

EMS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

January 6, 2020 @ 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, Carole Mottaz, Ken McNiff

Also Present: Dan Toland, mayor; Jason Stroud, assistant city administrator; Scot Simpson, city administrator; Katy Frey, interim EMS coordinator; Scott Nelson, fire chief

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes from October 28, 2019.

MSC Mottaz/Westpetal to approve October 28, 2019 regular meeting minutes. Unanimous.

1) Update on staff changes

Jason Stroud provided the board a staffing update of the EMS Department. He has been promoted to Assistant City Administrator and is no longer the EMS Director. Stroud introduced Katy Frey as the Interim EMS Coordinator for the foreseeable future and explained that she will oversee the day-to-day operations of the EMS department. Stroud mentioned that he will still manage the administrative/business end of EMS operations.

2) Alternative EMS Service Delivery Update

Stroud gave an update regarding the request for proposal (RFP) process for an alternative EMS service delivery. The City received two proposals and only one was a complete proposal to be considered; Allina Health EMS. Stroud said it is the intent now to have the contract discussion/negotiations with Allina Health EMS. A draft contract would be presented to Council after the EMS Council workshop on Jan. 28, 2020.

Stroud clarified that this is only a proposal phase and urged Advisory Board members to attend the Jan. 28, 2020 City Council workshop.

Mottaz gave some context to where the EMS department is today and where it was in the past since 1984. Gave some nationwide perspective of the EMS situation. Thanked Allina Health EMS for the submittal of a comprehensive RFP.

Stroud emphasized that this process will involve all of the partners involved in the River Falls EMS service area.

3) Introduction of Allina Health EMS and Proposal Presentation

Stroud introduced Susan Long, EMS chief for Allina and vice president of operations for Allina Health EMS; Angie Fox, representing Allina's communication center; Kevin Miller, operations director and deputy chief; Helen Strike, president of River Falls Area Hospital; Dave Matteson, operations manager for the metro service area.

Susan Long and Helen Strike gave a presentation to the Board introducing Allina Health and the River Falls Hospital and the services it provides and statistics about the hospital system in River Falls.

Long provided organizational details regarding Allina Health EMS, leadership, the support staff, their service area, and physical assets such as ambulances.

Dave Matteson spoke on his role with Allina Health EMS and talked on the operational proposal presented to the City of River Falls. The proposal will include the current River Falls EMS service area and will include a three-truck coverage option: two staffed ambulances 24/7 for the Cities of River Falls and Prescott and one staffed ambulance 7 days a week 13 hours a day (during peak time of 911 system) based at the River Falls Area Hospital. Shifts will go from 24 hours to 13 hours and will go from 9 benefitted employees to 21 and maintain paramedic EMT staffing.

Mattison said they want to offer employment to all current RF EMS personnel provided they are recommended by the City of River Falls to hire. They have reviewed what the RFEMS service has for assets and determined that Allina could purchase around \$350,000 of assets and purchase additional critical care equipment. It will be the intention as well from Allina that they would hire a 'local leader' that would be rooted in the community and partner with the City to oversee all day-to-day operations of the RFEMS service.

Kevin Miller discussed how Allina Health EMS will react to response times and their commitment to the River Falls community. An example was provided of Hutchinson, MN and their response times. Provided an explanation for ambulance billing and its comparison to how River Falls currently bills users. Allina Health negotiates with insurers like Blue Cross Blue Shield for ambulance rides and other items.

Angie Fox talked about the Allina EMS dispatch operations and how it would work with River Falls. Allina's technology was discussed such as their PSAP system, pre-

arrival instructions apps, AVL's, and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD).

Miller addressed some of the concerns that the Board might have regarding Allina coming over and assuming ambulance services for the River Falls Service Area.

- Allina will not hold hostage River Falls and jack up the prices;
- Ambulances will not all be sent over to the Twin Cities to help over there;
- Cost of EMS service delivery will not be dramatically more than the current service.

Stroud wanted to specify that the Town of River Falls is included in the proposal and that River Falls EMS does not have some of the items that were mentioned during the presentation that would be upgrades to the current technology RFEMS has.

Scott Morrissette asked if once a request has gone through Allina's dispatch, how does ambulance/EMS communicate with fire/police with Fox responding that ambulances have portable radios to stay on fire/police channels and one to stay on Allina's channel.

Jeanne Wespetal wanted to understand if the proposal was for four years from 2021-2025 term with Stroud saying it is undetermined at this time and a term will be negotiated.

Brenda LaValley asked about the per-capita rate and if that would be maintained in this proposal with Allina Health EMS and Mottaz said it would still be maintained for the Towns but the rate has not been determined yet.

