

**Whitewater Township Board  
Minutes of Regular Meeting held July 28, 2015**

**Call to Order**

Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan.

**Roll Call of Board Members**

Board members present: Benak, Goss, Hubbell, Lawson, Popp

Board members absent: None

Others present: Frederic Township Fire Department Chief Doug Pratt and Deputy Chief Ed Goscicki, Mobile Medical Response Director of Operations Matt Holtcamp, and 3 others

**Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda**

No adjustments.

**Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

None

**Public Comment**

**Tim Shaffer, 5309 Moore Road**, asked that the public have a chance to ask questions during the meeting because he thinks there will be a couple issues that he and others would like to get some answers to.

There was board consensus that the public should be allowed to ask questions.

**Correspondence****Annual Financial Report – Board of County Road Commissioners – Year Ended 2014**

Popp inquired whether everyone had an opportunity to read the document.

Brief discussion followed. This item will be brought back at the August 11 meeting.

**Public Hearing**

None

**Reports/Presentations**

None

**Unfinished Business****Review PRAC Recreation Plan**

Regarding the first three items of unfinished business, Popp suggested that only Unfinished Business #4 be considered tonight.

**Review Ordinance 22 Pension Plan**

See above.

### **Review Whitewater Township Planning and Zoning Fees**

See above.

### **Review Ambulance Service Proposals**

Goss stated she read the entire Frederic Township presentation before the last meeting and most of her questions were answered. She does have questions for Mr. Holtcamp.

Holtcamp of MMR provided answers as follows:

- He is not aware of what the T stands for under Status on the inventory of devices. The document is not generated by MMR.
- Members of the municipality boards serve on the quality assurance committees. One to two board members is encouraged, as well as a member of the public at large. Whitewater would become part of the Elk Rapids/Milton Township advisory board.
- The EMS Survey Team is completely independent of MMR. There are 35 questions on the survey. There are specific questions about the EMT and paramedic themselves, questions about comfort of ride, timeliness with which the ambulance showed up, did the paramedic and EMT include your family in the decision-making process, seven or eight billing questions, quality, cleanliness and timeliness of the ambulance. The survey can be linked to specific providers. The manager gets monthly updates.
- Licensed Road Staff means EMTs and paramedics.
- Forty hours is considered full-time. Paramedics work either a 48-hour schedule or a 56-hour schedule.
- MMR does background checks on prospective employees. MMR will hire people with misdemeanor convictions. People with alcohol convictions have to be run through their insurance underwriters; they are difficult to insure; each case is looked at individually.
- The most common injuries in EMS work are back, shoulder, and knees.
- Holtcamp explained how the PulsePoint app works.
- Regarding the low Cost of Goods Sold figure in 2012, Holtcamp stated it was a bad year on selling of ambulances. One ambulance company went out of business. They got a new salesperson in. They spent more time on getting their own fleet up and running.
- MMR collects, on average, about 62% of billing. Other revenues consist of management contracts, subsidies from other areas, fees to provide dispatch service, to name the big ones.
- Holtcamp does not know the starting wage of EMTs but stated it is competitive. They have nearly 275 full-time EMTs and some part-time EMTs. MMR does not employ MFRs as they run ALS.
- There is an employee contribution for MMR's health insurance, and they have flexible spending accounts available.
- Holtcamp described the nature of the pending lawsuits.
- MMR is already approved by the local Medical Control Authority.
- Holtcamp stated they would make do with the limitations of Whitewater Township's EMS facility regarding overnight living quarters until the situation can be fixed or remodeled. Temporary sleeping quarters can be brought in or lazy-boys or roll-aways brought into the current crew quarters temporarily. They will always have the 24-hour ambulance.

- At the end of any contract, Whitewater Township would still own two ambulances.
- The 1997 ambulance can probably be used for some more time before it would have to be replaced. The wheel base on it is smaller than recommended. If Whitewater Township wanted to sell it and put the cash in the bank, they could do that.
- Whitewater Township will continue to own all the equipment on the ambulances.

Regarding the Ambulance Service Agreement, Real Estate Lease Agreement, and Motor Vehicle Lease Agreement, Holtcamp provided the following information.

