

SOUTH KALAMAZOO COUNTY

FIRE AUTHORITY

Minutes of Special Meeting Held June 15, 2017

The ~~regular~~ **special** meeting of the South Kalamazoo County Fire Authority Board was held at 13123 S. 24th Street, Vicksburg, Michigan on June 15, 2017. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jason Gatlin at 6:00pm.

The following members of the Authority Board were present for all or part of the meeting: Colin Bailey, Todd Carlin, Jason Gatlin, Ken Hovenkamp, Randy Smith and Mike Tomlinson.

Guests in attendance for all or part of the meeting: Chief Tracy McMillan, Administrator Tracy Locey, Attorney Craig Rolfe

Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was taken to remember Comstock Township Fire Chief Ed Switalski who lost his life in the line of duty.

Approval of the Agenda

Smith moved citizen comment to I.5 Smith moved, seconded by Hovenkamp to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Citizen's Time

Sue Lewis wanted to know why citizen time was moved up in the agenda. Gatlin responded it provided an opportunity to the citizens to speak prior to a decision being made by the board. Lewis is a registered nurse and has treated many South County residents. Since an emergency room is no longer in Vicksburg it is important to have a good ems provider. Response times are highly important.

Robert Lohrberg of Pridecare Ambulance has dedicated employees that have served the South County area for many years. They are willing to keep the SCEMS logo on the vehicle. Pridecare will call mutual aid when it is needed to insure timely responses are provided.

An employee of Pridecare spoke but did not identify herself, is a resident in South County, and has worked for Pridecare for the past 15 years. Pridecare employees are passionate about the community and the residents they ~~service~~ **serve**.

Wes Schmitt, Chairman of South County EMS (SCEMS), stated neither he nor any of his board members has a stake in any of the three providers that submitted bids. SCEMS board and staff are disheartened that they cannot continue operations. SCEMS has reviewed and sought outside input on the three proposals. It is SCEMS's recommendation to SKCFA to select Life EMS as the provider.

Alicia Crandall wanted to know if employees will lose their jobs. Pridecare stated they are willing to hire SCEMS employees if they are interested in employment. Mark Meijer of Life EMS stated SCEMS employees may apply to go through their employment process.

Update from the Finance/Planning Committee

Smith stated due to the speed in which information was being made available all emails and documents have been forwarded to the board as received. Smith's personal opinion is all three providers submitted similar proposals. All three have stated they are willing to continue the contract at no cost with service levels being the same or better. SKCFA looks to its long term partner SCEMS on how the talks are progressing. Representatives from all three providers are present at the meeting. Smith stated since SCEMS recommends Life EMS it carries weight with him. He is not an expert in the ambulance service industry and puts confidence in SCEMS's recommendation.

Gatlin inquired on the proposed 5 year extension Pridecare submitted with its proposal. Lohrberg stated Pridecare is willing to enter into a five year agreement with a renewal with the Provider Agreement's current terms. They want to see SCEMS go out in a good light. Discussion took place on the coverage they would provide. **Rolfe advised now is not the time to change the provider agreement.**

Mark Meijer of Life EMS stated his company uses real-time GPS to place their ambulances throughout their coverage areas. Life Care stated they currently serve the communities to the Authority's southern border and would add additional resources if needed. Lohrberg noted Kalamazoo County Medical Control Authority is looking to change its protocols to pull the closest agency.

Smith stated he doesn't feel a bad choice can be made. All three will do an excellent job serving the residents. Rolfe briefly reviewed the resolutions the board made consider in selecting an ambulance service provider. The resolutions endorse a provider and provide authority to the chairman to sign appropriate documents related to the transaction. The Authority is giving consent to SCEMS to proceed with a provider of their choosing. If the Authority does not consent, then SCEMS must consider proceeding with another choice.

Hovenkamp moved, seconded by Smith to adopt the resolution as presented consenting to the recommendation of SCEMS to proceed in negotiations with Life EMS. Motion failed 3-3 with a roll call vote. Ayes: Hovenkamp, Smith, Tomlinson. Nays: Gatlin, Carlin, Bailey.

Bailey stated based on the proposals the services would be similar and since Pridecare is already in place serving South County it would be a good transition. Smith reiterated he does not have expertise in this field. Smith stated a decision must be reached this evening and he continues to support the recommendation of SCEMS. Gatlin stated Pridecare has served the community well. Carlin stated the residents should be the primary concern, not bank notes. Pridecare has a proven record. Tomlinson has confidence in the SCEMS to make the best recommendation. SCEMS has been upfront and truthful in the reporting their difficulties. Schmitt stated Pridecare employees stated they will not work for Life EMS and SCEMS employees stated they will not work for Pridecare.

Gatlin moved, seconded by Carlin to recommend SCEMS reconsider and proceed in negotiations with Pridecare. Motion failed 3-3 with a roll call vote. Ayes: Gatlin, Carlin, Bailey. Nays: Smith, Tomlinson, Hovenkamp.

Smith noted the discussions are not changing his mind. Hovenkamp stated the companies cannot control the management styles or where employees would want to work. Gatlin stated Pridecare has met all the expectations to date and we know what type of service can be expected in the future. Bailey inquired on the firefighters opinions. TJ Pool stated Pridecare has met his expectations. He cannot speak on the other services as he has not worked with them often. Megan Bush stated she is a Pridecare employee and Pridecare employees have a high moral standard. Ron Crandall inquired if SCEMS were to close, doesn't that mean the provider agreement is void. It was explained the contract is an asset and liability of SCEMS therefore is something that can be bought/sold. An inquiry was made as to why Life EMS is no longer the SCEMS partner when several years ago they were. Locey responded stating SCEMS put a proposal out for bid and Pridecare was the low bidder with the most amounts of services to be offered to SCEMS. McMillan stated his daughter works for Pridecare, but feels there is no reason to change.

Gatlin asked Schmitt if they would reconsider their recommendation. Schmitt responded stating he cannot speak for the SCEMS board.

Gatlin moved, seconded by Carlin to recommend SCEMS reconsider and select Pridecare to continue their negotiations. Motion carried 4-2 with a roll call vote. Ayes: Gatlin, Carlin, Bailey, and Hovenkamp. Nays: Tomlinson, Smith.

Lohrberg stated Pridecare will work with SCEMS and make the transition as smooth as possible.

With there being no further business, Gatlin adjourned the meeting at 7:23 pm.

Todd Carlin, Secretary

Recorded and typed by Tracy Locey.