

Gage County EMS Advisory Committee
Beatrice, Nebraska
May 7, 2009
8:00 a.m.

Minutes

Present:

Don Harmon
Dan Hawkins
Brian Daake
Jane Witthoff
Larry Stanosheck
Rex Adams
Mark Meints
Matt Bauman
Diana Durfey
Ron Miller
Mike Pethoud

Absent:

Dawn Hill
Dennis Byars
Dee Fritch
Alan Fetty

Staff Resources:

Robyn Henderson
Dean Cole
Richard Mettler

Guests:

Jill Jensen
Dave Battiato
Shirley Gronewald

Call Meeting to Order

Don Harmon called the meeting to order and asked members to introduce themselves.

Approve Minutes

Motion was made and seconded to accept the agenda and minutes of April 9, 2009, meeting; motion approved.

Review Committee Charter

Dave Battiato noted that his title is County Administrator.

Discussion/Decision: Inter-local Agreement and Joint Public Agency (JPA)

Jill gave a review of where we are to date on discussion of inter-local agreement and joint public agency.

OPTION 1: Status Quo Plus - Expand current inter-local arrangements.

- Register of Deeds Transfer tax issue -- \$.50 goes into county general fund; it is not specifically identified for EMS, but could be.
- Oversight group – members do not have to be elected officials
- Taxing authority for oversight group: Generally no; however, public safety committees can use county-wide sales and use tax to generate funds, but is subject to voter approval. This would be carved out of any existing city sales tax.
- Fiscal responsibilities are shared under Option 1 and it is wide open; the group decides.
- Affiliations with Non-Gage County ambulance services can continue and contract with county.
- Joint Antelope Valley Authority (inter-local agreement) – may be a good template for Gage County
 - Option 1 agreement:

- Start with current agreement
- Decide on purposes
- Joint entity or not?
- Duration
- how financed
- how budget prepared
- how administered
- how to terminate, dispose of property, etc.

OPTION 2: Joint Public Agency

- Register of Deeds Transfer tax issue -- \$.50 goes into county general fund; it is not specifically identified for EMS, but could be.
- Oversight group is required and they have to be elected officials, but non-elected members can be designated.
- Non-Gage county services can continue affiliation through contracts.
- Taxing authority can be delegated by establishing authorities; it will be under county lid. Establishing authorities can allocate funds to oversight group to be spent.
- Fiscal responsibilities – wide open depending on wishes of group. Can do revenue and funding bonds, and general obligation bonds
- Agreement between Lancaster County and Lincoln for new corrections facility is good example of JPA.

Biggest difference between Inter-local Agreement and JPA is taxing authority. Primary comments made during discussion: 1) the inter-local agreement seems easier; 2) JPA won't pass County Board as they won't give up taxing authority; and 3) JPA can allow for more permanent funding and would ensure that funding is always there. Whatever model is chosen, Gage County needs to have body that can advocate on behalf of the group and is sustainable.

There was general agreement that the Rescue Services need to become accountable. Mark and Rex have been hammering for changes on this for years. For example, Matt sent letters requesting financial information from rescue departments over a month ago, but hasn't received any information back yet. Mark stated that the current agreements are 8 years old. An Inter-Local Agreements can incorporate accountability standards in the documents. Dave noted that Gage County can have separate agreements for funding between each department and the county AND an agreement that focuses on other issues such as joint purchasing and centralized billing.

Richard asked what was preventing the group from making a decision between inter-local agreement and joint public agency. Most agree with ILA, but there are some that have strong concerns about future funding and see the joint public agency as a more stable model to ensure that. Rex noted that EMS is quality of life issue, and although there is no directive requiring the County Board to provide funding, it has always has. Rex said the Board has a strong commitment to preserving that.

Dianna asked if the group could request the Board for a minimum amount of funding. Rex stated that we have that now; the amount is set in the current ILAs. Total right now is about \$280,000 with medical director. Matt suggested the Board needs to determine the actual cost of providing services as the \$280,000 may not be right amount; it could be higher or lower.

Matt stated there is a draft ILA in existence and it's about 85 percent ready to go.

Danny Hawkins moved that the group accepts the ILA option and have a small group work out the actual ILA. Jane seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the motion was accepted with eight yeas, no nays and three abstentions.

YEA

Don Harmon
Dan Hawkins
Brian Daake
Jane Witthoff
Larry Stanosheck
Mark Meints
Diana Durfey
Ron Miller

NAY

ABSTAIN

Rex Adams
Matt Bauman
Mike Pethoud

It was also noted that centralized billing, shared staff, and other administrative things done to help the departments could be included in new ILA.

NEXT STEPS:

Matt will circulate draft of agreement for comments by committee. Jill circulated a draft for an ILA that outlines needed components (see attached handout). Matt's draft agreement will be circulated to the Advisory Committee for comment; comments due by May 22.

County currently has contracts with Clatonia, Wymore, Adams, and Beatrice. Some of these Services have subcontracts with other first responders groups. These relationships need to be included in the letter of intent. Agreements or processes will be developed to deal with Pickerell, Cortland, Odell, Blue Springs, and DeWitt.

It was suggested that this group could be designated as the oversight group by Board; possibly with ability to provide subcommittees, thereby drawing others into committee process. It was determined that the County Board would probably need to "re-appoint" the Advisory Committee with its new mission to provide oversight.

Diana noted that the hospital has a plan that they want to put into practice that will meld with the actions of this committee and with the EMS network through Gage County. Dean noted that Crete Area Medical Center and Crete City F&R now have a shared operation with a Paramedic co-located at hospital from 3-11 pm. The Paramedic will help with calls in the evening and when not on call he will be at and paid by the hospital.

Dean commented that work done now can be stepping stone to developing an ambulance district, which would take legislation to accomplish. This group needs to show that it is credible and responsible and can be a strong advocate for legislative changes down the road.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting dates:

June 12, 2009(subsequently changed to **June 13**) **July 9, 2009** **August 13, 2009**