- “Region” is defined as the geographic area of Whitewater Township.
- The “Supporting Municipalities” verbiage applies to municipalities other than the primary municipality, in this case, Whitewater Township.
- Whitewater Township will have an ALS ambulance. By law, calls will be billed according to the care and procedures provided.
- 911 will dispatch the closest ambulance. For transfers out of a hospital, the patient has a choice of transporting agency.
- MMR will not take the ambulance out of Whitewater Township to take someone from Munson to Grand Rapids. MMR’s only interest is the emergent 911 calls, not hospital transfers.
- Ambulance Service Agreement, Article VI, Subsidy, paragraphs B and C are not applicable to the current situation in Whitewater Township.
- Whitewater Township will have one 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week ambulance, staffed by a paramedic and an EMT 365 days a year. Whitewater’s ambulance will stay in Whitewater Township, except for a request for mutual aid.
- MMR has its own disaster assistance response team set up. They do not pull any of their assets off the road to respond to disasters, with the possible exception of a devastating tornado.
- The response time of 12 minutes and 59 seconds or less 80% of the time applies to all Priority 1, 2, and 3 calls.
- Response time is measured from the time Grand Traverse County Central Dispatch relays the location of the call to MMR to the time MMR’s emergency vehicle arrives on scene. MMR will provide Central Dispatch reports monthly showing the response times.
- There will be little variation from what the township is seeing currently in the way of response times due to most likely the same staff, the same building, the same roads, same conditions, same corners, same houses. The one variable is chute time, i.e., the time it takes for staff to get to the ambulance. MMR monitors their chute times.
- The response time clock does not restart with a change in the priority of the call.
- If people cannot pay, they fill out MMR’s charity care form.
- The “PM Board” referred to in the contract would be the township board.
- Unless notice of termination is given by either party, the agreement will continue under the same terms and conditions annually, i.e, with no increase or decrease in the subsidy.
- Under Article XV, Assignment of Agreement, the prohibition on entering into additional ambulance contracts was discussed.
- An increase in the subsidy could be requested if the call volume dropped precipitously. If an increase is requested and the township does not agree to it, that would not be grounds for MMR to terminate the contract.

- The base building rent of \$600 per month is what they have historically used with their fire departments, but it can be negotiated. They will pay their share of the utilities.

Popp inquired if there were any questions from the public.

**Tim Shaffer** inquired what the regional description is (postal description, which includes Acme, or the township line); can our radios and portables be programmed to MMR frequencies, or will they be different radios; has there been any thought given to adequate housing for the paramedics; what ratio of basic versus advanced calls are we presently running.

Answers were provided as follows: The township line would define the region. MMR will use 800 MHz and VHF radios. Holtcamp stated that statistically 70-80% of the calls are going to be ALS.

Popp inquired if there were questions for Frederic.

Benak asked how many paramedics they have on staff.

Deputy Chief Ed Goscicki stated there are six full-time and three part-time. In any month, there could be anywhere from three to nine casual paramedics that work for them.

Regarding the budgetary comparison schedule for year ended June 30, 2009, under Contributions from Other Units, Goss inquired as to why the actual contributions were so much higher than budgeted. Goss acknowledged that it was quite a few years back.

Chief Doug Pratt responded that the \$44,300 is what they get from Maple Forest Township, but he stated he does not know why there was such a difference. These documents are audit reports; he did not put the numbers together.

Pratt clarified which townships Frederic does, or does not, get a subsidy from. Popp inquired, if the grants did not exist, would Frederic ask for subsidies.

Pratt clarified that their grant money is not for wages. It is for equipment. They have been very successful with fire education grants. They do regional grants, and he provided some examples.

Pratt listed the townships they cover as follows: Frederic, Maple Forest, Lovells, Coldsprings, Excelsior, Blue Lake, and Bear Lake. Total population of all is 7,000 to 8,000. All of the townships are contiguous. They have two ambulances staffed 24/7, one at Coldsprings/Excelsior and one in Frederic. He explained how they move assets to cover the other areas. They have six total ambulances, five in Frederic, one in Coldsprings.

Hubbell asked, if neither Pratt nor Goscicki are paramedics, how they professionally run an ALS service.

Pratt replied that you do not need to tell the paramedic how to do their job to know what they are doing. Pratt stated he has done this since November 2000 and he took it from a volunteer service to limited advanced, then to ALS under the Bennett bill, and then to full ALS.

Referring to page 3 of the proposal, paramedics with an average experience level of 15 years, Popp noted that may not mean they have been with Frederic for 15 years.

Pratt responded that one paramedic has been with them for 20+ years. The 15 years is an average. Most employees hired when they started ALS in 2011 are still with them today.

Popp inquired if the lift test is an important test for EMTs.

Pratt stated it is great if it is structured to rule out people with prior back injuries. Their staff goes through blood work, x-rays, drug test, and a questionnaire. They may require additional testing as a result of the questionnaire. They have a lift test consisting of lifting and walking, but there is no requirement to climb stairs or ladders.

Hubbell asked Pratt how ambulance replacement would be handled.

