

**EMS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**January 6, 2020 @ 6:30 p.m.**

River Falls City Hall

222 Lewis Street

River Falls, WI

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*OFFICIAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN ON ANY AGENDA ITEM*

Call Meeting to Order – 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes – October 28, 2019

1. Update on staff changes
2. Alternative EMS Service Delivery Update
3. Introduction of Allina Health EMS and Proposal Presentation

ADJOURNMENT

Posted: 1-2-20

City Hall

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## **EMS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

**October 28, 2019 @ 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, Jessica Delwiche

Also Present: Dan Toland, Mayor; Jason Stroud, EMS Director; Scot Simpson, City Administrator

Advisory Board Members Absent:

Carole Mottaz, Ken McNiff

Jason Stroud opened up the meeting as Chairperson Mottaz was absent from the meeting. Stroud introduced new board member, Jessica Delwiche. A nomination process was proposed for the election of a Vice Chairperson.

**MSC Morrissette/Edgar to nominate Jeanne Wespetal as Vice Chairperson of the EMS Advisory Board. Unanimous.**

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes from October 7, 2019 and Workshop Minutes from October 7, 2019.

**MSC Donath/Kittleson to approve October 7, 2019 regular meeting minutes and October 7, 2019 workshop minutes. Unanimous.**

### 1) Staff update from October 22, 2019 City Council EMS Workshop

Stroud provided the board an update from the City Council EMS Workshop that occurred on October 22, 2019. A general theme of the workshop was that there were consistent and thoughtful questions and concerns shared during the workshop. Stroud said there seemed to be an indication from Council that they were supportive of a request for proposal (RFP) process for an alternative based EMS delivery service and also that the service cannot continue financially as is in its current status.

Stroud said that while staff provided their professional opinion about going with direct negotiations with Allina, Council thought it was best to do an RFP. Stroud said that this is not the end game and that an RFP would provide a more formalized process.

Scot Simpson said that Council took what was discussed at the October 7, 2019 EMS workshop into consideration when they had their October 22 workshop. Simpson explained to the board members why City staff proposed conducting direct negotiations with Allina; It could be a faster process to get answers directly, and that the City could negotiate on behalf of the towns for a better deal due to leverage.

Simpson said that the Council was in agreement to negotiate a reasonably simple RFP, which includes the City's neighbors in the RFP process. There was consensus that EMS is a vital public service, and that the RFP process would run through Jason and Scot.

Scott Morrissette shared with the group his perspective as a Council member on the topic and that there needs to be an RFP in order for the Council to make an informed decision. A partner could be selected from the RFP and more direct negotiations could be conducted.

Gary Donath asked if putting this out to a referendum was ever considered and if it should be an option. Morrissette provided a reason for why he was not in favor of conducting a referendum for EMS. Morrissette said that the goal is to hear feedback and the need to have community involvement/engagement.

## 2) EMS RFP Discussion

Stroud gave a presentation on what the RFP process will look like. The City is not looking for the cheapest service but will look for a solution that works for the entire River Falls EMS service area. The City could create a base contract for EMS services and there could be some form of action from the towns and Prescott to either opt-in or opt-out.

Simpson explained to the board that this would not be a typical purchasing contract as the Council is not required by law to accept the lowest proposal for an alternative based EMS delivery service. It is a more open process compared to a typical bidding process.

Simpson said there was a discussion with Council in that if responses to the RFP were less expensive, the City does not have to accept if it feels it could provide those services at a similar cost. The RFP process could go better, and it could go worse, but the City has a number of choices of where it could go. Stroud said there is an opportunity to enter into contractual negotiations with the provider and the City would not be beholden to what was laid out in the RFP.

Stroud discussed with the board a tentative timeline of items that will lead up to the RFP. River Falls will host the Prescott Fire and EMS Association meeting on Nov. 7 which will include the surrounding towns and what may go out in the RFP. A pre-proposal conference on Nov. 22 would be determined to explain verbally what the City is trying to accomplish and allows the proposers to ask questions. Proposals would be due to the City by Dec. 13.

Stroud said he is proposing an ad-hoc work group to review the RFP's when they come in. It was proposed that the EMS Advisory Board meet again on Jan. 6, 2020 to go over what was found in the RFP process and what the staff recommendation is. Staff have proposed an aggressive timeline because the City uses a biennial budget process, and a provider would need at least nine months to start-up operations.

