

HARTSVILLE/TROUSDALE COUNTY METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

**EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 15, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

LESLEY OVERMAN, CHAIR                      DAVID NOLLNER  
RICHARD JOHNSON                              AMBER RUSSELL

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

DAVID THOMAS                      BRIAN CROOK

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS BY POSITION, NON-VOTING PRESENT**

MATT BATEY    DANIEL HARRIS

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Commissioner Landon Gulley, Commissioner Will Dennis, Ken Buckmaster, Chris Franklin, Casey Higgins, Mark Beeler, Kirk Sutherland

Meeting was opened by Chairman Lesley Overman

Minutes from the January 18, 2023 meeting had been passed out prior to meeting and were reviewed for corrections or amendments.

Motion by Amber Russell to approve minutes as presented; Seconded by David Nollner.

**MOTION APPROVED**

1. **EMA.** Chief Batey gave a brief report. No major concerns in EMA.
2. **EMS.** Overman reviewed the monthly reports supplied by Chief Batey. In January 2023, EMS had 119 calls (87 911 emergencies / 32 non emergencies); transported 94 individuals; and an average response time of 7.2 minutes. Of the transports, 11 were to Trousdale Medical and 87 were to other facilities. Chairman Overman asked why more were transported out of the County. Batey answered that is dependent on the level of care needed for the patients. The EMS financials were reviewed by the Committee. Overman questioned the resolution that was cited for the write offs (RES 2016-18-553). This resolution pertains to the process of billing exemptions and what is an allowable event. EMS uses Fox Collections for outstanding billing. Fox will take 30% of what they collect. They have been able to recoup 7% on average. May need to research to find another collection agency. An updated resolution is being proposed which would have the write offs come before the Committee.

**Ambulance color design.** A petition has been posted online to support the darker color scheme of the ambulance. Mayor stated that during his campaign, he had several citizens complain about the dark color scheme. After obtaining the office, Mayor contacted the state to inquire about the color scheme. The state has granted permission to go back to the original white/orange design. Mayor did learn that the remaining fleet will need to be designed/wrapped/painted in the same fashion. He is still researching this thought. Mayor wants to ensure that the citizens are able to recognize an emergency vehicle and is working with the state EMS board to answer questions that have arisen. The look of the ambulance is evolving nationally, but there are still regulations to be followed. The original design was to be a medium gray and not the black as it was received. Chief accepted the ambulance on delivery.

**EMS Payroll/OT.** As of the end of January, the overtime line item is at 78.9% of its budget. There are records that show current battalion chiefs are working over 130 hours of overtime per pay period. At the previous meeting it was stated that EMS was fully staffed. However, shortly after the January meeting, 2 members resigned; a paramedic and an EMT. Even with new hires, the EMS is still short staffed. Chief Batey has had a few more responses on his ad and will be reaching out in the next week. Another option is to look into hiring PRN positions to fill in the gaps. Batey believes there are several in the area who would be interested.

**Volunteers as EMS Driver Policy.** Commissioner Will Dennis gave a brief overview of the discussion from the Personnel Committee. Concerns were raised over any needed training and liability. The use of volunteers for EMS driving is rare but if it is happening more than once every six months an update to the policy may be needed. Reason for the need of a volunteer to drive is when both EMS personnel are needed in the back of the ambulance enroute. Every attempt will be made to have another employee drive the vehicle, but in the rare instances a volunteer may be needed. The definition of volunteer would need to be updated to reflect that insurance will cover registered Rescue and Fire members but not a unaffiliated person.

**Training.** Russell asked for a training schedule. Batey stated that their training is online including CEUs.

- 3. Fire Dept** Effective February 14, 2023 Fire Chief Jay Woodard resigned. An interim chief will be appointed in the coming weeks. Mayor wishes to speak to the members of the department for their input on who should be considered.

**Brush Truck.** We have offers from the insurance company on whether to repair or total the vehicle. Mayor is still collecting estimates and appraisals before making a final decision. It has been suggested to ask the insurance company to reevaluate their estimates and speak with another company concerning repairs. It is felt that some of the rates and prices are underestimated.

**Combing Rescue and Fire.** More discussion needs to be done as far as bylaws, Charter compliance, and Commission approval for a smooth transition. Volunteer Casey Higgins spoke about the division within departments and low morale. He believes there are several trust and communication issues that need to be resolved before combining the two groups.

- 4. Rescue Squad.** Harris gave a brief overview of their vehicles. Rescue #4 is the only running vehicle. Needing to consider purchasing vehicles to have a working and reliable fleet. Has reached out to Wilson County Motors for pricing. Maintenance needs to be done to the auxiliary equipment, but they are in working conditions. It is possible to use unused funding from EMA salaries or the Rescue per diem lines to buy vehicles. Harris is going through the EMR certification and hopes to be able to bring a class or training to HTC to train others.
- 5. Discussion.**
  - Last year, Commission approved funding from the American Rescue Act (ARPA) for classes for employees of the county for EMT certification. This did not apply to volunteers. Several feel it would be beneficial to open other educational opportunities for volunteers to further training for the community.
  - Fundraisers for the rescue and fire groups.

Motion to adjourn made by Amber Russell; second by David Nollner.