Pratt replied that there is nothing in the agreement that cannot be changed. He stated he agrees with Holtcamp that the 1997 ambulance probably should be put out to pasture. It is not a deal breaker, but only one truck is needed. They replace their ambulances regularly. They have brought on three new trucks in the last three years. The older trucks are used for nursing home transfers or backup trucks. He stated the 2010 ambulance should not need to be replaced for at least five years, especially with the low run volume, but when it needs to be replaced, they will replace it. The maintenance will be done with their maintenance people. For oil changes, they use Quick Lube in Kalkaska. He stated he is okay with taking out the clause stating the township will be responsible for any maintenance over \$200.

Lawson noted the diminishing fund balance of \$205,000 in 2011 down to \$105,000 in 2014. He asked if Pratt sees a change coming.

Pratt stated a lot of it is the purchase of two ambulances in 2013. They build up, then pay out. They get loans if they have to. He stated they will probably not be purchasing anything major ambulance-wise until they build up the cash fund again.

Hubbell stated Frederic relies on a lot of grant dollars.

Pratt stated it is not that he relies on it, but it helps out the bottom line. If he can buy widgets with grants instead of it coming out of his budget, he would rather find some grants.

Goss inquired how many townships Frederic receives subsidies from.

Pratt stated two. They bill the end user in the other townships.

Popp inquired if Pratt would ever see Whitewater getting to that point.

Pratt replied not unless you have a big run volume. If all 200 calls a year were billable, their collection rate is a bit better, at 64%, but that is a far cry. Because Frederic does not have anything contiguous with Whitewater, Whitewater is its own little square. Whitewater will have an ALS ambulance here 24/7 unless there is a call.

Popp noted he likes that the name Whitewater Township will remain on the car, in tandem with Frederic. Our residents will know it's their ambulance.

Pratt stated the name on the side of the ambulance means a whole lot to the taxpayers. They would add a patch to the driver door and add "paramedic" to the side.

Hubbell stated he doesn't necessarily agree with that.

Referring to the Ambulance Service Agreement, Lawson asked if Whitewater was supposed to staff the BLS service.

Pratt replied no. They would have to license the second ambulance as a basic. He explained how it could be upgraded to ALS, if needed, if they have the personnel. The current Whitewater staff would be utilized, but they would be employees of Frederic Township. Pratt stated unless he has staff locally here, he does not see how he can run the second ambulance, and they would have to be paid on call. His main concern is the primary.

Benak asked why he would lease both ambulances, to which Pratt replied that they can, but the 1997 is close to end of life. His concern would be having to replace the ambulance a month from now and the board deciding to end the agreement 90 days later.

Popp noted he would like to keep it (the 1997 ambulance) on board.

Discussion followed regarding expenses of the second ambulance, inability to get the license back if it were let go (because of its age), and 4WD versus 2WD ambulances.

Popp inquired how many of Frederic's personnel are both firefighters and EMTs.

Pratt replied that all of his paramedics and full-time basics are cross trained. They have three part-timers who are strictly EMS and two that are strictly fire. Of their 32 employees, they have three that are not fire. Pratt stated they only provide fire service in Frederic and Maple Forest Townships. Pratt stated he will hire a paramedic, but they have to go through fire training at the earliest offering.

Pratt stated it is his intention to hire as many EMTs from Whitewater as possible. The local people know the area and the roads.

Regarding training, Frederic Township pays for EMT and specialist. They train in-house up to the specialist level. For paramedic training, they have people go to Baker or MMR. They do

continuing education every month in house and all the ACLS. Anything that is required by Med Control or Pratt, Frederic pays for.

There was some discussion concerning how Frederic handles fire training and whether paramedics would be working a fire.

Discussion turned to billing. Pratt stated they use AccuMed for billing. They bill the insurance. If there is a deductible, they bill the patient once, then write it off. If a Whitewater resident was transported anywhere in Kalkaska or Crawford County, they do the same thing. If a resident has no insurance, they write it off. They get hardship cases all the time. This policy applies to transfers as well. This area is hard to get into because North Flight is hospital owned; the same with Kalkaska. If there is a choice, they can do the transfer.

Popp noted that Addendum 1 to Frederic's proposed Agreement for Emergency Medical Services states, "Compensation can be reviewed annually at the request of either party . . . . If no . . . requests are made, the compensation will remain the same. Any increase or decrease will be agreed by both parties." Popp stated that even though transport numbers have gone up, we are still below where MMR or Frederic will probably place it. Popp feels review of compensation is an important option for us to keep open.

Holtcamp stated that is in their contract as well.

Popp inquired if the board is ready to make a decision on this.

Goss stated she would like more time to think about it. Lawson agreed.