Tricia Shearen stated that Prescott has a station and wanted to know how the Prescott station will be addressed. Miller talked about some of the situations that Allina Health could address for the Prescott station and indicated they want to maintain that station in Prescott.

Mae Wolfe asked how would Allina coordinate with services to reach callers during severe weather situations with Stroud saying it would most likely be no different than what is currently already being done with RFEMS.

Joe Rohl – Asked how Allina and a municipality would respond to outliers that may occur in which Miller responded by talking about response exceptions and how Allina gets a report every week that includes those outliers/response exceptions that the local leader reviews. If outliers are consistent in a community, the contract has teeth in it to hold the service accountable.

Mottaz asked if other communities have similar advisory boards that Allina Health EMS works in. Long responded that their ALF communities are the best example regarding that question. They had a board that existed before Allina came in and Allina will accommodate communities that want to retain their boards.

Mottaz asked if there was a situation in which one of the EMS service area partners, such as a town, were to leave the agreement/service area how would that affect the rate, number of ambulances, etc. Miller responded that it may or may not affect the group but stressed that the area works better in collaboration as volume drives down costs and provides greater resources.

Mottaz asked if there is a mechanism to have a backup unit in case of an emergency where the three trucks are all dispatched at once. Miller replied that they will try and design a system to cover up to 99% of River Falls EMS needs. Resources will be shifted for mutual aid if the three trucks if the three trucks assigned to River Falls area all out.

Miller clarified the differences between the number of full time employees and casuals and how they could be scheduled.

Morrisette asked if RFEMS has mutual aid agreements with surrounding agencies such as Lakeview and Stroud responded that they do and Miller said they would do that with surrounding communities if Allina came in. Stroud said that he has done some analysis on the amount of times all the ambulances have been out at once and it has been only less than 1% of the time that it happens.

Mottaz asked a question regarding employment to current RFEMS staff. Miller said those who are benefited positions would hopefully be maintained and hired on first and would recruit on down to casuals.

Mottaz asked a question regarding first responders in Towns and if that is something Allina would use/support. Miller said that the decision rests with the City in that regards to using first responders.

Mottaz asked who will choose the local leader and Matteson responded that the local leader would need to have certain qualifications and Allina would have a board to compare candidates and would also solicit recommendations from the City for those who would be suitable as a local leader.

Mottaz asked about the partnerships Allina would have with civic organizations in the City and what that would look like. Miller responded with how Allina would respond to those situations and talked about dedicated staffing for events that go above and beyond the necessary requirements for staffing.

Mottaz asked about negotiated fees and how bills are either written off or billed back to the City. Miller said those bill examples Mottaz provided would not be billed back to River Falls.

Scot Simpson wanted to clarify the answers that have been provided so far regarding the amount of ambulances in the River Falls service area, mutual aid, licensing of the

ambulances, and staffing. Generally, how would mutual aid look if an adjacent community has an on-going or chronic staffing issue, will Allina still provide a base level at all times in the River Falls community which Miller responded that the volume does change and that they have statutory responsibilities to keep a certain level of resources in the community. Miller said not every resource will be able to be deployed to Wisconsin due to licensures, but Allina has the ability to bring mutual aid over and above what is reasonable from Minnesota.

Simpson asked if Allina has a preference how the contract comes together with the City and with the service partners. Miller said they will learn with the City but anticipates they would want a singular overall agreement with some clauses with other entities of the service area.

Mottaz asked how long these agreements take to organize and finalize. Long said it would be 30 days at a minimum, but it has and is different for all communities.

Morrisette asked how long it would take to implement the transition with Miller saying it takes about six months to transition. June 1, 2020 to meet the Jan. 2021 timeline.

Mottaz asked what non-revenue generating costs should River Falls anticipate during the transition. Miller said training staff would be the primary cost at around 24 hours of training time per staff member. Training could be conducted in-house.

Stroud reverted back to Simpson's question regarding what the other partners would prefer in how a contract would come together. The representative from the Town of Troy said they were not looking to do something different. The Prescott representative said they would need more information but would like to do a group/presentation during the contract negotiation. The rest of the members in the audience/group would like to negotiate as a group.

Simpson said they will review ways in which the State of Wisconsin would allow the City create a singular contract that has all the parties involved in the process. Morrisette said that from his perspective in a Council standpoint, it would make sense to do it as a singular process. Rohl wanted to comment that the process should be kept simple.

Adjournment: MSC Wespetal/Morrisette at 8:17 p.m.

Next meeting date was not determined.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandt Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Brandt Johnson
Assistant to the City Administrator