

TOWN OF ALLENTOWN AND PEMBROKE
Joint Tri-Town Board
311 Pembroke Street
Pembroke, New Hampshire 03275
Minutes of Regular Meeting
June 10, 2015

Call to Order.

The Joint Tri-Town Board Meeting for June 10, 2015 was called to order by the Chair at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call.

Present on the Board: David Jodoin, Shaun Mulholland, Mike Kelly, Harold Paulsen, and Bob Bourque.

Excused: Dana Pendergast

Others Present.

Tri-Town Staff: Stephanie Locke and Christian Kellerman

Other:

Approve minutes of previous meeting(s).

Mr. Jodoin stated there were no minutes to approve.

Approve expenditures.

Motion. Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the Accounts Payable manifest for June 5, 2015 in the amount of \$4,270.68. Chief Paulsen seconded the Motion. There was no additional discussion.

A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Mulholland-Yes; Mr. Bourque-Yes; Mr. Jodoin – Yes; Mr. Kelley Yes; and Mr. Paulsen – Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Motion. Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the Payroll Manifest for May 28, 2015. Chief Paulsen seconded the Motion.

The Chair informed Mr. Kelly they are required by law to authorize all the expenditures.

A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Mulholland-Yes; Mr. Bourque-Yes; Mr. Jodoin – Yes; Mr. Kelly –Yes; and Mr. Paulsen – Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Motion. Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the Payroll Manifest for June 11, 2015. Chief Paulsen seconded the Motion. There was no additional discussion.

A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Mulholland-Yes; Mr. Bourque-Yes; Mr. Jodoin – Yes; Mr. Kelly – Yes; and Mr. Paulsen – Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Consider adoption of policy revisions

Mr. Bourque asked if in the future when they do revisions to policies could they put changes in bold or underscore. The Chair stated bolding or underscoring changes is a good idea.

Accounts Receivable

Mr. Gamache the update to Section 4.6 Payments for Services rendered. He read the following changes

a. The service's contracted billing service shall be responsible for receiving payment for services rendered and such payments will be deposited in a specified account(s) per the agreement between the Service and contracted billing service.

b. On occasion, patients, third party payers, other agencies (including municipalities) and other persons/organizations may opt to or be directed to, make payment directly to the service. In this case, the payer shall make payment to: "Town of Pembroke".

i. Designated Town Office Staff (Pembroke) shall be responsible for notifying the contracted billing service of any payment received by the town for charges associated with ambulance service, to exclude paramedic intercepts.

ii. Payments received for EMS details, request for documents, paramedic intercepts, donations, and other service billable items are not to be reported to the Service's contracted billing service.

iii. With the exception of a donation, the Service Director shall not receive any payments in cash. Payments are be made to the Town of Pembroke Finance Department.

The Chair expressed concern of the Director taking any cash at all. Mr. Gamache stated they can strike "with exception of a donation" part of the section. Mr. Jodoin suggested putting in something like "all payments for services and/or donations must be made payable to the Town of Pembroke and directed to the Pembroke Finance Department."

Motion. Mr. Jodoin made a motion to approve the Accounts Receivable Policy as amended. Mr. Bourque seconded the Motion. There was no additional discussion.

A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Mulholland-Yes; Mr. Bourque-Yes; Mr. Jodoin – Yes; Mr. Kelly – Yes; and Mr. Paulsen – Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Donations

Mr. Gamache stated the policy describes how they would accept donations. He read Section 4.1 Donations, Tips, and Gifts for Individual Employees which states;

1. Employees of Tri-Town EMS shall not accept any Donations, Tips or Gifts that are intended for the employee. Any Donation, Tip or Gift that is left with an employee shall be reported to the Director.
2. Employees shall do their best to professionally refuse accepting Donations, Tips and Gifts.
3. Employees shall do their best to determine the identity of the person/organization trying to give a donation, tip or gift to the employee, and shall report this information to the Director.
4. Non-Monetary gifts that are left with an employee shall be handed over to the Director for determination of disposition.
5. Monetary gifts that are left with an employee shall be brought to the Town of Pembroke Finance Department.
6. Gifts of food, intended for the employee shall be declined. In the case of persistent people where the food was purchased and given to the employee, the employee may opt to consume the food at that time.