Benak stated this is our second meeting that we have chewed on it and talked to people. She stated she knows what her decision is going to be. If this gets drug out too much longer, she will not be here for the vote. Her daughter is having a baby in August. Benak stated if it is not the first meeting in August, we will have to hold off until she gets back because it is not fair to leave her out of the vote. She is ready to vote.

Hubbell stated he is ready, too.

Discussion followed regarding the reason for seeking the proposals, updated revenue and expense numbers, employee shortage, cost of benefits, advertising for temporary employees, the complicated nature of running an ambulance service, the benefits of outsourcing, and related issues.

Goss would like a few more days to compare the two proposals and would be willing to have a special meeting to get it done.

There was brief discussion of the Rural Fire situation.

Hubbell stated he is ready to make a decision tonight.

Popp stated he can make a decision tonight.

Lawson stated he can make one, too.

**Motion by Popp that we award Frederic the contract.** Popp stated they can provide us with both EMS and answers to our fire questions before we know what they are. Popp noted it is more money. Cross training is important and is the wave of the future.

There was no second.

**Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Benak, to accept MMR's bid as presented to us, a one-time fee of \$295,000 and they pay the rent and their part of the utility bill.** There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, no. Motion carried.**

Popp congratulated MMR, offered consolation to Frederic, and thanked everyone for their input and hard work.

#### **New Business**

##### **New Ambulance Coordinator/Ambulance Privacy Officer**

Popp noted Doug Straughen has offered to step up and provide the services vacated by Dawn as of 7 p.m. tonight.

Hubbell stated MMR would be willing to help us out in that area, if we need it.

Holtcamp stated the timeline for this will be considerably less than with Elk Rapids and the transition time will be much quicker. If Whitewater needs help managing the current system, he would be willing to consult. There would be no charge for that.

Discussion followed.

Holtcamp stated if there was a mass exodus of employees or holes in the schedule, he can provide coverage out of Elk Rapids.

Popp stated he needs to get Doug in place to report gaps in the schedule to Med Control. To get Elk Rapids to roll, this board will have to tell Med Control to dispatch Antrim County.

Holtcamp stated, on days there are holes, plans will have to be made to have Grand Traverse Central go through Antrim to get MMR dispatched.

Lengthy discussion ensued in an effort to craft language for a motion to change the dispatch protocol.

**Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Lawson, to give the supervisor authority to contact the Northwest Regional Medical Control Authority to make protocol change so that Elk Rapids MMR can respond in Whitewater Township when Whitewater Township is not**

**fully staffed.** There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, no; Benak, yes. Motion carried.**

Popp inquired of Holtcamp if there is anything else he (Popp) needs to do.

Holtcamp stated a letter to the State of Michigan will be needed once the process gets started.

**Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Lawson, to hire Doug Straughen for the ambulance coordinator and the ambulance privacy officer positions.** There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes. Motion carried.**

Popp noted the current rate of pay is \$12/hour for that position. Straughen is looking to get more due to the additional responsibility.

Brief discussion followed. No action taken.

**Rural Fire Update – Whitewater Township to Seek Fire Department Mutual Aid Agreements with Elk Rapids, Clearwater, Acme, East Bay Townships**

Popp previously prepared a memo and updated the board today on his efforts in this regard. Popp stated he thinks within a few months we are going to be running a fire department.

Brief discussion followed.

**Lynx Network METRO Act Application**

Popp stated an application has been received to bury some fiber down South Skegemog Point Road.

**Motion by Benak, seconded by Lawson, to give the supervisor authorization to sign the METRO Act application for Lynx Network.** There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes. Motion carried.**

**Tabled Items**

**Review Administrative Policy Section 5 (tabled 10/14/2014)**

This item will remain tabled.

**Review Graded Wage Scale (tabled 04/14/2015)**

This item will remain tabled.

**Board Comments/Discussion**

Popp noted we have already heard about the ambulance holes coming up August 1. There is a tire recycle event on August 7 and 8, 10 am to 2 pm, located at 361 East Welsh Court.

**Announcements**

The next Township Board meeting date is August 11.

**Public Comment**

**Tim Shaffer, 5309 Moore Road**, stated he was hoping to get some insight on the Rural Fire strategy meeting of July 20th. It sounds like nothing was accomplished.

Popp replied that the way they are going to look at it is that Rural Fire is going to break into pods; Grant, Green Lake, and Long Lake. Paradise, a portion of Union, Fife Lake, and Springfield will be pod number 2. Whitewater and a portion of Union will be pod number 3. They instructed all the pods to confirm that they can get mutual aid agreements signed. Popp believes that means they are breaking up.

Discussion followed.

**Adjournment**

Motion by Popp, seconded by Lawson, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss  
Whitewater Township Clerk