

TRI-TOWN EMS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Wednesday, October 11, 2017
Pembroke Town Hall
311 Pembroke Street
Pembroke, New Hampshire 03275

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mulholland at 3:30 p.m.

Present on the Board: Harold Paulsen, Mike O'Meara, Dave Jodoin, Bob Bourque, Shawn Murray, Shaun Mulholland

Present on the Staff: Chris Gamache, Director; Stephanie Locke Assistant Director; Daniel Fitzpatrick, Advanced EMT

Approve minutes of previous meeting

On motion of Mr. Jodoin, duly seconded by Mr. Bourque, it was voted to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2017 meeting.

Approve expenditures

On motion of Mr. Bourque, duly seconded by Mr. O'Meara, it was voted to approve the accounts payable manifest dated September 28, 2017 in the amount of \$1,151.43; the accounts payable manifest of September 18, 2017 **(no amount stated)**; and the payroll manifests of September 28, 2017 and October 12, 2017.

Director's Report

Mr. Gamache reported that calls for EMS assistance totaled 115 in September. Call volume continues to be high – over 100 calls per month for the last six months. Of the 115 calls, 107 were assigned to Tri-Town and eight went to mutual aid. Tri-Town gave mutual aid on ten calls. Eighty-three (71%) were transported, which is significantly high. Of the total, 66 (54%) were Pembroke calls and 43 (37.5%) were from Allentown. Average time out the door was 49 seconds, down six seconds. Regarding collections, through the first of September, 282 accounts were sent to collections. First Financial collected \$6,455.79, leaving a balance of \$175,780.96. Last week, another 184 accounts were sent to collection in the amount of \$125,167, for a total collections balance of \$301,455.

Mr. Gamache continued, stating that, as of November 1, 2017, Mr. David Hirsch will no longer be the medical director at Concord Hospital; Dr. Nathan Laroche will be the new director.

Mr. Gamache reported that Ambulance 8 was taken out of service early in September. The two front tires were replaced; the outer rims were bald. Grappone could not perform a front-end alignment

because of the weight of the vehicle. Mr. Paulson recommended a place on Basin Street in Concord where that service could be performed.

Chair Mulholland asked why the alignment was needed when the vehicle has only 14,000 miles on it.

Mr. Gamache explained that the original alignment was done before PL put the Box on.

Mr. Jodoin asked about the warranty.

Mr. Gamache responded that the vehicle was still under warranty but he didn't know if this would be covered. He is taking a vehicle in today for a check engine light and a recall, and he will ask about the tires. He said that problems like this are common. The manufacturer and the chaise manufacturer point the finger at each other and nothing is done.

Mr. Murray suggested that Mr. Gamache look at his contract.

Mr. O'Meara said that this is a lesson learned, to check the alignment after the installation of the Box.

Mr. Gamache said that even on lighter-weight vehicles, they are only getting 20,000 miles on a set of tires.

Chief Paulsen asked for the brand of the tires.

Mr. Gamache said that the tires replaced were Continentals; the new ones are Michelin.

Chief Paulsen said that Michelins are better.

Mr. Gamache said that PL will be refunding Tri-Town for the refrigerator which was part of the purchase agreement. They have tried installing various units and all have failed. Tri-Town is looking into finding a unit that will work because some of the medications require refrigeration.

Mr. Gamache said that Tri-Town responded with Pembroke Fire to a cardiac arrest situation. The patient has been discharged and is in rehab. He reminded the Board that they saved a patient in cardiac arrest earlier this year. And, a third cardiac arrest situation occurred in September; the patient is being treated in a medical/surgical unit in Concord.

Mr. Gamache reported that Allenstown Fire, Allenstown Police, and Tri-Town received recognition as the EMS unit of the year and were honored at a ceremony on September 25, 2017. Their Emergency Medical Responder in-house course started September 7, 2017 with 16 participants. Six or seven of these are paying students, so the service made a small amount of money on this. Tri-Town is offering a CPR course on Saturday, October 14, 2017. On October 25, 2017, Tri-Town will do training for Pembroke *Police* Fire. Every two years they have to qualify with their guns, and Tri-Town will give instruction on wound care, wound packing and tourniquet application. Staff members are working on Primex training, based on the chart provided by the Board. Mr. Gamache said that they can't access three of the items. He will

provide the specifics. Tri-Town is in the process of hiring a per diem paramedic and will probably bring this to the Board at the next meeting.

Purchase orders

There were no purchase orders.

Review proposed policy changes

Mr. Gamache said that the first proposed change relates to the distribution of patient care reports, instructions to the staff on the timeframe and method of reporting. Mostly, this is agencies requesting copies of medical records and the instructions basically follow HIPPA guidelines. New Hampshire law dictates fees that can be charged.

Mr. O'Meara asked about the form of acknowledgement of receipt (Section 1-e).

Mr. Gamache responded that this information is preloaded in their FAX machine, and the director makes updates if there are changes. They have a MRH agreement with Concord Hospital; with other facilities, they have email correspondence.

Mr. O'Meara suggested, under Section 2-A, which says a PCR request must be on letterhead, adding "upon receipt of a lawful request."

Mr. Bourque asked if these requests were required to be in writing, or if a police officer, for example, could make a verbal request.

Mr. Gamache responded that the request had to be written and that they are required by law to track such requests, which they do. He added that 95% of these requests are related to legal action.

Mr. O'Meara asked if Tri-Town staff ever doubted the legitimacy of a request, or if they ever felt the need for legal advice.

Mr. Gamache responded that they usually have a notarized release from the patient.

