

**Walworth County Board of Supervisors
Fire/EMS Study Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 28, 2023
Walworth County Government Center, County Board Room 114
100 West Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin**

Chair John Peters called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Roll call was conducted and the following members were present: Chair John Peters; Fire/EMS Representative Chief Bruce Vander Veen (arrived at 10:10 am); County Representatives Director-Public Works Richard Hough and County Board Supervisor Ken Monroe (Alternate); Local Representatives Theresa Loomer (Alternate) and Brian Wilson; and, non-voting Emergency Medical Directors Andrew L. Aswegan, MD and Mitchell Lee Sheley, MD (arrived at 10:03 am). Vice-Chair Dave Nelson; Fire/EMS Representative Chief Fred Schalow (Alternate); and, Local Representative Joe DeGaro were absent. A quorum was declared.

Others in Attendance

County Staff: Walworth County Administrator Mark W. Luberda and Walworth County Captain-Support Services Todd Neumann.

On motion by Hough, second by Wilson, the agenda was approved with no withdrawals.

On motion by Loomer, second by Hough, the January 17, 2023 Fire/EMS Study Committee meeting minutes were approved.

Dr. Mitchell Lee Sheley arrived at 10:03 a.m.

Public Comment – Todd Neumann, Walworth County Captain-Support Services stated as the committee considers an EMS study, they may want to look at Seattle program as it may be helpful to Walworth County. In cooperation with their hospital, the Seattle fire department dispatch center has, as part of their Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) program, a nurse triage assigned to dispatch center. That person's job after the initial EMD is done is to help individuals that really aren't having an emergency and don't need an ambulance. They work with several clinics to keep clinical times open, so a person can be seen in the same day and keep that patient out of the EMS and ER system. If there's a transportation issue, maybe look at expanding the Dial-A-Ride program.

New Business

7a. Consideration of and discussion on the potential need, purpose, and scope of services for an independent evaluation or study on Fire/EMS Services in Walworth County, including but not limited to studying ways in which fire and emergency medical services can be made more sustainable throughout the County, studying the delivery options for fire and EMS service in Walworth County, and collecting, compiling, and evaluating resource and service delivery data for such study purposes

County Administrator Mark Luberda referenced his cover memo (page 3 of packet) for explanation on the long agenda title. The purpose was to bring into the discussion the two charges that came from the County Board from the original resolution and the reference in the most recent resolution where they set forth the appropriation. He stated he can go back to the County Board with the intent for additional appropriations if the committee thinks there's something that is going to be more extensive for funds. Included in the packet (pages 3-48) were examples of different studies to assist the committee on deciding what details to include in their study.

Chief Bruce Vander Veen arrived at 10:10 a.m.

Director-Public Works Richard Hough and Brian Wilson both stated they'd like more detail on what the Ozaukee County study provides and if it has actionable results or if it's more of a broad policy discussion. Discussion ensued regarding consolidation and regionalization options. Chair Peters cited results from their first study (that was sent to every Fire/EMS agency and local official throughout the county) that every organization that replied would be interested in sharing services. However, when it came time to do so, it never happened. Since then, a lot of agencies have done referendums to address staffing concerns. Wilson suggested the study provide direction for implementation. Peters stated the City of Lake Geneva recently started a study in which they hired PAA. The study is being done on where they place stations for the

next 20 years, and what staffing model and apparatus goes is in each station. Lubberda referred to the distributed pages from a Town of Linn contract and pointed out that the second paragraph of the cover memo lists the questions the town will be addressing. From the discussion at the Town meeting, it sounded like they were considering what the roles should be in cooperation with the City of Lake Geneva and getting background to see how they fit in on a broader perspective of service. Lubberda mentioned he's seen communities break a study into two pieces starting with a bigger, broader question and then from those results, look closer at the detailed areas of concern.

Dr. Mitchell Lee Sheley, EMS Medical Director for Mercy Health stated the study should be looked at more broadly. He is most concerned with the Fire/EMS and clinical medicine response times disparities. The best running EMS system that he has been a part of has been countywide. A countywide EMS system with countywide buy-in from all individual municipalities, volunteer, career, and professional, offers entire control over that level of care that can be provided. This eliminates the disparities. Sheley referred to Seattle program that Neumann presented to the committee, and touched on the features that make that program successful including the countywide dispatch system with a tiered level response. Dr. Andrew Aswegan stated a good solution he's seen was a community switch to countywide paramedics but still allowed local fire departments to have volunteers. He indicated that dispatch needs to be upgraded with computerized EMD and looking towards tiered responses. Lubberda thinks the issue of regionalization is one that is happening state wide and there's evidence that the County Board is supportive of collaborative efforts.

On motion by Hough, second by Wilson, to perform a study that arms our citizens and policymakers with the state of our Fire/EMS services; their disparities, current and potential future ones, across the county; and to identify options for collaboration. Any recommendations are met against a countywide model of best practices, and they give us the near, mid, and long-term options.

Hough described the following:

Near-term: What are our EMS services? What are our paramedic staffing levels?

Mid-term: partial consolidation options with MOU's between various communities

Long-term: additional options to address projected disparities. Which would leave room for discussion between policymakers on whether or not we establish or consolidate a regional organization or do we rest on partial consolidated options.

The committee ensued discussion on services, staffing, training, and technology that could help support EMS. Bruce Vander Veen, suggested looking into community paramedic program funding for the study. Neumann added an extension of the community paramedic program could be used towards a solution for the increased number of emergency calls from nursing homes.

7b. Topics for next meeting

The committee requested a presentation from Captain Neumann on a short and long-term plan for Communications. Lubberda stated he would work with Hough to put together a scope of the RFP and bring it to the next meeting. He confirmed the Committee's intent to anticipate the scope to target the Wisconsin Policy Forum, which would require broader flexibility with the funding for a sole source.

Confirmation of next meeting date and time: The next meeting was confirmed for April 6, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment

On motion and second by Vander Veen and Wilson, Chair Peters adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.