beneficial because it would provide stability for staff, an incubated transition, and Allina would be financially committed with its rates. Allina would be directly billing,

and the billing risk would be on them.

Simpson said that though this may be an advisory board, Council greatly appreciates the due diligence and feedback the advisory board provides. Simpson would like to know what the Boards thoughts were on implementing this contract arrangement with the towns and giving the towns a 5-year per capita number, they could work with. Doing this would potentially mitigate the overall risk for the City.

Wespetal asked if staff checked with the State of Wisconsin to see if this type of contract would work which Simpson said under past intergovernmental contracts staff believe it would be ok for all interested parties.

Wespetal asked where the money would go from the sale of the equipment and Simpson said it would address the deficit from last year and place the remaining proceeds into the enterprise fund. The plan would be to keep the enterprise fund open during the 5-year contract to fund various EMS expenses.

Wespetal asked if Town of River Falls expenses in-kind would handle property expenses and Simpson said he assumes that it will but that decision has not been made quite yet. Simpson said that administrative aspect such as insurance of the EMS building, record keeping, will still be handled by City staff.

Mottaz asked about the assessment to the city of Prescott and towns. Stroud said the contiguous towns to River Falls will be around \$11 per-capita and those in the Prescott area would be \$19 per-capita. Mottaz said she would like to see an annual 3% increase in the contract for a rainy-day fund that would be spread throughout the towns. Simpson said the reason for the City potentially taking on that 3% cost is to make it seem like the City is not using the service for “free”. Wespetal supports the 3% built in to the per-capita rates because there is a lot of in-kind expenses that the City absorbs. McNiff said there is the perception that River Falls gets these services for free on the backs of the towns and Prescott.

Simpson talked about what the City is doing for the service and how the City carries the whole deficit forward that needs to be put back together. McNiff said that the public needs to be made aware of the City’s true cost such as it carrying the entire deficit to make it more palatable for the public.

Mottaz asked if Stroud could present to the upcoming Prescott Fire and EMS Board. Simpson does not want to get into the weeds of rumor dispelling but instead the City could provide some FAQ’s and other items to get the word out about this potential change.

Mottaz indicated she would be supportive of the draft but would want subsequent changes to be communicated back to the Advisory Board. Stroud said he was asking the board to provide a recommendation to the Council to proceed with the transition from providing emergency medical services directly to contracting with Allina Health

Systems in accordance with the principals provided within this memorandum.

**MSC Morrissette/Edgar to send the resolution to Council. Unanimous (Kittleson Abstained)**

Mottaz talked about the conversation she had with Kevin Miller about if Allina could River Falls station and Prescott station on the ambulances. Stroud said that it is a pride and ownership thing, and by asking for that we could limit their fleet apparatus.

Morrissette said he has yet to meet anyone who cares what the side of the ambulance says as long as it does a good job. Stroud said they could use magnets on the side of the ambulance with the Prescott and River Falls name when those ambulances are in those areas.

4) Role of EMS Advisory Board

Stroud said he does not recommend doing anything differently with the Advisory Board through 2020. Stroud recommended that they continue to meet in even months.

Mottaz asked Brandt Johnson to review some items from the minutes that are done annually. McNiff asked what Allina would need for input regarding an advisory board. Stroud said we could possibly review those items that Mottaz requested at the April organizational meeting as well as the role of the EMS Advisory Board. Edgar had a question regarding if there are advisory boards in other areas and Stroud said that there are not any other advisory boards throughout Allina's network.

Adjournment: **MSC Morrissette/Wespetal at 7:57 p.m.**

Next meeting date is April 6, 2020

Respectfully Submitted,



Brandt Johnson  
Assistant to the City Administrator