

**Minutes of the Annual  
Joint Municipal Meeting of  
Fitch-Rona EMS District - Draft**  
Thursday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Attendance:

EMS Commission: Alder James Wheeler, Connie Hilla, James Roberts, Alder Kate Cronin, David Lonsdorf, Derek Johnson.

Fitch-Rona EMS District: Chief Patrick Anderson, Deputy Chief Jeff Dostalek, Office Manager Michelle Wachter

City of Fitchburg: None

City of Verona: None

Town of Verona: None

Others present: Scott Yarbrough, Fitchburg FacTV,

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by EMS Commission Chairperson, Derek Johnson, at 7:00 PM.

Welcome and Introductions: Derek Johnson welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the annual meeting and reviewed the parliamentary procedures for making motions by the municipalities.

Public Comments: None

Review and Approval of October 20, 2022 Minutes: Motion by Commission Member Roberts, to approve the minutes from the Joint Meeting. Second by Commission Member Hilla. *Motion carried.* (4 Ayes, 2 Abstains)

Length of Service Recognition:

Chief Anderson recognized the following paramedic who appeared in person and was provided with a certificate of service:

Jeremy Owen – 5 years

Chief's Report: Chief Anderson welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. The Chief then went through the details of the report he provided to attendees. He provided an overview of the district size/area served, number of employees, vehicles, and the general cost per capita to operate which is \$40.07 per person within the district. He noted that the district expanded to 71 square miles due to absorbing a portion of the Town of Madison last year.

The Chief projected that the district will have around 5000 calls for 2023 and currently calls are up 16.6% for 2023. He went on to show a pie chart showing the breakdown of calls by

municipality, with the City of Fitchburg continuing to be where most calls occur. This was followed up by a heat map that clearly shows the areas where most of the calls come from, noting the high call volume around senior housing and the suspected un- or underinsured. This information is extremely helpful when developing budget projections and the need and location for future staff and ambulances. The Chief went on to discuss fractile times for calls and noted that when an ambulance leaves on a call and until the time they return and are back in service is about 1 ½ hours. He noted that station 2 in Fitchburg is still the busiest. When discussing mutual aid, he noted that there have been 25 times already in 2023 when all the district trucks/ambulances were out on calls and another local municipality had to cover calls for the district. There were only 14 mutual aid calls for all of 2022.

He explained the accounts receivable aging report along with the rest of the financial data. He did note that a change in the billing company occurred in 2023 and that the number of accounts that are >180 days is very high. It continues to be a topic of conversation during the weekly phone conferences with the new billing company.

The other financials included business checking, savings, certificates of deposit, and WISC Funds. The Chief noted that grant funds were used to purchase powered stair chairs, a replacement Power Cot, IV Pumps, and an Electric UTV. He explained how each of these is being used and how they aid in employee safety and patient care. He also noted the pre-hospital ultrasound purchased with EPIC grant funds will roll out soon. These will be used to look at heart function to help patient care. The Chief noted that there are many other uses for these units as well, but they are currently limited through the state EMS office.

Chief Anderson continued with his vision for the district along with growth estimates. He would expect that growth will continue at 3%-5% and would anticipate purchasing a 4<sup>th</sup> ambulance in 2025 and a 5<sup>th</sup> ambulance by 2030. Chief Anderson noted that the projection is fluid as many things can happen in the next several years to impact the outcome. He noted that with the expected growth, a second Deputy Chief is in the 2024 budget and will be hired in early 2024. This position will be focused on staff training for critical equipment, patient care protocols, technology, and assistance with the growing operational tasks that is largely managed now by the Chief.

Commission Member Lonsdorf asked if there was any way to slow the growth? The Chief indicated that the short answer is no, however with a new Deputy Chief, the district will be able to do more with public education. This would include fall prevention and other possible programs to be created through training outcomes or through other medical community opportunities. He further noted that the patient population for patients over the age of 60 has grown 10% over the last 5-years.

#### Presentation – Fall Prevention Program – Deputy Chief Jeff Dostalek

DC Dostalek provided a slide presentation on the topic. He noted that there were 800 calls for falls in 2022 and we are at 698 already in 2023. He did note that most don't come from senior housing which is a common perception. He noted that most come from single and multi-family homes. The topic has been a noted concern at the state Department of Health and he is part of a working group to do presentations to community groups on fall prevention.

## 2024 Budget Presentation (Operational and CIP):

The Chief went through line items on the budget and explained that the majority of the budget increase, as usual, is wages and benefits. He explained scheduled and unscheduled overtime line items that are unique to EMS. He explained the increased availability and use of LTE paramedics has reduced the unscheduled overtime. He then explained operational expense variances from the 2023 to 2024. Specifically noting medical equipment maintenance.

Chief Anderson explained the ambulance purchase process. The district purchases an ambulance every two years and uses it as a front-line ambulance for six years and a reserve ambulance for an additional four. The purchase price includes replacing most of the contents of the ambulance since most of the durable equipment inside, such as the cot, as those items also have a life cycle of about 10 years. However, with the timing of ordering and receiving ambulances, the life cycle will be changed to a 12-year rotation and the durability of the equipment is something that will be monitored for potential future capital purchasing changes.

Chief Anderson explained reserve funding, tax levy exemption, and the local limit criteria. He noted that the plan was to get the reserve funding back to the agreed amount of 15%-25%. He noted that if the reserve ever goes over this amount, the matter would be brought back to the commission to determine how to direct the use of those funds, such as placing them in an assigned fund or applying the excess to future budgets. He also discussed post-retirement health care and the potential impact in the next 10 years with the district having 5 employees with 20 years of service.

The final apportionments were presented based on Equalized Valuation.

Chief Anderson noted that all Fitch-Rona EMS District staff do a fantastic job and appreciate the support from all the municipalities.

### Other Business:

None

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Commission Member Roberts, second by Commission Member Wheeler - *Motion carried.* The Joint Municipal Meeting was adjourned at 7:49 P.M.

Submitted:

Derek Johnson, EMS Chairperson