

**Whitewater Township Board
Minutes of Special Meeting held July 21, 2021**

Call to Order

Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan.

Roll Call of Board Members

Board Members present: Treasurer Benak, Clerk Goss, Popp, Trustee Vollmuth

Board Members absent: Trustee Hubbell

Others present: Acme Township Supervisor Doug White, Acme Township Clerk Cathy Dye, Acme Township Trustee Paul Scott, Mobile Medical Response Representative Steve Myers

Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda

There were no adjustments.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

Public Comment (5:00)

None

Agenda Items as Listed in Special Meeting Notice (5:09)**Discuss Sharing of Ambulance Service with Acme Township**

White indicated he has talked to both Popp and Goss over the past couple months and said this is a fact finding to see how the Whitewater board feels about sharing ambulance services with Acme Township, whether it is MMR or another entity.

Lengthy discussion followed. Topics included:

- The length of Whitewater's relationship with MMR.
- The cost and level of service provided by MMR.
- Lack of complaints from Whitewater residents.
- Increase in cost for the same level of service.
- MMR's proposal for Acme and Whitewater Township to share an ambulance.
- Approximate call volume in each township.
- Benefit of sharing an ambulance between the two townships, as opposed to an ambulance coming from Traverse City.
- Overview of MMR's entry into the geographical area formerly served by North Flight and what they are proposing to provide to Acme and Whitewater.

Benak, Goss, and Vollmuth expressed support for sharing ambulance services with Acme Township.

Acme Township representatives expressed support for sharing ambulance services with Whitewater Township.

Questions/concerns expressed:

- Would the truck be dedicated to the two townships and not leave the townships?
Myers' answer: It would be in the contract; it would stay in these townships.
- Staffing problem.
Myers' answer: This unit is already staffed; it would be the Whitewater staff.
- Whitewater rig has been pulled out to Acme, has sat at the Acme hall.
Myers' answer: It has gone on calls. When it sits in Acme, he needs to know about it. He needs times and dates. White said it occurred in January and February.
- Popp's complaint about MMR's staffing level in the former North Flight service area.
- Popp wants "MMR is the only transporting authority" to be eliminated and to review asking a closer responding agency to pick up calls in the southwest corner of Whitewater Township.
Myers' answer: Mutual aid; if East Bay is closer, so be it.
- Approximately 200 calls a year in Whitewater, approximately 400 calls a year in Acme, Popp's concern about Whitewater being without an ambulance during transports.

Myers talked about MMR's goal to start a paramedic and EMT education program on September 27th at the remodeled Hastings Street location, and said it is definitely the goal to add units to this system. They will be scholarships for the EMT positions; applicants take the program for free and then work for MMR. MMR will also provide the paramedic education for them at just the cost of the books, for a 2-year commitment.

Myers said MMR sees the value of BLS ambulances in the non-emergency market, such as moving a patient from the hospital to a nursing home, and said the system here could use a couple three BLS trucks a day doing non-emergency work, to keep the ALS units available. He said it is definitely the goal to add units to this system.

The issue of billing, waiving deductibles, waiving copays, and the difference between billing and revenue was discussed.

Myers pointed out that 90% of what the townships would be paying for is the cost of an ambulance sitting there waiting for a call, the cost of readiness, no different than the fire department.

Popp suggested the township get a price for the 24/7 coverage with our historical call volume to see what the number is.

Scott agreed Acme will have to answer that question.

White pointed out they need to come up with that answer very soon because they have to go out to the people for the millage in November.

There was general discussion concerning millages.

There was general consensus among those present that something can be worked out between the two townships that is mutually beneficial.

White said the next step is the agreement. He says he has been talking to East Bay and MMR; both have given him numbers, and said we have to sit down and decide which outfit we want to go with. He said he is open to all options and his biggest worry is an Acme/Whitewater unit being pulled into Traverse City for runs, and to make sure they are staffed and are there when they are supposed to be.

In response to a question from Benak, White said he has numbers for Acme going alone, and some preliminary numbers if it was all three, but says he has no idea what East Bay wants to do.

Scott requested the supervisors get together and talk about the numbers and come back to the full board with the preliminary numbers and we need to act.

On a question for clarification from Goss, White confirmed that he is suggesting that East Bay be asked would they consider providing ambulance service to Acme and Whitewater townships, first, and if they do agree to consider it, what would they have to have to provide an ambulance that would be strictly assigned to Acme and Whitewater townships 24/7/365. Also, that the East Bay ambulance would be a lot closer to the south part of Whitewater Township.

It was clarified that the \$370,000 offer to Acme by East Bay is for what MMR is doing and does not include the cost of Metro Fire providing the EMT. It is \$646,000 for 24/7 coverage.

Timing of millage requests in each township was discussed.

It was noted that whether East Bay Township would even entertain providing service to Whitewater is not known.

Scott requested the supervisors ask for the Elk Rapids/Milton Township contract.

Myers stated the MMR proposal to Acme and Whitewater for \$480,000 collectively would be a 5-year contract, price locked in for five years, and provided further details about the organization.

There was discussion that some cost figures are already out in the public and the sealed bid process will not be necessary.

White explained how he approached the East Bay Township Board regarding the possibility of ambulance services, and suggested Whitewater Township talk to Beth Friend and Nick Lemcool.

There was general agreement that the meeting was beneficial for both townships.

Board Comments/Discussion (2:00:27)

None

Public Comment (2:00:31)

Lois MacLean, 5919 Linderleaf Lane, spoke on her concern with moving buses from East Bay Township, MMR's track record with the township, availability of mutual aid, and response time expectations of living in a rural community.

Adjournment (2:03:27)

Motion by Scott to adjourn, second by White. Roll call vote: Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, absent; Popp, yes; Vollmuth, yes. Meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk