

MINUTES
PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
300 NORTH HIGH STREET
MUNCIE, INDIANA 47305

JANUARY 4, 2018

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING: 6:00 P.M., 1ST FLOOR CITY HALL AUDITORIUM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Councilperson Polk.

ROLL CALL:	PRESENT	ABSENT
Jerry Dishman	X	
Brad Polk	X	
Julius Anderson	X	

ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY INTRODUCED:

ORD. 68-17 AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING FIRE BASED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF MUNCIE AND RESCINDING RES. 131-77.

Chairman of the Public Services Committee, Councilperson Dishman, starts the meeting by thanking everyone for coming out tonight. If anyone that wishes to speak publicly has not already signed their name on the sign-up sheet, he asks that they please do so now because after the meeting is started, there will be no more additional sign-ups, unless someone comes in late. Dishman informs that he is going to give everyone 5-10 minutes to speak and to please not repeat any comments or information that has already been addressed. The Committee members are here to just take input and will not make any comments. With that being said, they move on to the sign-up sheet to start hearing comments.

Jason Rogers, Director of Delaware County Emergency Medical Service, has had forty years' experience and EMS is ever evolving. They have what is considered to be premiere providers here in Muncie and Delaware County. Over the years, EMS as a whole has changed and it has gone from a first aid squad to essentially a business. There are things associated with building a business that does not happen overnight and there are certainly things that go along with healthcare that take an even longer progression. He can inform how much money was spent in 2016 and what their net revenue was in 2016 as well. The majority of EMS services in Indiana alone, are not profitable in the 911 market. DCEMS looked at some of the things that has been said about second class cities and twelve of twenty-five do not have fire-based EMS, thirteen of them do. This is according to the Indiana state statute because they called every single one of them. Fire based EMS is many things, it could be a first-responder or paramedic on a fire engine, it could be two paramedics transporting in an ambulance that has been housed at a fire station, it could also be a fire service that is hired by a fire department. There are models all

over the place, all over the country, all over the map and all over the expense rate. So, if the discussion is about money, he can inform that in 2016 the net revenue for Delaware County was \$61,636.26. Rogers has also been informed that the city had asked for, in the past, \$100 per call for providing the fire service. What he thought was the 5,000 runs that they wanted \$500,000 for was incorrect. He was told that the city had asked for \$100 for 12,000 calls that were taken in the city, totaling \$1.2 million. He feels like that is an unrealistic request when the first year Delaware County actually made under \$100,000. The balance is if this is about money or better care. According to the NFPA EMS Standard 1710, require a four minute or less first responder, or an eight minute or less ALS ambulance. The average response time for Delaware County and Muncie for 2016 was six minutes and forty-two seconds. He questions whether or not this is about doing something better, other than billing, which he finds hard to believe that that could be done. DCEMS currently does it for less than 4% cost to the biller along with a professional billing company to do it that also holds the largest market in Indiana (they bill for the EMS in Indianapolis). There are deductibles and write-offs for Medicaid and Medicare, in which over \$500 million was wrote off in 2016. This is not about profit and it is not about being held hostage for these runs, this is about public safety and providing a better service that can be done by the men and women that are in this very room and do it every single day. It can't get any better than them. Rogers wants to make clear for the record, that he has never been approached or asked to sit down and go over these numbers other than them being requested and e-mailed. DCEMS can speak from forty years of history and forty years of fact, which is all public record. He thinks that should be taken into consideration before a change is made in what they are already doing. He is not saying they could not use more ambulances because they absolutely could. They took over 17,000 responses in Delaware County. If the numbers hold true then 12,000 of those will be within the city of Muncie. There is a need, absolutely. He thinks they could do this better in working together to provide a better service. Maybe that means combining services with a firefighter driving and a paramedic from Delaware County in the ambulance. He doesn't know if that would even be considered but it needs to be. He closes by thanking the Committee for listening. The rest of the Committee thanks Rogers for his input.

Eddie Bell, Muncie Fire Chief, has a PowerPoint presentation and tells the Committee to feel free to cut him off if he runs over on his ten minutes. Hopefully by the time he is done presenting this, the Committee will be able to say the MFP has answered most of their previous questions. If this city does a fire-based EMS, this city will make money. This is dual purpose. MFD can provide a service that is much better than what is currently in place. What they are asking to do is put six ambulances with six paramedics inside the city limits, not running in the county or anywhere else. This provides a better service for the citizens of Muncie, and the fact that those six ambulances will stay here and will work within the city. Delaware County has approximately six ambulances that work in Muncie and in the county. Many times, they have two or three calls in the county and maybe one or two in the city and there is huge void. They end up calling other companies in like Eaton EMT's and some of the other volunteer ambulances. The citizens of Muncie, he believes, deserve better. A fire based EMS does guarantee a revenue stream. Bell totally agrees with Rogers, with 1,000 runs plus transports per month. There will be a minimum 56% collection rate, with writing off the 44%, which is where

