

May 22, 2019 Prescott Area Fire and EMS Association
Committee Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to due call and proper public notices the Prescott Area Fire and EMS Association Committee met on Wednesday, May 22, 2019 at 7:00 pm at the Prescott Fire Hall, 260 Flora St. Prescott WI 54021.

Call to Order/Roll Call: Chairperson Tricia Shearen called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Present were Board Members: Dan Johnson, Lee Olson, Coni Gray, and Darlyn Hintz; Prescott Fire Chief Tom Lytle; River Falls EMS Director Jason Stroud, Dive Team Leader Josh Knutson, Dive Team member Howard Thompson and Association Admin Asst. Holly Mitchell.

Changes to Agenda: move Atkins claim to other business under 3. a. Disputed claims updates

Olson/Hintz motion to approve minutes for March 20, 2019, passed without a negative voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments

CHIEF'S REPORTS: River Falls Ambulance Director Stroud reports preliminary possibilities of cost for EMS service and types of service possible for the EMS contract renewal. Prescott city finance staff have submitted budget charts showing how the upper and lower cost extremes for service could be handled in the budget and what that would translate to for the overall financial situation. The lower cost extreme for service of \$19 per capita, which is near what is charged now, would continue EMS service from River Falls EMS, but not include maintaining a station in Prescott so in this case, ambulances would be responding to Prescott service area from the River Falls Ambulance station. The higher cost extreme for service of \$32 per capita would include EMS service from River Falls EMS serving from the EMS station in Prescott. These are extreme ends of possibility and there is room and time for discussion. Currently River Falls EMS is providing Advanced Life Support service to the Prescott service area from the Prescott EMS station but Director Stroud states that it is costing River Falls more to provide this service than was originally expected or planned for. The original contract allowed for Basic Life Support coverage of the Prescott service area, but per the River Falls EMS state plan, they must send ALS to first out calls if available, so the ALS coverage has been expanded, causing a raise in staffing costs. Revenue has slowed due to decreased call volume and payer mix shift with increases in patients who utilize Medicare and Medicaid which does not reimburse at a sustainable rate. Staffing costs have increased due to staffing more full time and part time staff and nearly eliminating the use of volunteers/paid per call staff. Stroud reports that the EMS service is running at a significant deficit that this year was absorbed by EMS reserve funds but these funds will run out within two years if this deficit continues. Stroud advises the board that River Falls will not be able to renew the EMS contract on the current terms. The board does not want to take funds from the Fire budget to pay for EMS costs and also does not like the option of not having an ambulance in Prescott. As the range of possible costs also affects the townships of Oak Grove and Clifton, the board states that there will need to be an intergovernmental board meeting organized to discuss and decide on possible paths forward. Johnson states that the board will need to look at options and that the community expects ALS coverage but may not understand that the average cost for that in WI is around \$31 per capita. Shearen proposes to meet monthly until contract resolution and requests that River Falls present their final numbers by the end of June. It is agreed that there may be some mid-range options providing in town staffing during peak hours. Johnson requests that Stroud submit 3 possible options for consideration and the broader community will have to make decisions. Length of contract is also discussed. The previous contract was a 3 year contract with a one year addition. River Falls advises they are not prepared to lock into a 3 year contract at this time and will offer one year to allow them to re-analyze their financial situation. Johnson acknowledges that River Falls has been exceeding what was required from the initial contract without additional charge but with increased staffing costs and decreasing reimbursements, the current situation is not sustainable.

CHIEF'S REPORTS: Fire Chief Lytle reports they have not had many fire calls. They have added one new member to their roster who is already trained to FFI. There are 4 staff in the process of completing FFI who have earned special recognition from their instructors for their leadership and character. The Fire Department membership completed their semi-annual trash pick-up on Hwy 29. The City will be upgrading the weather sirens, but the current quote is old and they are working on getting a current one. The new system will be

louder, have a longer range and will be more convenient to set off from remote radio access. The DNR grant is open and with the boards support we are planning to apply for it again this year. Last year we received a 50/50 grant for four radios. Chief Lytle attended the Wakota meeting with our mutual aid partners in MN as we are considered part of the 'metro' area. Our mutual aid agreements give us access to assistance from other services and their resources. Heavy Rescue chassis and cab should be complete mid-August which will require the first payment to be paid. The city will be taking care of this payment. The next payment will be due in early 2020 when the truck is done and delivered. The earliest the next payment would be needed would be November/December 2019. The DMC annual inspection was done. The Fire Chief and inspectors noted improvements have been made but there are still requirements to be completed. The inspectors are organizing lists and giving timelines for the changes to be made. Hintz advises the City is also working with this business on improvements as well. Lytle states that membership will be beginning planning for the next truck in early June and hope to have some preliminary numbers ready to present in August.

Josh Knutson, Dive Team Leader reports he is working on getting a quote for a mid-size, 25 horse engine inflatable watercraft which would give the team the ability to get up rivers but still be carryable and easily transported. It also gives the team an option for winter water access. They are considering electric start for its charging ability. Cost may be around just under \$18,000. Knutson is looking at a FireHouse Subs grant for funding which closes at the end of Aug and would give full funding. Thompson states that if a grant is obtained there is also other equipment that could be replaced/upgraded if a zodiac is not purchased. Johnson requests Knutson bring the grant requirements to the next meeting. Knutson reports that the dive team sold the old cardiac monitor they had to Westgate Fire in Iowa for \$600.

Fire Inspections and their billing process was discussed. The board would like to consider options for hiring a part-time position through the city to complete the inspection invoicing.

Hintz/Johnson motion to approve Fire and EMS cash balances for March & April 2019; Budget for March & April 2019; and Payables for March & April 2019; current reports from LifeQuest, Fire Recovery and Waukesha Collections passed without a negative voice vote.

OTHER BUSINESS: Elections

Hintz/Olson motion to reelect Shearen Board Chairperson, passed without a negative voice vote.

Shearen/Hintz motion to reelect Johnson Board Vice Chairperson, passed without a negative voice vote.

Mitchell advises of two significant errors that have been found on the part of the current billing company used for Phases I & II billing. Options for reconciliation were presented for consideration and the board advises Mitchell to request reimbursement from said billing agency. The board is supportive of researching different billing companies for Phase I & II billing. Discussion on the Wisconsin Department of Revenue State Debt Collection Program (SDC). The board requests Mitchell ask Waukesha about the SDC program and find out if they have any reasons we should continue with their agency if the other program is less cost. There have been no changes in disputed accounts. Johnson reports a call from a community member who advised of receiving a bill for EMS service a full year after the call happened and questions the ability of the EMS billing agency. Two positive property owner responses are presented to the board in recognition of Prescott Fire's appreciated service.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be set for Wednesday, June 19th, 2019 at 7pm at the Prescott Fire Hall, 260 Flora St. Prescott WI 54021.

Gray/Hintz motion to adjourn passed without a negative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,
Holly Mitchell
Administrative Assistant
Prescott Fire and EMS Association
City of Prescott