Mr. Gamache stated they are trying to avoid people giving stuff to the employees and having anything be construed as a kickback.

The Chair asked about the rationale behind this. Mr. Gamache stated this is for individual employees. He explained things given by the hospitals at Christmastime as a donation is covered under Gifts for the Service. Chief Paulsen stated it contradicts itself The Chair stated this makes it so the Director has to weigh whether or not this is a persistent request.

Chief Paulsen asked if they have had an issue with this. Mr. Gamache stated they have not had any issues. He stated it was a spinoff of the Accounts Receivable and things which would potentially happen and how to handle it. He stated whatever if given to the service needs to be distributed fairly and not just given to one specific employee. The Chair stated if someone give something to an employee, the employee needs to say they can give it to the service but they can't specifically give it to them. There was further discussion of receiving food for the service versus for an individual.

Chief Paulsen suggested they have a sentence which states “no individual employee shall accept a gift for anything.” Mr. Bourque stated they shouldn't be accepting money for anything and if the person receiving the service wants to donate then it is for the service.

Mr. Gamache recommended they table this until he has a chance to make additional changes.

Employee Compensation

Mr. Gamache stated this was from last month and when he updated it the Board felt there were too many changes. He stated the changes were to Section 4.8.i which states “Employees who are terminated by the Service shall not receive payment for accrued vacation time, sick time, personal time, etc. Terminated employees shall only be compensated for actual hours worked.”

Mr. Bourque asked Mr. Jodoin if the town does it so an employee would lose accrued vacation. Mr. Jodoin stated if they are terminated for cause. The Chair stated the State law doesn’t require vacation time and as long as they are consistent with their policy and everyone knows it, they don’t have the right to it.

Chief Paulsen stated if the policy says they get vacation time for time worked he thinks they should owe it to the employee. The Chair stated law applies and doesn’t require for vacation or sick time regardless if they are a public or private entity. He stated he has been on the Labor Board and an employee tried to argue this but the Board upheld it.

Mr. Bourque asked if an employee quits will they get it. The Chair stated the rule says if they are terminated. Mr. Bourque stated he doesn’t agree with it because it is time accrued and whether they quit or are terminated they should get it.

Mr. Kelly stated the he always thought if time was accrued throughout the year but not used they would lose it but the State says they have to roll it over. The Chair stated they only get to keep so much. Mr. Jodoin stated their Personnel Policy says the employees are allowed to carry over 80 hours of vacation time. He stated compensatory time cannot be use it or lose it.

Motion. Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the Employee Compensation Policy. Mr. Jodoin seconded the Motion.

Mr. Kelly asked if it says if an employee resigns in the appropriate amount of time the employee would get the accrued compensation. The Chair stated he doesn’t think it is in this one.

A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Mulholland-Yes; Mr. Bourque- No; Mr. Jodoin – Yes; Mr. Kelly – Yes; and Mr. Paulsen – Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

NH Patient Care Protocols

Mr. Gamache stated the intent of the policy is to ensure the providers are following the protocols and provide recourse if they fail to do so.

The Chair read Section 4.3.c which states “The Service reserves the right to report any and all protocol issues and clinical concerns to the Medical Resource Hospital and/or the New Hampshire Department of Safety, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and will do so where and when obligated to file such report.” He stated he is not sure why they are putting this in the policy. He stated they don’t have to reserve the right but they do have an obligation and responsibility to do so. Mr. Gamache stated it is for the employee so they understand they have the right and obligation.

Mr. Jodoin stated they could put “this service has an obligation to report any and all protocol” rather than reserves the right.

Motion. Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the adherence to the applicable NH Patient Protocols. Mr. Jodoin seconded the Motion. There was no additional discussion.

A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Mulholland-Yes; Mr. Bourque-Yes; Mr. Jodoin – Yes; Mr. Kelly – Yes; and Mr. Paulsen – Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Routine Ambulance Inspections

Mr. Gamache stated the policy ensures ambulances are being checked on a daily basis or anytime there is a change in shift. He stated if both crews are on a 24 hour shift it doesn’t have to be checked. He stated if there is a reverse 24 hour shift it is a complete shift change which would require an ambulance check. He stated they are making sure the ambulance is being checked by at least one crew member each day.

