



Public Safety Committee Agenda

Committee Members:

The Honorable Ray Graham, Chairman
The Honorable Craig Wooten
The Honorable Jimmy Davis

Friday, October 23, 2020 at 8:30 a.m.

Historic Courthouse-2nd Floor
Conference Room

1. **Call to Order:** Honorable Ray Graham
2. **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance:** Honorable Craig Wooten
3. **Approval of Public Safety Minutes:** All Committee members
 - a. August 14, 2020
4. **Discussion on EMS Franchise Requests:** Mr. Steve Kelly
 - a. Carolina Ambulance
 - b. Thorne Ambulance
5. **Update on EMS System** Mr. Ray Graham
6. **Update on QRV:** Mr. Steve Kelly, Mr. Don McCown
7. **Citizen Comments:**
8. **Adjournment:**

Tommy Dunn
Chairman, District 5

Craig Wooten
Council District 1

Ray Graham
Council District 3

Cindy Wilson
Council District 7

Rusty Burns | County Administrator
rburns@andersoncountysc.org

Brett Sanders
V. Chairman, District 4

Gracie Floyd
Council District 2

Jimmy Davis
Council District 6

Lacey Croegaert
Clerk to Council

ANDERSON COUNTY
SOUTH CAROLINA

**Minutes
Public Safety Committee
Friday, August 14, 2020
Via WebEx**

The Public Safety Committee meeting of Friday, August 14, 2020 was called to order at 8:02am by Chairman Ray Graham via WebEx. Mr. Craig Wooten and Mr. Jimmy Davis were in attendance for the Public Safety Committee meeting via WebEx. The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was provided by Mr. Jimmy Davis.

The following items were discussed by the committee:

3. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Jimmy Davis made the motion to approve the Public Safety Committee minutes for July 2, 2020 as submitted with a second from Mr. Craig Wooten, the committee voted unanimously 3-0 to recommend to Full Council.

5. Discussion on EMS Billing Fees: Mr. Steve Kelly, Mr. Don McCown:

This proposal came to the Public Safety Committee for review as an option to increase funding a little bit. The County will not be increasing the subsidy and it is expected that the Covid-19 issues will flare up again during the flu season this fall. Increasing the fee schedule only increases the rates that will be charged to private insurance and self-pay and will not affect Medicare or Medicaid. These fees provide the ability to get more money from insurance companies. Currently, other regions are getting paid more than Anderson County. If these proposed EMS fees are increased the County would not need an increase for a long time. These fees will help provide assistance to make services sustainable and provide the resources needed to run the services in Anderson County.

Mr. Don McCown stated that this year 12% of Emergency Medical Services are folding across the United States. An estimated 19% may fold by the end of the year. There are personnel out with COVID and high call volumes. A lot of counties and governments are unable to raise subsidies with some at the maximum of what they can bill. A lot of these services will not be in business in 2021.

In the proposed Anderson County EMS Fee Schedule an ALS 1 is a paramedic response ambulance. The ALS 1 rate will increase from \$900 to \$1575 per transport. An ALS 2 is for critical patients, cardiac arrest, advanced airway, and administering of drugs. The ALS 2 rate will go from \$1212 to \$2212 with an increase of \$1000. An ALS non-emergency rate will raise from \$840 to \$1470 and a BLS non-emergency rate will increase from \$540 to \$945. The transport mileage is charged per mile and will include an ALS rate increase of \$22.20 to \$38.85 per mile and a BLS rate increase of \$22.20 to \$38.85 per mile. The County will not have to increase these fees for at least 5-6 years. These increases will affect private insurance and private pay. The insurance is currently paying these rates in other areas. When the insurance company receives a bill, they historically pay the allowable which is normally around 60%. Any negotiation of rates would occur between the provider and the insurance companies. The insurance companies are currently unable to fight anything for EMS or the hospital due to COVID-19 so, they have to pay the rates.

Mr. Craig Wooten made the motion to accept the proposed billing fees for EMS with a second from Mr. Jimmy Davis. The committee voted unanimously 3-0 to recommend to Full Council.

