

Notes from EMS Regionalization Exploratory Committee meeting September 6, 2006

Present: Freeholder Helene Reed
Gerald White – Boro/Township Administrator's
Paul Lambrecht – VP, Clinical & Support Services, Underwood
Charlene Vitale – EMS Career Chiefs
William Holmstrom – Ambulance & Rescue Assoc.
Len Clark – Deputy, Emergency Response
Jack Fisher – County Administrator
Chad Bruner – Deputy County Administrator
Michelle Pandolfo – Special Projects

Absent: J. Thomas Butts - Emergency Response Coordinator
Louis Moffa – Mayor's Assoc.

Freeholder Reed introduced Jerry White from the Township Administrator's Association. Mr. White is Township Administrator of West Deptford Township.

Squad Subcommittee:

Bill Holmstrom briefed the committee on a special meeting held on August 29, 2006 to brief the squads and career chiefs on this exploratory committee. There were more questions than they could answer, Paul Lambrecht stressed to them that the special meeting was for fact finding. To that end, a survey was given out and sent. Ten were received back. They will continue to seek feedback from the squads to develop a snapshot of Gloucester County's EMS. Charlene will review the surveys and summarize them. Some questions raised at the meeting were as follows:

- ✓ How much is budgeted for the exploratory process?
- ✓ Will there be a broad-based tax?
- ✓ Can this branch into the fire service?
- ✓ Existing career employees – hired first?
- ✓ Will they be County employees?
- ✓ Will the jobs be civil service?
- ✓ What will the pay scale be?
- ✓ Inter-local service agreement options?
- ✓ What will be protocol?
- ✓ Have costs projections been generated? Billing vs. costs.
- ✓ Could this be a money maker for a municipality?
- ✓ Certifications/registrations?
- ✓ Will the EMS force be paid during the day and volunteer at night?

Two consulting leads were discussed. Paul Lambrecht was in touch with a consulting legal firm which is willing to come out and meet with the committee. The firm has some regionalization experience in Delaware and Maryland. Chad Bruner spoke about the IAFF which assists with regionalization for free as part of their mission. Concern that the IAFF was for firefighters was discussed. This organization is able to limit their scope to EMS only. Case in point, some area squads are already represented by them. Questions needing to be answered by possibly a consulting firm would be:

- ✓ 3rd party billing, especially with Medicare (they dictate certain criteria)
- ✓ Logistics on putting this together

Chad Bruner suggested meeting with a consultant in a smaller group and then bringing them back to full committee; possibly for the October 11th meeting.

It was discussed that Prince George County in Maryland has both a county-wide paid and volunteer EMS service. New Castle County in Delaware has a new EMS program County-wide. Perhaps the committee can visit and talk to their administration.

The administrative code and standard of care was further discussed.

Municipal Subcommittee:

Jerry White will send a survey to all municipalities asking for the following information:

- ✓ Direct/indirect costs
- ✓ Offset costs – debt
- ✓ Insurance costs
- ✓ How much money does EMS cost the municipality
- ✓ What checks
- ✓ What debts

Key Points discussed

The committee reiterated that the standard of care is the reason for regionalization.

Other counties are looking at how Gloucester County handles this situation because they're considering regionalization themselves. Freeholder Reed has been approached at Association of Counties on how Gloucester County is making out.

Paul Lambrecht added that if any County can do it, Gloucester County can.

Meeting dates

The next scheduled meetings are Wednesday evening @ 6:00 pm, September 20th, October 11th and 25th.