Mr. Gamache stated they have a section of how to accurately fill out the check sheets and how to indicate if something isn’t checked. He stated they are trying to avoid people just checking all of the columns.

Mr. Gamache stated there are two purposes for the checks; the first is to ensure the stuff that is supposed to be on the truck is there and the second is the employee knows what is on the truck. He stated each employee is required to check the ambulance twice a month. He stated the on duty paramedic will have the authority to make sure the check sheet is completed. The Chair asked if the paramedic will have the authority and responsibility. Mr. Gamache stated he uses the two words interchangeably. The Chair suggested he changes it to have the responsibility.

Mr. Gamache stated in the case of two paramedics the responsibility would be shared jointly. He stated this is not currently in the policy but they can add it if needed. The Chair asked if the senior paramedic should have the responsibility. Mr. Gamache stated they can’t give it to the senior paramedic because most of the paramedics have the same hire date. He stated they can add a section 10 to clarify it or add a subsection 7 to say they will be held jointly responsible.

The Chair asked where in the policy it says what is supposed to be done with deficiencies. Mr. Gamache said there will be other policies coming and will cover vehicle failures or incident reporting. The Chair asked what would be the proper procedure to document it if someone finds a deficiency in something they can correct. Mr. Gamache stated it is on the check sheet which would indicate something is missing.

Mr. Kelly stated if it is something simple they just replace it but if it is somebody who is consistently missing something than he circles it and puts it on the back. He stated there is a spot for the Director to initial it. Ms. Locke suggested they circle things on the check sheet and then write “replaced” next to it.

Chief Paulsen asked about the two inspections a month in regards to the requirement of the employee to work a certain amount of hours per month. Mr. Gamache stated the policy is they have to be available 36 hours a month which comes out to about 3 shifts. He stated he doesn’t expect someone to come in just do to an ambulance check.

Mr. Gamache stated the policy requires the form to be signed. He stated the policy also says the Director or Assistant Director may require any employee to complete a check sheet at any time with sufficient cause. The Chair asked why they would need to have sufficient cause. Mr. Gamache stated he will take “with sufficient cause” out.

Motion. Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the Routine Ambulance Policy as amended. Chief Paulsen seconded the Motion. There was no additional discussion.

A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Mulholland-Yes; Mr. Bourque-Yes; Mr. Jodoin – Yes; Mr. Kelly – Yes; and Mr. Paulsen – Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Tri-Town Full Time Employee Job Descriptions

Mr. Gamache stated the only one updated was the full-time paramedic job description. He stated the mindset right now is any full-time employee they are interested in hiring is the paramedic so they didn’t do the EMT or AEMT. He stated it didn’t sit well with him to have “it’s not their job it’s my job so deal with it” thrown in his face. He stated he wants to make sure these people understand they are full-time and they are getting lucrative benefits for a paramedic in NH. He stated part of what he did is going through the items and added wording such that whoever is brought in understands this.

Mr. Gamache stated under General position description he added “perform routine cleaning of service facilities and vehicles.” He stated under Supervision Exercised he added “shall ensure all routine tasks as designated by the Director or the designee are sufficiently completed. He stated

under Duties and Responsibilities he added “perform BLS and ALS emergency medical care as required by law and as indicated by patient care protocols.” He further explained other areas he added to the job descriptions.

Ms. Locke asked if they want to address the schedule since the NCB people don’t have to do as many hours now. She stated the Dr. Ford informed her it is down to a 40 hour refresher and still be compliant with NCB requirements. Mr. Gamache stated they could remove the third bullet under Schedule because that is the way it is today.

Motion. Chief Paulsen made a motion to approve the amendments to Full-Time Paramedic Job Description as described. Mr. Bourque seconded the Motion. There was no additional discussion.

A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Mulholland-Yes; Mr. Bourque-Yes; Mr. Jodoin – Yes; Mr. Kelly – Yes; and Mr. Paulsen – Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

TTEMS Patient Satisfaction Survey

Mr. Gamache stated one of the accreditation standards is to survey those they serve. He stated they are required by Federal law to disseminate their privacy practices. He stated he is not aware of any practice in the state of NH doing this. He stated there are changes coming to how EMS services will be reimbursed and one of the requirements are they will need to have feedback from their patients. He stated this will be a mailer to the patients and then the survey will be a prepay, peel it off and mail it back.

