

**OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF BLAINE COUNTY
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MAY 2022 SESSION**

BLAINE COUNTY AMBULANCE DISTRICT

First Day

Monday, May 2, 2022

Pursuant to Statutory Provisions, the Board of Blaine County Commissioners (BCC) met this day at 9:00 a.m. Present were Chairman Dick Fosbury; Vice-Chair Angenie McCleary; Administrative Services Specialist / Commissioners Assistant Jenny Lovell; Deputy Clerk-Auditor-Recorder Joana Guerrero. Blaine County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy and County Clerk Stephen McDougall Graham; Ketchum Fire Chief Bill McLaughlin; Ketchum Fire Chief Assistant Seth Martin; Ketchum Fire Department Lieutenant/Medic Lara McLean; Wood River Fire and Rescue Chief Ron Bateman; WRFr Operations Chief Bass Sears; Sun Valley Fire Chief Taan Robrahn; North Blaine County Fire District Chief and Sun Valley Fire Department Assistant Chief Rich Bauer; Carey Rural Fire Chief Richard Kimball; Central District Fire Chief Carl Anderson; Ambulance District Medical Director & Doctor Terrance O'Connor; Air St. Luke's Director of EMS Blaine Patterson; *Idaho Mountain Express* staff writer Mike Shultz was present.

Some participants in this meeting were by web conference or teleconference.

Chairman Fosbury called the Blaine County Ambulance District (BCAD) meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioner Davis was not present for this meeting.

McCleary moved, seconded by Fosbury, to convene as the Blaine County Ambulance District Board. Motion passed 2/0.

Ambulance Transfer to Jefferson County

- Rural Carey Fire Department Inventory

Fosbury received a call from Jefferson County asking if Blaine County would transfer the 2003 Ambulance that Rural Carey Fire Department (RCFD) has as surplus property. Blaine County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy updated the Blaine County Ambulance District that Wood River Fire Department (WRFr) transferred ambulance unit Charlie 691 to the RCFD. Carey Rural Fire Chief Richard Kimball alerted Blaine County Ambulance District (BCAD) that they are in the process of transferring 2003 Ambulance Charlie 691, and should be finalized by the end of May. County Clerk Stephen McDougall Graham advised the commissioners that they do not need to have a public auction on the 2003 Ambulance. The commissioners can transfer surplus equipment to another public entity by passing a resolution. McDougall Graham, Pomeroy and Chief Kimball will prepare a resolution to transfer surplus property to Jefferson County.

City of Ketchum Fire Department

- Upgrade & Outfit 2008 Ambulance

Ketchum Fire Chief Bill McLaughlin prepared an estimated cost to upgrade and outfit the 2008 Ambulance to be consistent with the other county ambulances. The total cost would be \$101,000 due to the price of the Stryker Cot and ambulance monitor. Ketchum Fire Department (KFD) would pay \$35,000, and request BCAD to cover the remaining balance. However, Chief McLaughlin would like to hold off on requesting the upgrade until a decision is made on the Air St. Luke's proposal for inner facility transfers.

Air St. Luke's

Air St. Luke's approached KFD asking if they had any interest in providing ground transportation for Air St. Luke's. Chief McLaughlin, Pomeroy, McCleary and Air St. Luke's Director Blaine Patterson had an initial discussion regarding different options of ground transportation. Pomeroy explained that if Air St. Luke's were to have KFD or any fire district provide ground transportation they would have to have a contract with the ambulance district. Pomeroy stated that they need to process and examine budgets, billing, payer mix for ground service, payer mix for ambulance billing, and an asset utilization analysis before any fire district can agree to provide these services. She also mentioned that Air St. Luke's investors need to be notified and have a discussion regarding the proposal.