Mr. Bourque asked if a PCR request could be made without the consent of the patient.

Mr. Gamache said that it could, per HIPPA regulations.

Chair Mulholland called for a vote on the motion to approve this policy change. All members voted in the affirmative. **(Note: no motion actually made)**

Mr. Gamache said that the next proposed policy change regards reimbursement of license upgrades and was drafted after the budget process. He received input from Chief Paulsen, suggesting the removal of Section A-i.

Chief Paulsen said it was okay to leave it in; he had misunderstood its intent.

Mr. Jodoin asked about the requirements for becoming a paramedic.

Mr. Gamache said that most candidates still complete a certificate program, but the trend is toward an Associate's degree. Reimbursement would only be available for core paramedic courses, not the additional courses required for an Associate's degree.

Mr. Bourque asked if these should be referred to as prerequisites.

Mr. Gamache responded that electives is a better term because prerequisites are courses which must be completed before starting a program.

Chief Paulsen said that approval of the Board would be required before starting a course of study.

Mr. O'Meara said that he believes they have covered that.

Mr. Jodoin asked where in the policy that was stated. He can only see a requirement for Board approval when putting the money in the budget. He said that one person could take the full allocation.

Mr. O'Meara suggested changing "applicable" reimbursement to "approved" reimbursement.

Mr. Jodoin said that Section 6 should be the first step.

Mr. Gamache said that there are two service times required: 450 hours of ambulance coverage prior to requesting reimbursement for a license upgrade and 2,000 hours of service afterwards.

Chief Murray said that this needs to be simplified. There is too much minutia; it's an administrative nightmare. He said there should be an equal shot for anyone interested in reimbursement. One person should not get it all. He said a matrix would be helpful for guiding the Board in making decisions.

Mr. Gamache said that he is trying to protect funds. He added that they offer in-house training too, which obviates the need for reimbursement.

Mr. O'Meara stated that the Board has all the outs it needs, and he recommended reversing the order of Sections 4 and 5.

Mr. Gamache said that Section 6 could be removed, but then employees could receive reimbursement and quit the service.

Chief Paulsen said that the policy should be worded so that applicants might be able to receive reimbursement, only if the funds are available.

Mr. Jodoin said that the service might reach a point when no employees need license upgrades.

Chief Paulsen suggested that Mr. Gamache come back with a cleaned-up version of the policy.

Chief Murray asked about the cost of paramedic licensing.

Mr. Gamache said it was between \$10,000 and \$20,000.

Chief Murray said that in reality, you might be paying for books or clinical costs.

Mr. Gamache said that paramedic licensing is a benefit to the service and to the towns, more so than the Advanced EMT license. He said that it doesn't take many calls to make up the amount of the reimbursement.

Chief Murray said that the service is excellent, at the highest level. Maybe they should reimburse for paramedic and not Advanced EMT licensing.

Mr. Gamache said that they now have seven paramedics and nine each of EMTs and Advanced EMTs on staff.

Mr. Bourque asked if an EMT had to become an Advanced EMT before becoming a paramedic.

Mr. Gamache responded no.

Chair Mulholland said that this is too bureaucratic, too complicated. A block of money would be available. A deadline for applications would be set, and the Board would review them and allocate the funds. If an applicant meets the requirements, and the money is available, the reimbursement is guaranteed. They should not have to take the course, not knowing if they would be reimbursed, or the amount. He said he is not interested in making sure they work a given number of hours after reimbursement. The benefit outweighs that risk, and there is no evidence that this would happen. They have not seen a mass exodus.

Chief Paulsen said that the policy could be changed at a later date if necessary. He added that Chair Mulholland should have voiced his opinion at the last meeting.

Mr. Jodoin said he didn't want this in the first place, and if they are not required to stay after reimbursement, that money is wasted.

Chair Mulholland said that, right after the Town Meeting, the money could be encumbered. A deadline for applications could be set for the end of March, and the applications could be reviewed at the April Tri-Town Board meeting. He said they need to encourage people to enhance their education.

Mr. Gamache said that he would prepare another draft of this policy.

ComStar revenue report

Mr. Jodoin said that he sent this report to the Board members. Billing for the month was \$49,000 for Allenstown and \$43,000 for Pembroke. Collections for the month were \$15,000 for Allenstown, \$21,000 for Pembroke, and \$5,800 for all others. Uncollectible allowances for the month were \$136,000 for Allenstown, \$141,000 for Pembroke, and \$15,000 for all others. Uncollectible balances for the month are \$236,125 for Allenstown, \$222,000 for Pembroke, and \$39,000 for all others. The new receivables total \$497,125; the previous balance was \$481,000.

Director's report (continued)

Mr. Gamache stated that Hearshell VanLuven was evaluated and met the criteria for a merit increase. He currently makes \$19.50 per hour. This adjustment would increase his hourly rate to \$20.53, Grade 13, Step 5, Year 1, at \$20.53 per hour. Mr. Gamache said that Daniel Fitzpatrick is an Advanced EMT currently making \$15.10 per hour. He was evaluated and met the criteria for a merit increase to \$15.64 per hour, Grade 9, Step 4, Year 2.

On motion of Chief Murray, duly seconded by Mr. Bourque, it was voted to approve these merit pay increases.

Chair Mulholland said that the Tri-Town EMS budget would be presented to the BOS at their October 16, 2017 meeting. Mr. Gamache should attend, and anyone else interested should feel free to attend as well.

On motion of Mr. Bourque, duly seconded by Mr. Jodoin, it was voted to adjourn at 4:50 p.m.



SHAUN MULHOLLAND, CHAIRMAN