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NOTICE

Smithfield Township was invited to this meeting on August 22, 2023 but the Supervisors did not have a quorum. The notes from the meeting are stated below in the interest of transparency, but these are not official minutes of the township because no quorum was present.



Middle Smithfield Township

WORK SESSION NOTES

August 22, 2023

A joint work session with Middle Smithfield Township, Smithfield Township, Price Township Board of Supervisors and Bushkill Emergency Corps for Tuesday, August 22, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. with:

Middle Smithfield Township: Mike Dwyer, Annette Atkinson, Mark Oney, Michele Clewell, Bonnie Winters,

Smithfield Township: Lucas DeBartolo, Julia Heilakka, and Jacob Pride,

Price Township: Rick Mosher, Bob Wilson, Sandi Mosher, and Denise Mick,

Bushkill Emergency Corps: Debbie Kulick, Deb Boyle, Sonny Murphy, Ed Regina, Gail Cummings, Kevin Rivera, Zerla Bartolome,

On Zoom Holly Dennis, John Kloss EMS Council, ~~Brian Suburban, Pam Barrett~~, Becky O?

Public in person: Jerry Grafal, MCFC Chief, Nick Dennis, MCFC Assistant Chief, Pam Barrett, Vickey Ozgun, Bryan Dunlap, Suburban EMS

- **Discussion**

- Bushkill Emergency Corps Board of Directors
 - i. Debbie Kulick (DK), thank you for the support you have given us.
 - ii. Shortage, training, lack of funding, reimbursements are still hard to get.
 - iii. Dr. Favini, not here but provided a letter that was handed out and pointed out issues.
 - iv. Price township is also invited to attend the Bec meeting.
 - v. The MST newsletter was very helpful.
 - vi. Very involved in all your townships.
 - vii. In cooperation with LVHN, first on the scene at the MST CCC
 - viii. Sonny has been on the board 15 years and wants to continue and get support from our township.
 - ix. Debbie Boyle: It is about the service, and we are here when suburban gave you the information. What are the considerations of what the service the Supervisors want for their townships? Is it all about money, money and service level, money service level and who provides it? BEC is a community service organization, and runs on peanuts, because it runs with volunteers, EMTs, and medical professionals. BEC is not just there 24/7 in those townships, they are involved in the community, the fairs,



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- football games, because it is a community-based organization. Does it cost more for this service; this is something the boards must figure out.
- x. Gail, when the local newsletter comes out, and the BOS are supporting shop local and others trying to help others, and this is just another aspect. There is an ambulance service, serving 58 years. No surprise or shock, it is the crisis across the country for EMS services. She volunteers 12-48 hours a week in many different towns. Taking one ambulance company away will decrease ambulance services for everyone.
 - xi. Debbie Kulick said they do not have any additional financials not already shared to provide.
 - xii. Debbie Boyle, unlike what she heard in another proposal from Suburban, is a contract proposal, which is okay. However, it seems to her that BEC and the Supervisors have been involved every month and having input. Having a community ambulance service, you get direct involvement.
 - xiii. Jacob: Although he thinks Suburban has a board, its only community members and thinks Debbie Boyle has a good point.
 - xiv. Debbie K. said they can restructure their board and could have members of the townships on their board.
 - xv. Gail, when you look at paying someone additional for EMS services. Many community members are happy to see the aspect of community serving community, there are the ones that utilize the services.
 - xvi. Jacob, this is a multi-tier issue and has an option of Suburban, but MST does not have that option and they need to respect that they do not have that option. Price has different needs too. In Smithfield, Suburban's offer is not expanding their services, just accepting calls.
 - xvii. Gail, in this day in age, does not like seeing EMS pitting each other against one another. Decreasing any service puts others in a deficit.
 - xviii. Mike Dwyer, we have all sat through these meetings with you and other providers. We understand what the problem is. There are a few things, his opinion, we are not confident in the numbers you give us. I do not think we are actually receiving all the services that you are stating. We do not always have ALS and BLS may come from the west End. Until we produce a solution, we will continue this same old thing. This is just not working, and we must figure out how to fix it. It is not just \$\$\$\$. When we meet, we need to find a solution, it is a different model, a regionalization, he is not sure.
 - xix. Sonny: do you think BEC should connect with another entity like St. Luke's? Mike said yes. From 8k a year, 25k, 80k a year to \$350K a year. We cannot just keep going back to the well and asking for money. Justify. There is enough brain power to produce a solution.