they came up with the 56% collection rate along with the Medicare rate that is \$536.04. by doing just that, the approximate income would be \$3 million totally collected revenue for the year. Let it be reminded that the bills have not been paid yet. The next thing is if they do a blended rate, that would be a rate that would include commercial insurance, private insurance, Medicare and Medicaid. For a city the size of Muncie, the blended rate would be a total of \$700.10 taking that at a 56% collection rate, would bring in \$4.7 million before the bills are paid. Bells states that yes, they will have better response times by having seven fire stations strategically placed throughout the city which will allows that. DCEMS has three stations inside the city along with stations outside the city in Yorktown and Hamilton. MFD can be anywhere in the city in two to four minutes from their fire stations. There are two really critical stations that would be the #3 station and the #6 station. Basically, what happens is railroad tracks block off both of those parts of town. What happens if there is a train running all the way across the northside just from Jackson St. to (for instance) Princeton Ave. and there is nobody that can get to the other side. As a fireman, Bell has been on the back of a firetruck when they didn't have a station that was operable and physically watched flames due to being unable to get to them. This way, they can have an ambulance at six of their seven fire stations. The PowerPoint presentation then shows a bill from an individual that experienced an accident to her hand, here at City Hall. She was picked here and driven to IU Ball Memorial Hospital. The bill was \$950 plus \$30 which was \$15 per mile. For anybody to say that they are not going to collect anything over and above the Medicare rate of \$536.04, this is part of the blended mix. This is where the \$700.10 average of the actual bills that come in. Again, he is saying it is unrealistic to think that Medicare is the only thing that will be collected. Anderson collects at a 78% rate as we here apparently collect at a 56% rate. Again, cash flow into the city at the lowest rate, \$536.04 at 56% will bring in \$190,000 per year. In the PowerPoint there is a copy out of the budget but Bell does not go into that since he is short on time. The next slide shows the conservative forecast regarding the blended rate. It states that 45% of the collection will be Medicare, 15% will be Medicaid, 30% will be Commercial and %10 will be Private. Bell would be considered a commercial rate since he works for the city of Muncie and much the same with every one on the council most likely having commercial insurance as well. At the last meeting, there was a lot of talk about not being able to collect anything other than Medicare rates which is not the case. Bell got on the Internet and looked at the November 28th meeting for the County Council and saw Mr. Rogers stand at the podium and state that yes, they do make money and yes, they do have opportunities to use their money for other things such as the roof of the County Building, the roof of the Delaware County Jail, and he believed he said other things along with that. There is no reason for us as a city not to provide this service and for the monies that come in, even if it is \$32,000 or \$61,000, there is no reason for us not to have that money go in to the general fund. If more police officers need to be put on the street, do something in the parks, programs for youth and seniors, then that opportunity needs to be there and that money needs to stay here with Muncie. The thing he would say to the Committee Members as Councilmen, is if he were in his district and he can see the opportunities that the city could possibly have over the next year by putting money in the general fund like this along with providing a better service for the city of Muncie. That includes response times, being there to make sure that everything goes as quickly as possible, providing the best service for the citizens and putting money in the general fund. Bell would be thinking that his citizens would want to make sure the

right decision is made. He recalls sitting at a Council meeting about three months ago and watching the budget hearings where cuts of \$1.00, \$4.00, \$7.00, \$10.00, \$20.00, were made from different budgets being fiscally responsible. This would not be fiscally responsible if this opportunity was not taken to bring money in to the city and for citizens to be able to use it along with getting a better service. He closes by thanking the Committee.

John S. Bailey Jr. has a MBA which means he understands numbers and is a very community orientated person that works in the community a lot. He is here because he had to use these services exactly one year ago today. January 4, 2017, Bailey fell and laid there until someone came home and found him. He then shows the members of the Committee a picture of the blood stain from the incident. When someone finally got home to him and called 911, the response times from MFD was about four minutes so someone there very quickly. They had him ready to transport within about ten minutes of being there, but, there was not an ambulance there yet to transport him. He sat in his home bleeding until they got there to take him. Bailey states he is located near fire station #5 with Polk as his District Councilperson. Moving on to another example, he informs that Rick Dishman, whom is the brother of Committee Chairman Jerry Dishman, also had a falling incident at their next-door neighbor's house. Bailey and his family were woken up by MFD firetrucks because they were in the street but the ambulance was the last to show up. He and his family were looking out their windows watching and wondering when Rick would be transported. He wants it to be understood that having ambulances at every fire station saves lives. He is not trying to do away with anyone's job with DCEMS now because they could be moved over to the city for being the qualified paramedics they are. With the same entity doing it and the city getting the money for it, it just makes common sense to him. There is always talk about what can not be done because the funding isn't available to do it. If money can be made off of something that makes the city greater, advantage should be taken of that. That to him is common sense and he is trained to look at numbers because he has a Master's in Business, and this just makes sense. Bailey is in a wheelchair and may need help from time to time and fire station #5 has come through for him. Imagine how much better he would have been if an ambulance would have come from fire station #5, picked him up and took him straight to the hospital. He lost a lot of blood and has the pictures to show it. The job of the City Council is to take care of the citizens but also be good stewards of city money. This is a good steward of the money issue. Bailey thanks the members of the Committee for their time.

