



AREA AMBULANCE SERVICE

Randal Dunford
Director

Heather Daly
Captain

AMBULANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: AUGUST

PAGE 1 OF 4

Date of Meeting: August 27, 2020 / Northside Fire Station

Member Attendance: Jerry Steele, Wayne Kling, Brede Sorenson, Barb Cram, Rick Murray, Richard Yarrington

Absent: Joyce Stenklyft

Others Present: Director Dunford

Meeting called to order at 5:02PM

- **Approve Minutes:** Motion made by Jerry Steele and second by Barb Cram to approve July 30, 2020, Meeting Minutes with correction that Presentation by Ambulance Employees occurred later on the agenda due to mix-up in time. Motion Carried
- **Persons Desiring to Be Heard:** None
- **Director's Report:** • Monthly statistics and invoices presented for July, 2020
 - **See Attached Director's Report**
 - Discussed current staffing. 5 new part-time hired. Full-time Paramedic submitted 2-week notice in August.
 - Director provided full update of COVID-19 Response by Department
 - Grants: \$500.00 Tomah Rotary, \$3,000.00 Andre's Fund
 - Employee Work Schedule: Director informed committee of concerns addressed about 48/96 work schedule and how it was implemented.
 - Zoll Service Contract Update: Zoll agreed to annual payment
 - Equipment Purchase: Council agreed to purchase of AeroClave Decontamination System. 2 Units ordered; one for Ambulance, one for DPW
 - Retirement Letter submitted by Director
- Motion to approve Director's Report by Brede Sorenson and seconded by Rich Yarrington. Motion Carried
- **Other Such Matters By Committee Member:** None
- Motion by Barb Cram and second by Jerry Steele to adjourn. Motion Carried

Meeting Adjourned at 5:51PM

Minutes Taken By: Randal Dunford

Minutes Typed By: Randal Dunford 9/17/2020



City of Tomah Ambulance Commission Meeting – August 27, 2020

Director's Report For: **JULY, 2020**

2 OF 4 PAGES

1. **STAFFING:** In July we hired 5 new part-time employees; one is a Paramedic and the other 4 are new EMTs. We have eight employees that are in Field Training; 2 are Paramedic and 6 are EMTs. On August 17th full-time Paramedic Isabell Miles submitted her 2 week resignation notice. Isabell plans to go into accounting but desires to stay on part-time. A promotion to full-time from the part-time staffing is being looked at.
2. **COVID-19 DEPARTMENT UPDATE:**
 - In July we had 18 COVID precaution calls.
 - Our Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is in good shape. The N95 Masks are still difficult to acquire.
3. **GRANT:** Received a \$500.00 grant from Tomah Rotary to assist with the purchase of a decontamination UV light. We received \$3,000.00 from the Andre's Fund to go towards the purchase of the AeroClave Decontamination System.
4. **EMPLOYEE WORK SHIFT:** In recent weeks the employee work schedule has come under scrutiny. In the fall of 2019 the employees approached me with a new shift schedule which is widely used in the Fire/EMS industry. Employees were working a 24/48 schedule (24 hours on followed by 48 hours off). For example, a crew would report to work at 8:00AM on Monday and work until 8:00AM on Tuesday and then have Tuesday and Wednesday off and then report back to work on Thursday morning at 8:00AM. This shift averages 56 hours a week. The employees proposed to me a 48/96 schedule (48 hours on followed by 96 hours off). With this schedule the crew would report to work at 8:00AM on Monday morning and work until Wednesday morning at 8:00AM and then report back to work Sunday morning at 8:00AM. This shift cycle also averages 56 hours a week.

The employees provided me with documentation citing the popularity of the schedule nationwide. They advised me that the 24/48 schedule was extremely difficult because the employee could never really decompress from the prior shift before starting the next. The 24/48 schedule also created more off time taken by employees, i.e. sick leave, comp time, vacation, and even shift trades. The 24/48 shift is believed to cause a higher level of employee burn-out and turn over.

As explained to me in a document provided to me by Paramedic Adam Robarge, he states



the following:

“The biggest concerns addressed during this research involved fatigue and the effects of sleep deprivation on safety and patient care. Other concerns were identified including call volume for busy departments, quality of life issues related to family and child/dependent care and being away from home and family for 48 straight hours.

The schedule was initially implemented to reduce commute times for firefighters, but agencies who implemented the 48/96 schedule realized several additional benefits to both their members and management. Benefits for members included increased quality of life, spending more time with their family, and less time recuperating from their last shift. Management found improved productivity, increased morale, increase crew continuity, and less sick leave and shift trades.”

I was advised that not everyone in the employee group wanted to change the schedule and I informed the Union that if it was not a 100% vote by the employees, I would not be in favor of the schedule change. Starting in the first pay period of January 2020 the department went through a trial period for five (5) months which was approved by the City Administrator, City Attorney, and the City Clerk. At the conclusion they had an employee vote and 100% of the employees were in favor of the new schedule. There were no issues with the schedule from the management standpoint or payroll. I knew that negotiations for a new contract would begin in the fall of 2020 so I allowed for the schedule to continue.

I have since been scrutinized for not taking this issue back to the acting City Administrator for Council approval. Subsequently I have been ordered to revert the schedule back to the 24/48 hour shift. I have issued a letter to the employees advising them that we will be switching back effective September 20, 2020. In an email to Mayor Murray and City Attorney Penny Precour, I wrote the following:

“... I know my opinion carries no weight with you, however in my 34 years of experience in the public sector, an employee is most productive and willing to give extra to their employer when they are working a schedule that they love. The 24/48 schedule does create more overtime and burnout which is evident in the overtime that was worked in 2019. Captain Daly and I both agree that it would be in the best interest of the City to work with Union to keep the schedule that is currently in place. Captain Daly informed me that we have 5 employees that have stated they will seek employment elsewhere if they have to go back to the 24/48 schedule. I believe that this can easily be resolved by offering the membership the 48/96 schedule in exchange for the wording regarding the Floating Holiday issue. I believe this can be resolved and taken before the Council in September. The 48/96 work schedule is a great recruiting tool and we have already taken 2 experienced Paramedics from Tri-State Ambulance, which just a short time ago we never had any interest of Tri-State employees working here. We are headed in the right direction.”



5. Zoll Service Contract Update: Zoll has agreed to allow us to pay annually for the service contract. The cost is \$7,243.00 and we just sent one in for repair which would have cost us \$2,583.00, so we will definitely see the savings of this worry-free service contract.
6. CRITICAL CARE: It has been a goal in our 5 year plan to upgrade the ambulance service to Critical Care designation. This special designation means that we would be able to handle more acute patient cases that must be ground transported to a higher level of care. Nearly all of our staff have received the Critical Care certification. I estimate that we would see a 5-10% increase in transfers which would raise our revenues substantially. I do believe that to effectively meet the demand for facility transport service, we would need to add a 3rd ambulance to the rotation which would be another shift, or 6 people.
6. EQUIPMENT PURCHASE: Council approved the order of the AeroClave Decontamination system. The order was subsequently made.
7. RETIREMENT: See Attached Letter

Respectfully,


Randal Dunford
Director