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- xx. Debbie Kulick, once we have steady funding then we can get more grants, Hughes Foundation, etc., they are looking for a base for the funding. The taxes are where it starts.
- xxi. Mike agrees funding the fire and EMS is top, but how do we get this to work?
- xxii. DK; we are increasing the training. Prior to pandemic we were ALS all the time
- xxiii. Mike what is needed is to regionalize
- xxiv. DK: once we get everyone here support, then we can go after the county for their support.
- xxv. Sonny had to leave for another meeting.
- xxvi. Ed, the numbers do bounce around month to month. Getting a steady stream of money will help with this, because of the given chances.
- xxvii. Jacob, model shifting, Suburban EMS does break even somewhat because of the transport revenue they receive, can Bushkill EMS not offer transports as well?
- xxviii. Debbie Boyle said they ran a deficit and ran on reserves. BEC does not have a reserve and does not have the capacity to operate a model that includes transport currently.
- xxix. Debbie knows that a fire and EMS tax will go hand in hand, everyone will benefit. Unless you have the pool of money, reimbursement from insurance can take months to years and decreases as well.
- xxx. Gail stated BEC less than 30% return on reimbursables. It has decreased.
- xxxi. Lucas, BEC provided everything that he specifically asked for, and no further financial information is outstanding/requested. The numbers fluctuate but are the best we can get for volunteer financial team members. We need real financial audits, not just financial reviews longer term – which of course requires funding. Debbie Boyle said they are financial statements that are reviewed, and on a cash basis, not following GAAP (as would be helpful). Debbie Boyle stated all townships are in possession of the yearly reviews.
- xxxii. Lucas, looking at what you really need, capital improvements are not included in the current budget. The budget does have a paid staff admin person, which is needed. Regarding regionalization, I spoke to all local EMS providers including St. Luke's, LVHN, Lehman, Suburban, and PMREMS, and no one stated they were interested in purchasing BEC.
- xxxiii. Debbie Kulick, she thinks she heard that Suburban would write off any loss for next year but come back and ask for more in following years, and still have a shortfall; \$300k.
- xxxiv. Debbie Boyle their financials are reviewed on a cash basis. Audited financial statements are on an accrual basis. They use cash basis because



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it does not cost 10k for audits, and it would cost a chunk of change to change from cash to accrual basis.

- xxxv. Mike asked what the number is today; \$36k a month, 432k a year.
- xxxvi. Lucas said their new budget has a lower amount, but with capital improvements included, this seems closer to accurate.
- xxxvii. Debbie B said the numbers they provided includes an administrator to get grants, etc. now you have volunteers.
- xxxviii. Bonnie in your P&L, \$600k, what is that? Debbie K said that is all EMT's BLS and ALS and a mix of volunteer. That is the paid staffing portion.
- xxxix. Mark that's 432k alone or with MST, ST, and Price. Yes. Technically it could just be MST if others go in a different direction.
 - xl. Mike believes having a regional coverage area, this way townships are not all separated.
 - xli. Mark even if MST is the only one who supports BEC, BEC would still manage calls in ST, Price, Lehman
 - xlii. Mike is concerned with service, not so much money. He does not think the residents are getting all the services all the time; ALS and BLS.
 - xliii. Mike the takeaway gets someone to put together a business plan for emergency services.
 - xliv. Mike, include JLN.
 - xlv. Jacob, the JIN study is to tell us what everyone has.
 - xlvi. Jacob, he thinks there are two business models, Eastern Monroe Regional EMS, and level a tax and have a board like Oak Grove.
 - xlvii. Mike, we could meet every month and get aggressive.
 - xlviii. Debbie Kulick, MST 96%, ST 85%, Price 40%
 - xlix. Mike would like to ask John Kloss on zoom, there are other models out there, correct.
 - I. John Kloss joined to listen but not make a recommendation, but to compile information to help the Supervisors make an informed decision. Yes, there are other models out there. County, authority, tax based multiple,
 - li. Debbie Kulick said the commissioners did talk about a county authority, but the county cannot create one, the townships have too but they would support it.
 - lii. Gail: what would the thoughts be for a rep from townships and all the EMS to form a small committee and work through some solutions. Mike is for it.
 - liii. Jacob, we need to budget for something next year and this will not be done in time.
 - liv. Lucas official budget -\$363K, but we should use the 432K per year is the accurate number to work off.



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- lv. Mike Smithfield also must consider the additional cost for ALS for Suburban. He does not see where we will not have two providers.
- lvi. Lucas has the split of funds needed between each municipality.
- lvii. Mike said we still have 3 months to see what the target is. And work towards that for budget season.
- lviii. Mark, please look at Lehman, what they are getting for their tax money, and similar municipalities in PA.
- lix. Nick Dennis: the 400k, what does that cover for BEC?
- lx. Brian: suburban said they want to build up their staffing and is further from the Stroudsburg station. Want to wait until early 2024.
- lxi. Jacob: \$432k is BEC and unfortunately, the fire companies must figure out that tax too.
- lxii. Lucas the splits...ST 50,920.00 to BEC this fiscal year to date and will continue to request ST to contribute \$11,160 per month (ST share of split) until tax money arrives. He wants to nudge the townships if they do not make their payments then BEC is gone. MST gave an extra 25k, but nothing else since. Bonnie said fuel, Lucas asked if MST is discussing the money. Split calculated is 10% Price, 31% ST, and 51% MST, of the total request of \$36,000 per month. With this, ST pays \$11,160/month, their 31% share. This must be given to BEC until the tax money comes in.
- lxiii. Lucas if not all in agreement with the figures, splits, etc., we need to solidify this.
- lxiv. Julia, what is Price doing? Bob said they are still in discussion. BEC covers 40% of the Price. And PMREMS covers 60% now.
- lxv. Julia asked Suburban EMS, if 100% primary coverage for ST, would cost roughly \$6,800/month. If continue to do the 15% coverage for ST, could they take this amount and multiply it by .15? Brian said it is based on call volume. They do a one-third of all the call volume in ST, the request would go up, because their revenue received goes down instead of going up. They would have to ask for more funds if not covering the entire township because their costs would remain the same, but their revenues would decrease.
- lxvi. Bryan Dunlap, Suburban EMS, discusses all calls in BEC region per year for each township.
- lxvii. Mike, we all agree. He would be happy to join the ad hoc committee, try to put something together and we all will try to coordinate something, along with MCFC and others could attend. Let us do it soon.

- **Public Comment – None**
- Adjourn at 6:27pm.