Jason Chafin, President of IAFF Local 1348 in Muncie, which represents both the Muncie Fire Department and the Delaware County EMS employees. His body is made up of both entities that are being discussed and impacted by this decision. They voted on their December Committee Meeting to oppose this. There are several issues that made their membership worrisome. He refers to Section 1. (a) 1. Non-emergency basic life support services and Section 3. Non-emergency Advanced life support services." Chafin questions that if there is going to be six ambulances put into city limits then are they going to be doing non-emergency work. He refers to Section 3. and states that when the amendment was made to put "all fees collected by the City assessed for Emergency Ambulance services within such fund to be used, on proper appropriation, for any lawful purpose." There is a lot of fire departments out there that do this

fire based EMS and both Mr. Rogers and Chief Bell gave numbers, but in the end, the expenses add up a big chunk of whatever is decided that will be done. The DCEMS Budget is over \$2.6 million which funds many different accounts. There is not going to be a \$3 or \$4 million windfall into the general fund to hire cops and if this is done the way every department does it in a way which to him, is a misconception that some people might have had. In Section 4. The city of Muncie may contract for the provision of EMS. As Mr. Bailey mentioned earlier, they have some of the most experienced men and women in the state of Indiana when it comes to EMS in this county and working here. Any plan that does not involve them, obviously as union members, wouldn't be a plan that they could support. That experience and those people are what would be needed for this to go forward. In closing, he thanks the members of the Committee for their time.

Jim McDonald is a thirty-year resident of Muncie but before that, worked EMS in West Virginia. He is unique as he can see this from both sides. He has been a professional firefighter, ran ambulance companies and tried to make budgets work for both of them. If response is the question, a fully equipped paramedic in each station makes sense, with transport to follow later. If profit is the issue, then we have to start looking at the numbers on buying six units, equipping them and maintaining all that rolling stock. That gets to be very expensive very quickly. He states it is known what it takes to keep vehicles running and to keep them equipped, necessary training of paramedics and EMT's will be needed. Or they could hire them away from the county. Those are options. It seems like there is a division and there needs to be some kind of sit down, locked in a room together negotiation, between the county and the city to get an equitable situation worked out. This division between city and county is only going to grow. This is going to be step one with other things later and he can guarantee that. This will be the wedge that starts separating everything again. That is all he has to say.

Committee Chairman Dishman informs the audience that McDonald was the last on the list and asks if there is anyone else that would like to state anything that hasn't already been addressed (no one comes forth). Dishman then thanks everyone for coming out and asks that they please come to the Monday, January 8, 2018 Regular City Council Meeting.

Councilperson Polk states they just got the financial information tonight. There is four days before the January meeting which they would then vote on this. He would like to make a recommendation from the Committee that they take an extra month to study this and then if it is something that they can get back together as a committee to discuss some things. For one instance, the amount of money that is going to be put into gasoline for six ambulances per month is around \$700 which is around 100 or so gallons for six ambulances. Looking at the number of runs per month, he would assume they would be hybrid ambulances. Those are some questions that the Committee needs to address before taking it to the entire Council. At this time, he makes that recommendation that they do not proceed from the Committee until maybe February.

Councilperson Anderson states that is a good recommendation but they still have to hold their January meeting this upcoming Monday and discuss it then with the entire Council. In terms of

giving a favor of recommendation from the Committee, he prefers to wait until the Regular Meeting on Monday and see what happens from that point.

Councilperson Polk states he does not know if any of the other Council members that are not on this Committee received this information. It was requested twice in December but just received today. If they are not here tonight, they are not going to get their financial information until tomorrow at the earliest which gives three days to study and come up with a decision that is going to impact the city of Muncie and also the employees of both departments.

Councilperson Anderson sees some of the other Council members in the audience so maybe they could physically get this information tonight or the Clerk could forward that information on as soon as possible prior to the Monday meeting.

Committee Chairman Dishman states he would personally like to have a little more information on the financials part of it. He does not like the city and the county fighting the way they are. He agrees with Mr. McDonald, to put them in a room together, lock it down and make them lash it out because the only ones that will suffer is the citizens of this community. In closing, he thanks everyone for attending tonight and hops to see everyone on Monday.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Dishman and seconded by Polk to Adjourn. ADJOURNED



President of The Muncie Common Council



Melissa Peckinpaugh, Muncie City Clerk
of the Muncie Common Council