Stroud discussed some of the must have items or requirements to be included in the RFP such as contractual responses times. Jeanne Wespetal asked if it would be better to strike response times from the contract which Stroud replied that he would like to see what the providers propose for those requirements. Simpson asked the board if the contract should state that service should go out at a specific time and if there should be separate responses times if the call is outside the City, etc.

Stroud asked for feedback regarding response times. Simpson told the board that it is very possible that the City will have at least one proposal from an organization to run the EMS services. The RFP should be written to appeal to a majority of proposers.

Stroud talked about how there could be language included in the contract to discuss transfers and rights to those transfers. Wespetal asked if there should be levels of response times which Kent Kittleson supported because we do not know what the proposers are going to suggest for response times. Simpson said that other proposers besides Allina would want to get more information regarding the type of service quality that would be expected in the River Falls EMS service area.

Donath asked a question regarding to the minimum service requirements and special event coverage, which Stroud provided clarification as to what those special event coverages would be. Morrissette asked a question regarding the flexibility for ambulances which Stroud provided an answer to. Simpson said the City would not want to dictate prices at this point in the process. The more specific an RFP, the less effective it would be and provided an example of flexible language in the RFP.

Stroud continued his presentation saying what would likely come next and asked if there were any additions needed. Judy Edgar asked if the towns and Prescott could be included in the conversation because they more than likely will rely on RF EMS to provide service. Simpson said there could be language added in the RFP for prices in the towns and Prescott. Stroud said that Prescott would need to be reviewed differently from the towns.

Simpson provided the group with some service area scenarios. Jessica Delwiche asked what choices were there for the towns which Simpson said they will find out in the RFP process. Questions from the board regarding town recruitment for EMS services and when towns were required by law to provide EMS service were asked which Simpson answered.

Morrissette asked what the contract terms should be for the RFP. Stroud said that an

initial starting point of at least five- or six-year terms is being considered. Wespetal asked about field price adjustments and Stroud provided some clarifications.

Delwiche had some questions regarding contract and the EMS house which Stroud provided answers to her questions. Donath asked why there wasn't language in the draft RFP about Jason's position which Stroud replied that requiring that his position be guaranteed could possibly limit the quality of responses to the RFP.

Stroud discussed the pros and cons of having short- or long-term contracts. Delwiche and Kittleson favors at least a five-year contract. Wespetal said that it might be a good idea to go longer because medical costs are not going down and would want to have a good rate locked in. Simpson said the board could consider a mechanism in the RFP to see what the length of the contract would do to the proposers pricing.

Stroud continued with his presentation discussing "what's next" and the schedule ahead. Simpson said as the RFPs come in, he would want to evaluate the level of open public dialogue we would want to have and where it will be most informative. Stroud said it is the intent to move forward with an RFP

Adjournment: **MSC Wespetal/Edgar at 8:33 p.m.**

Next meeting date December 2, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brandt Johnson  
Assistant to the City Administrator



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** EMS Advisory Board

**FROM:** Jason E. Stroud, Assistant City Administrator

**DATE:** January 6, 2020

**TITLE:** Alternative EMS Service Delivery Update

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### BACKGROUND

The City of River Falls has proudly sustained a third-service Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department since 1975, which provides advanced life support prehospital care and ambulance transportation for residents in River Falls, Prescott, and surrounding communities. The revenue generated through the EMS fee-for-service program, along with inter-governmental service fees, fully funded department operations.

Over the past few years, however, a decrease in overall call volume and stagnated reimbursements from insurance and governmental payers, combined with increased equipment and personnel expenses, have led to significant operational deficits. The department was able to cover these deficits with its reserve fund balance since 2017. However, the fund is depleted and cannot cover service costs beyond 2020.