Mr. Bourque stated he thinks it is well done however there is not a lot of room for comments. Mr. Gamache expressed concern with doing both sides is if it is not easy for the person to fill out, they are not going to do. He stated he can wipe out some of the items and give more room for comments but for the most part people don’t write comments and call if they have something more to say. Chief Paulsen suggested adding an email address to send comments to. Mr. Gamache stated he can redo this in a half page. There was further discussion of placement of the information on the mailer.

Chief Paulsen stated he would like to discuss with the Board the accreditations at a later date. Mr. Gamache stated the costs for them would be about \$5,000. Chief Paulsen asked about the costs each year. Mr. Gamache stated most of it is the protection of equipment and supplies, facility security, staff compliance with best practices. He stated the mailer is one of the only costs.

The Chair stated the objective right now is the best practices. He stated they are not telling Mr. Gamache not to comply. Mr. Gamache stated when he writes the policies they are to be in compliance with the accreditations.

Consider proposed 2016 Fee Schedule.

Mr. Gamache stated their BLS rates went from 600 to 750, ALS I from 800 to 1,000, and ALS II from 1,000 to 1,250. He stated it is his understanding their rates is what everyone else is charging. He stated the rates should reflect more of what their costs are. He stated their mileage rate went from 17 to 20. He stated the mileage rate is something they can play with because insurance will cover.

Mr. Bourque asked about number 14. CPR Course (Residents of Pembroke, Allenstown, and Town Employees) and why they are charging for town employees. Mr. Gamache stated they are charging because there is a cost to provide the course. He stated there are many levels of CPR courses. He stated the fee is what it costs them just for the card. Mr. Jodoin stated they would be paying out of the ambulance fund if they didn't pay for it.

Mr. Jodoin asked about number 12. Records Request (waived for residents of Pembroke and Allenstown). Mr. Gamache stated he is going to strike "waived for residents of Pembroke and Allenstown."

The Chair stated it will be helpful to have a list of the current rates on the same sheet as the recommended rates for the public hearing. Mr. Bourque asked how many public hearings they have to have. The Chair stated they have to have two public hearings.

Consider authorizing the Director to fill the present full-time Paramedic Position.

Motion. Mr. Bourque made a motion to authorize the Director to fill the present full-time Paramedic position. Chief Paulsen seconded the Motion.

Mr. Gamache stated they have streamlined the process and try to make it as quantitative as possible. He stated they developed a pre-hire exam for each license level. Ms. Locke stated they made an exam with BLS questions all the way up to advance questions as well as minimum requirement questions. She explained the various questions for the different license levels. The Chair asked if this test is multiple choice and how many questions. Ms. Locke stated it is multiple choices and there are about 25 questions.

Mr. Gamache stated they are going to advertise in the paper and go through the State for two weeks. He stated they will close the advertisement on the 27th. The Chair asked if the advertisement will include EOE and basic requirements. He stated when they put the ad out before they had the Board approve the ad and had all the information on it. The Chair asked where the applicants will look for the job descriptions. Mr. Gamache stated it would be sent to them with the application. Mr. Jodoin stated they have a section on the website to get the job description and application. Mr. Gamache stated he will get the information to Mr. Jodoin.

The Chair asked what the score is they have to get on the written test to continue on the process. Mr. Gamache stated they weren't necessarily doing it that way but were going to use it to rank them. Ms. Locke stated she was going to discuss the percentage with Mr. Gamache and then have it factor into the overall evaluation.

Mr. Gamache stated his intent was to give everyone a curiosity interview. He stated Ms. Locke will do the initial interviews and then he'll do the top percentage. He stated the top percentage would be three to ten depending on number of applicants. The Chair asked if they are going to ask the same questions of every candidate. Ms. Locke stated she has questions to ask every applicant. Mr. Gamache stated he has the questions from the last time they hired someone.

The Chair asked what they were going to do after the interview process. Mr. Gamache stated they would make a determination of who they are going to hire. The Chair stated one of the things Allenstown is doing is having a list of questions involving criminal activity which he can provide them with. He stated these are questions Mr. Gamache would ask and write the responses down and then make a determination of the top candidate. He stated Mr. Gamache would then give a condition offer of employment and do a medical and background check.

