

**Minutes of the Annual
Joint Municipal Meeting of
Fitch-Rona EMS District**
Thursday, October 15th, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was hosted virtually utilizing Zoom and coordinated with Fitchburg FACTv in compliance with current open meeting laws.

Attendance:

EMS Commission: Alder Shannon Strassman, Connie Hilla, James Roberts, Alder Kate Cronin, Gregg Miller, Derek Johnson, Supervisor Mike Duerst, Terry Schnapp, Sue Luginbuhl.

Fitch-Rona EMS District: Chief Patrick Anderson, Deputy Chief Jeff Dostalek.

City of Fitchburg: Mayor Aaron Richardson, Joe Maldonado, Julia Arata-Fratta, Gabriella Gerhardt – Quorum

City of Verona: Mayor Luke Diaz, Charlotte Jerney – No Quorum

Town of Verona: Town Chair Mark Geller, Tom Mathies, Douglas Maxwell -Quorum

Others present: Fitchburg Fire Chief Joe Pulvermacher, Town of Verona Clerk Teresa Withee, Scott Yarbrough (Fitchburg FacTV), Patrick Marsh (City of Fitchburg Administrator)

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by EMS Commission Chairperson, Terry Schnapp, at 7:02 PM.

Welcome and Introductions: Terry Schnapp 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 17, 2019 Minutes: Motion by the City of Verona to approve the minutes from the Joint Meeting. Second by the City of Fitchburg. *Motion carried.*

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, number of employees, vehicles and the general cost per capita to operate. He stated that the per capita cost for Fitch-Rona is in the middle when compared to other municipalities in Dane County.

The Chief projected that the District will have 3600 calls for 2020. The beginning of the year started with a significant increase in calls, but since the COVID outbreak, the call volume has been trending down, but the acuity of calls seems to have risen. He went on to show a pie chart outlining where in the District the calls reside with the City of Fitchburg continuing to be where the majority of calls are occurring. He reviewed the special reporting that is provided to the Commission each month on the occurrences of naloxone administration and Car 15 responses. The Chief went on to discuss fractile times for calls and noted the decrease in response times since the opening of the third station.

Chief Anderson displayed a heat map of the district showing calls over the last year and noted this is information to watch as future station placement and staffing is considered.

He explained the accounts receivable aging report along with the rest of the financial data. This included the business checking, savings, certificates of deposit and WISC Funds. The Chief noted that Fitch-Rona received funding from the federal CARES program. There are restrictions placed on the use of those funds and after presenting options to the EMS Commission, they approved the purchase of transport ventilators. The ventilators arrived last week and the staff will start training on them with a goal to have them on the ambulance by the first of the year. The Chief reviewed the benefits of the purchase and noted that Fitch-Rona will be the first 911-service in Dane County to use transport vents. He also stated that the service did receive a \$30,000 grant from EPIC this year to help with the purchase of an anti-idle system on the new ambulance to help reduce carbon emissions.

The Chief reviewed the years of service and recognized staff.

Chief Anderson continued on with his visions for the district along with growth estimates. In 2025, the service is expected to hit 4500 calls and the need for another ambulance. He suggested that it may be a peak time ambulance during the hours where the demand is higher, and would not require the hiring of a full 7-new staff, but 5-staff that would increase to 7 over a few years. He also recommended additional administrative staff at this time such as a second Deputy Chief to assist in the management of a growing district or changing the role of the Lieutenant. If the growth continues as expected, in 2030, the Chief envisions the need for a fifth ambulance with an estimated 5500 calls in the district. Further discussion and assessments would be needed to see where those ambulances should be located and what additional staff that would be needed.

2021 Budget Presentation (Operational and CIP):

Chief Anderson explained 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, since those also have a life-cycle of about 10-years. 2021 will be the next ambulance purchase and will replace the current 2011 ambulance.

Chief Anderson shared that the addition response car that was purchased in 2020 had arrived about two weeks ago and was waiting on the data terminal to be installed. This will be the

second response car in addition to the 2010 Expedition. As explained earlier, these cars are used to mainly by the Chief's to run between the stations and move supplies and equipment as well as driving to training and meetings. They are also used to respond to calls that may require some additional assistance, or first respond when they can arrive prior to an ambulance. The planned life-cycle of these vehicles is 15-years, so the CIP includes a replacement in 2025 for the oldest vehicle

Chief Anderson reviewed the fee schedule and noted that there will be an increase in the base rates for residents and non-residents of \$100 each. The rates were last raised in 2019 and reviewed each year by the Commission. The standby fee was also increased to accommodate for the rising cost of staffing those events. He reviewed the anticipated income expected for 2021 and the other income sources, such as teaching CPR courses and providing special event coverage.

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 historically, and he has reduced that line item significantly. He then explained operational expense variances from the 2020 to 2021 noting changes in vehicle maintenance, medical supplies, recruitment, and uniforms.

The final apportionments were presented based on Equalized Valuation.

Alder Arata-Fratta asked about the cost of the future growth of personnel in the District in 2025 and 2030. Chief Anderson did explain that the growth would require more paramedics, but depending on the need the increase in personnel could be spread out of a few years. He did mention that there are some staffing options that may include LTE's paramedic that would also reduce cost.

Alder Arata-Fratta asked about the missing line item from the 2020 budget presentation regarding the paramedic intern program. Chief Anderson explained that the line item was missed off of the presentation and that the intern program was a great program to support the fire programs and assist the growth of the profession, but since the municipalities were looking for cuts, the Chief recommended to the EMS Commission to not fund the intern program for 2021. The funding provided tuition assistance to paramedic students and the District would like to see those funds return in future budgets. Alder Arata-Fratta did comment that the intern program was a great program to offer to potential paramedics. Chief Anderson replied that the service is still allowing students from the Technical College system, and Fire interns are still allowed to ride and be exposed to the EMS field. The District ceased those during the initial COVID outbreak, but they have since started riding. The Chief reiterated that we would like to put this funds back in the 2022 budget.

Alder Gerhardt asked about \$1500 in public education and what those funds have been used for in 2020 and in 2021. Chief Anderson stated that minimal funds have been spent in 2020. Most of the public education funds are spent on the stuff that is handed out at open houses such as coloring books, and pencils, and candy for the homecoming parade. In 2021, the chief explained

that the service would like to get back into the community and do CPR stations at local business to encourage people to learn CPR.

Alder Aratta-Fratta asked about the medical billing line item. Chief Anderson explained Fitch-Rona uses a third-party billing company that charges 6% of what they collect for the service.

Commission member Hilla noted that the Telephone line item did not cross over into the presentation correctly. The phone line went up, not down, as indicated on the presentation. Chief Anderson stated that the plan went down about \$1/month per line, but the addition of the new response vehicle will add another data terminal to the overall charges.

Commission member Duerst brought up the concerns of billing for motor vehicle accidents. Chief Anderson explained the advantage of early billing with motor vehicle accidents as many of those polices have low coverage and the first entity to bill the auto insurance will get their bills paid with that coverage, while the remaining entities, or costs, will go to the health insurance companies, which tend to pay less.

Move to Caucus for deliberations on 2021 Operations and CIP Budget:

Though the Town of Verona and City of Fitchburg did have a quorum, the City of Verona did not. Town Chair Geller suggested that they forgo moving into caucus and rely on each municipality's normal budget process to reflect approval of the Fitch-Rona EMS District budget. Mayor Richardson concurred and stated that the process is largely ceremonial and makes for an opportunity for the municipalities. Motion by the Town, Second by Fitchburg.

Return from Caucus:

NA see above.

Discussion and possible action on the 2020 Operational Budget:

NA see above.

Discussion and possible action on the 2020 Capital Improvement Plan:

NA see above.

Other Business:

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by the Town of Verona, second by the City of Verona - *Motion carried.* The Joint Municipal Meeting was adjourned at 8:29 P.M.

Submitted:

Terry Schnapp, EMS Chairperson

Addendum:

The City of Verona City Council passed the EMS budget, as presented at the Annual Meeting, on October 26th, 2020. Reference Resolution R-20-042

The Town of Verona Board passed the EMS budget, as presented at the Annual Meeting, on November 5th, 2019

The City of Fitchburg City Council passed the EMS budget, as presented at the Annual Meeting, on November 10th, 2020 as part of their 2021 Operating Budget approval process.