As a result, staff undertook a comprehensive feasibility study to determine future options. While doing research for the feasibility report, staff found that many communities do not provide their own ambulance services; in fact, a 2017 survey of 1500 American cities, which was conducted by the International City/County Management Association, indicates that as many as two-thirds of the responding cities do not have their own municipal EMS agency. In Wisconsin, only 5% of the municipalities with populations between 10,000-50,000 sustain their own third-service municipal EMS department. Many of these communities contract their ambulance services through a non-governmental organization, such as a commercial EMS agency, or an EMS agency directly affiliated with a healthcare system. The final feasibility report included staff recommendations that the consideration of such a non-governmental EMS agency may be a viable option for the City in order to avoid potentially significant service fee increases or subsidies that would be needed to sustain current services.

## **DISCUSSION**

The EMS Advisory Board and City Council received updates on this matter at workshops in October of 2019. At that time, both of these groups indicated support for staff to move forward with issuing a request for proposals (RFP) for a non-governmental EMS service provider in order to fully evaluate the cost-effectiveness and service implications.

The RFP was issued, and two initial proposals were received. An ad-hoc RFP workgroup met and reviewed the proposals on December 18, 2019. This workgroup agreed that the proposal received by Allina Health EMS (AHEMS) met all submission requirements and is the only proposal to be further considered.

The information provided in the AHEMS proposal appears to indicate that a transition to their firm for the City's EMS services may be advantageous in terms of service-delivery and financial implications. The proposal from AHEMS ensures a staffed EMS presence in River Falls and Prescott, while continuing to provide EMS services to all municipalities currently served by River Falls EMS. AHEMS is willing to employ all current RFEMS staff who meet eligibility criteria and will operate from the current RFEMS operating locations. AHEMS is proposing to continue to provide the same level of services that RFEMS provides with little to no direct cost to the City and status quo per capita rates to the townships and Prescott. AHEMS is a fully accredited EMS agency that has a depth of resources available. The complete proposal has been made available to EMS Advisory Board members.

A preliminary comparison of what AHEMS and RFEMS can provide, and the implications for such, is included with this memorandum as an informational item.

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff intends to negotiate contractual terms with AHEMS in order to draft an initial EMS services contract. These terms and contract service requirements will be presented to City Council at their January 28, 2020 workshop for further consideration and discussion. Formal Council approval would be needed in order to enter into a subsequent contract; such approval would likely be sought at a regular council meeting in February 2020. If approved, the intention would be to fully transition EMS service delivery to AHEMS no later than January 1, 2021.

The EMS Advisory Board will be kept informed of related developments and outcomes throughout the potential transition. The EMS Advisory Board is encouraged to provide staff with feedback, questions, or concerns, related to this matter.

**Comparison of current service vs. Allina's EMS proposal**

	<b>River Falls EMS</b>	<b>Allina EMS</b>
Local Oversight / Service Level Flexibility	Direct / As-Needed	Contractual / Per Terms
Nationally (CAAS) Accredited		✓
Critical Care Transfer Services	✓	✓
Paramedic Staffed Ambulances	✓	✓
River Falls – One ambulance staffed 24/7, 2nd peak demand ambulance staffed at least 12hrs	✓	✓
Prescott – One ambulance staffed 24/7	✓	✓
90th percentile response times – City	0:09:02 (actual) + 1-2 minutes*	0:10:59 (proposed)
90th percentile response times – Rural	0:17:20 (actual) + 1-2 minutes*	0:17:59 (proposed)
Emergency Medical Dispatching (pre-arrival instructions) for entire response area		✓
Employment opportunity for <u>all</u> current FT and PT staff	Unknown	✓
In-house EMS employee development, continuing education and career opportunities	Limited	✓
Paramedic Pay Range	\$17.00-\$21.50	\$23.61-\$35.55
Comprehensive Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Initiatives and Programs		✓
Ability to Pay Program(s)	✓	✓
Special Event Coverage Services	✓	✓
Community Education and Outreach	✓	limited and/or per terms
Wheelchair/Paratransit Service Component		✓
Ambulance billing rates for transport (range based on level and criticality)	\$1,219-\$2,300	\$640-\$2,640
Township per capita (2021)	≥\$21.50/possible	\$11/proposed
Prescott Fire and EMS Association per capita (2021)	≥\$28.50	\$19/proposed
Annual subsidy likely required from City of River Falls (2021-2025)	>\$300,000	\$0.00

\* - RFEMS cannot capture/report call processing time by dispatch center; this time is typically at least one to two minutes. The proposed times from Allina include the call/EMS call processing times.