The Chair cautioned Mr. Gamache to be careful because they cannot make the applicants pay for the medical and background checks. Mr. Gamache stated what he has been doing is having them bring a receipt and he submits it for reimbursement. The Chair stated it would be better to use the same people as Pembroke because these are Pembroke employees. Mr. Jodoin stated they use Concentra for the medical check and Onsite for the drug testing. He stated he usually runs up to the State for the criminal backgrounds and waits for it to come back. He stated the applicant has to sign it and have it notarized. The Chair stated before Mr. Gamache comes to them with an applicant they want all the previous things discussed done.

A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Mulholland-Yes; Mr. Bourque-Yes; Mr. Jodoin – Yes; Mr. Kelly – Yes; and Mr. Paulsen – Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Discuss ComStar revenue report.

Mr. Jodoin stated the prior month's balance for Accounts Receivable was \$219,000 and at the end of May it increased to \$240,000. He stated the billing for the month of May seemed to be much higher and probably for both communities for the entire year. Mr. Gamache stated last month was the busiest month on record for the service. Mr. Jodoin stated the receivable for the patients of other communities is \$21,000.

The Chair stated one of the things they are looking at is the formula they use for the percentage of each town. Mr. Gamache stated he can get the total numbers of the two towns combined and then the towns individually and then by the percentage.

Mr. Bourque asked if they are getting money from ComStar regularly. Mr. Jodoin stated every two or three days they start seeing transmittals. He stated a lot of stuff comes automatic from the Federal government.

Mr. Bourque asked how the suit is coming along with the previous company. Mr. Jodoin stated he spoke to the lawyer. He stated with the prior Director and the authority and signing of documents he went through is going to be under Connecticut law. He stated they are pushing the issue the idea of an audit because CAG is saying they deposited \$50,000 more than what is in the bank. He stated he will have more information at the next meeting.

Director's Report.

Mr. Gamache stated for the month of May, a lot of the administrative time they usually do was taken up with an issue they dealt with so a lot of things got put on the back burner. He stated the month of May was the busiest month on record for both total calls and transports. He stated total calls logged to Tri-Town were 118 versus 76 in April. He stated transports for May were 74 which were up from 20 for April. He stated response time is four minutes and forty-nine seconds which is matching that of the cities around them. He stated on average their runs are just over an hour.

Chief Paulsen asked if they can bill for the transport by helicopter. Mr. Gamache stated they are in the process of finding that out.

Mr. Gamache stated he has two questions for ComStar are if transport by helicopter is a billable call and for cardiac arrest when they work on scene.

The Chair asked where they are at with the hardship cases. Mr. Gamache stated they are at \$142,190 which represents 75 accounts. He stated it is his intent to get this taken hammered down in the next week. He stated he thinks they are close to putting the whole thing to bed.

Mr. Jodoin stated a lot of these are so far out and the collectability is getting slim to none. Mr. Bourque stated it is his understanding they could collect the debt up to three years. Mr. Gamache stated the next step is to show the list to the towns. The Chair suggested he email the lists to the towns so they don't have to waste a meeting for this.

Mr. Gamache stated one employee expressed desires to go from per diem to part-time. He stated it works for them to do this. He stated she puts a lot of available hours in.

The Chair asked if the existing employees can do the job they are supposed to be able to and meet the current requirements. Mr. Gamache stated he doesn't know. The Chair stated before they give raises to anyone he wants to know they can meet the job requirements.

The Chair asked if they have people who have to call the Fire Department when they have to lift or refuse to do it themselves. Mr. Gamache stated they have people who do it when they have to but shy away when they don't have to do it.

Other Business

The Chair stated next month they should be looking at the budget for the first time. Mr. Gamache stated he can email it out so the Board can review it ahead of time. The Chair stated they will be looking at the job descriptions and doing a non-public for a personal evaluation for the Director.

Motion. Mr. Bourque made a motion to adjourn. Chief Paulsen seconded the Motion. There was no additional discussion.

A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Mulholland-Yes; Mr. Bourque-Yes; Mr. Jodoin – Yes; Mr. Kelly – Yes; and Mr. Paulsen – Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:36pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SHAUN MULHOLLAND', written over a horizontal line.

SHAUN MULHOLLAND