6. QRV's Outline Area: Mr. Steve Kelly, Mr. Don McCown:

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Medshore/Priority has requested to give the contracts of Ebenezer and Williford back to Anderson County. The County will need to determine if an ambulance should be placed at each station or if a QRV should be put in place to cover these areas. Honea Path has shown some interest in putting an ambulance there. Mr. Ray Graham recommended to the Public Safety Committee that the County staff these areas with two QRV's for six months to stabilize the EMS system. This will give the providers time to get past issues with COVID-19 and then the County can look into allowing a provider to take it over. A 12-hour ambulance will be replaced with a 12-hour QRV. The coverage and cost for the community will remain the same. The County does not have full staffing to do this yet. One QRV will work 12 hours a day and will be staffed with one full-time position and one part-time position during this period. One hold up will be the acquisition of vehicles. This process may take approximately 3-4 weeks to get everything up and running because this will require hiring employees, getting vehicles, and stocking them.

Implementing the QRV's will allow the County to oversee the current providers ensuring they are providing the highest quality of care to our citizens. The transport will be secondary. In these two areas whoever is available will respond to provide the transport. The most important aspect of the EMS system is to get personnel on the scene with the skills and knowledge to handle the medical issues until the transport unit can arrive. Medshore is still responsible for covering the services of these contracts until September 31, 2020.

There are ways to do this to make it work by using part-time personnel without benefits, full-time personnel with benefits, and the administration may cover some of the trucks. The main reason for using a QRV is to get a hold of patient care because it has gone downhill in Anderson County during the last six months. The startup cost will be for the vehicles. The benefits and insurance have already been calculated into what it would take to run a fully staffed QRV for a month. The stock is very expensive so it will be included in the contract with all of the providers. Currently in the QRV's the stock that's used is taken off of the ambulance during transport so that it doesn't cost anything. According to the numbers when staffing these two QRV's the cost will be at budget or \$300 over budget. The \$300 can be offset by Steve Kelly or Don McCown picking up one shift a week on a QRV.

The EMS system is failing and providers are struggling to make ends meet. These two areas with QRV's will be covered with part-time employees. This can be reevaluated after six months and then consider allowing providers to take these on. Medshore was failing these areas because the trucks were staying in the city and not staffing those areas. A QRV type model will provide a higher level of care. A County Paramedics' only goal is patient care. The paramedic will go out, assess the call and provide the care and then the transport will come transport and they will receive the payment.

Even though the County has been paying for the contracts of Ebenezer and Williford and not receiving the service they are unable to receive funding back. Medshore was fined \$9,000 for June and there will be a fine for July. South Carolina is hurting for paramedics. Currently, Priority has 15 employees out with Covid-19 and EMS is seeing about seventeen COVID-19 patients daily which is making an impact. Pelzer has seven employees out and Iva has four out so this is a major issue. If one employee shows up to work with COVID-19 symptoms it can spread quickly.

Mr. Jimmy Davis made the motion to implement the QRV system for Ebenezer and Williford until June 30, 2021 or as the Public Safety Committee sees fit to put it out to bid to another provider with a second from Mr. Craig Wooten, the committee voted unanimously 3-0 to recommend to Full Council.

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7. Executive Session: a. Discussion concerning Franchise Agreements and Contracts:

Mr. Craig Wooten made the motion to go into Executive Session for discuss concerning Franchise Agreements and Contracts with a second from Mr. Jimmy Davis. The committee voted unanimously 3-0 to go into Executive Session.

Mr. Craig Wooten made the motion to come out of Executive Session with a second from Mr. Jimmy Davis. The committee voted unanimously 3-0 to come out of Executive Session with no decisions made or votes taken.

Mr. Ray Graham made the motion the fine money that is assessed from any of the providers is earmarked to the EMS fund upon Ms. Rita Davis discretion and request it will be brought back to Public Safety Committee with a second from Mr. Jimmy Davis. The committee voted unanimously 3-0 to recommend to Full Council.

8. Citizens Comments:

The Committee heard comments from the following citizens:

Mr. Josh Taylor spoke about Anderson County moving in the right direction to fix EMS.

10. Adjourn:

There being no further business, the Public Safety Committee meeting adjourned at 8:58am.

Public Safety Committee

_____, Chairman

_____, Date