- Air St. Luke's Director Blaine Patterson explained that in the past years Air St. Luke's had on-call EMS and Paramedics performing the ground transfers. When COVID-19 hit and emergency calls doubled it put a strain on the employees. The employees were fatigued and overwhelmed due to the increase in ground transfers. Air St. Luke's is also having a difficult time retraining and hiring EMS employees. Patterson is proposing a new model where they would have a KFD ambulance unit stationed at the hospital from 11:00 am – 11:00 pm.
- Ambulance District Medical Director and Emergency Doctor Terrance O'Connor stated that the hospital is short staffed and is in need of assistance to perform these transfers. He understands that the BCAD may not want to be the primary servicer for ground transfer, but would appreciate if BCAD would consider being a backup for Air St. Luke's. Dr. O'Connor suggested that all

ambulance agencies should be involved in the transfers. He suggested that Pomeroy contact Wood River St. Luke's Foundation for possible funding.

- McCleary asked for a report with the total revenue, insurance payer mix, Medicaid payer mix for Blaine County and the BCAD. She asked Chief McLaughlin to prepare a report of the total cost to perform these services and if he would need to hire additional employees, and any potential offsets.
- Wood River Fire and Rescue Chief Ron Bateman stated that WRFD is not necessarily interested nor do they have the bandwidth to perform these services. Bateman would prefer if all conversation regarding Air St. Luke's be done during the Ambulance District meetings.
- Fosbury supports the idea of working with Air St. Luke's and building a strong partnership. McCleary is going to set up a meeting with Pomeroy, Chief McLaughlin, Ketchum City Administrator Jade Riley and Patterson for additional information.

Greenhorn Station

- McCleary favors having a KFD ambulance at the Greenhorn Station so that it could respond North and South valley calls. Currently the KFD ambulance is not staffed to be able to answer Sun Valley and South Valley calls efficiently. KFD has to travel south to the Greenhorn Station to retrieve the unit. Commissioners asked what needs to change for the unit to be used proactively.
- Chief McLaughlin explained KFD gets paid to run the ambulance; if another district were to run it, it would disrupt the current model. He suggested that it would be convenient to have the unit stored in Ketchum.
- Sun Valley City Administrator Walt Femling suggested BCAD doing something similar to what he did in the past as Blaine County Sheriff. Femling deputized every officer in Blaine County so they may respond to calls in different jurisdiction.
- The commissioners would prefer for all first responders living at the Greenhorn Station to be able to respond to calls and use the KFD unit. Chief McLaughlin explained that the legal documents state that only the contract holder's employees may operate the unit.
- McCleary suggested the unit be moved to KFD if neither Sun Valley Fire Department (SVF) nor North Blaine County Fire Department (NBCF) personnel can operate the unit.
- North Blaine County Fire District Chief and Sun Valley Fire Department Assistant Chief Rich Bauer informed the Commissioners that the volunteers who are currently living at the Greenhorn Station would need to meet both KFD and SVFD minimum training standards. The tenants who are living there are already expected to train longer, maintaining the station. Chief Bauer named all the tenants that are currently living in Greenhorn Station, three out of five tenants are dual volunteers, one is an officer and the other is not a dual member.
- Chief Kimball explained the 50% rule that he goes by. Meaning that he cannot expect for every one of his EMTs to be available 24/7. That if a district has ten volunteers it doesn't necessarily mean those ten volunteers will be available for every call. There will be times when a volunteer is unavailable and unable to respond to a call.

FY2023 Budget

- Carey Fire Department

Chief Kimball asked Pomeroy what she suggests they do with inactive unit 74. It is a 1995 Chevrolet 4x4 dually pickup with a utility bed and has 161,000 miles. The pickup was purchased by the Blaine County Ambulance District and Chief Kimball priced it at \$9,000. Chief Kimball received numerous calls from local farmers and from the City of Carey Public Works Department expressing interest in the pickup. Chief Kimball, McCleary and Fosbury would like to transfer it to the City of Carey. Pomeroy will prepare transfer documents.

Preparation discussion for FY23 Budget Requests

- Rural Carey Fire Protection District (RCFD)

Chief Kimball stated that RCFD is now fully equipped and will not be submitting any requests for FY2023. They received an ambulance from WRFR that had a Stryker cot and received a new heart monitor. Fosbury stated there is an ARPA request to install a communications repeater by the Little Wood River to provide better communication coverage in the Carey Area.

- Wood River Fire and Rescue Department (WRFR)

Wood River Fire and Rescue Chief Wood River Fire and Rescue Chief Ron Bateman reported that they are currently well equipped; they received an ambulance last month that has around 5,000 miles. Chief Bateman submitted the FY2023 budget estimate to the Wood River Fire Association to revise and approve. Once the budget is approved Chief Bateman will turn in the final FY2023 budget request to the Blaine County Clerk. They are anticipating needing to upgrade monitors in FY2024; it would be a total of eight monitors. WRFR withdrew the ARPA request for a new repeater at the Lock Out Tower on Baldy

and Timmerman Hill. They were not aware of the impact an ARPA request would have on the other agencies. WRFR included the ARPA fund request in their FY2023 capital budget.

WRFR Operations Chief Bass Sears has been able to keep the district staffed at 95% even with the loss of four employees. Bateman has been advertising open positions in his department outside of Blaine County. Chief Sears and Chief Bateman created a matrix that has different percentage rewards for WRFR employees. Employees on the lower end of the pay scale will receive a 13-19% wage increase and the higher pay scale employees will receive a 4.35% wage increase. Chief Bateman did this because employees work forty-eight-hour weeks and management works fifty-eight-hour work weeks. He hopes this will offset the cost-of-living increase in Blaine County. McCleary asked Chief Bateman to send Pomeroy and McCleary a copy of his pay scale to compare compensation and incentives with the other districts.

- Ketchum Fire Department (KFD)

Chief McLaughlin created a new hire process for KFD. They now offer longevity pay for employees; he did not anticipate a 9% CPI increase. KFD is currently maintaining minimum staff while they are in slack. He will need to hire another employee to provide timely service with the increased call volume.

Chief McLaughlin presented an estimate on the Record Management System (RMS) with different options. Chief McLaughlin suggested a Mobile Data Computer (MDC) for the front dash of the ambulance. It would be beneficial and efficient in data entry and timestamping. Chief Kimball did not think CRFD units need the MDC, but Chief McLaughlin noted it may cause a discrepancy if CRFD documents data differently. Chief McLaughlin does want to renew the Consolidated Asset Tracking System (CAT interface). He included the renewal fee in the KFD FY2023 budget request. Dr. O'Connor is supportive of timestamping, and data processing.

Pomeroy would like for all districts to prepare their budgets and make a decision on what interface and systems they want to subscribe to or renew. Pomeroy reminded all the chiefs to stay in contact with Blaine County IT Department.

Chief McLaughlin, Pomeroy, and Blaine County Disaster Services Coordinator Chris Corwin agreed there needs to be a study to assess communication weaknesses, which would better explain the dead areas and what could or should be done to improve communications within Blaine County. Law Enforcement is currently on 700MHz while most BLM and Forest Service are on portable very high frequency (VHF) repeaters. If the consultant suggests that all Blaine County entities use 700MHz, it would require purchasing and installing more repeaters, and purchasing 700MHz equipment for the entities that are not currently using it. Corwin had a rough estimate of \$100,000 to perform the study.

Review and update on Strategic Planning initiatives

1. Ensure Technical Competence of EMS Providers

1A. Develop and Coordinate Regional EMS Training Program

Dr. O'Connor and St. Luke's Medical Director Katie Schneider are working on developing a web-based universal training platform that will hold individuals accountable on taking the training. Chief Ron Bateman currently has this web-based training available for WRFR employees and volunteers. Dr. O'Connor believes online training should be included in the budget for all Blaine County EMS/Paramedic volunteers and employees. Dr. O'Connor asked the county to contribute funds to purchase the online training platform of \$10,000.

1B. Develop Affiliation with Other Training Programs

If the BCAD is going to perform transfers for Air St. Luke's Dr. O'Connor would like everyone who participates in the transfers to train with Air St. Luke's.

1C. Develop Regional and Field Training Programs

This will provide online web training-for employees and volunteers who are unable to attend in-person training.

1D. Regional Paramedic/EMT Recruitment and Training Program – Ketchum Fire Department Lieutenant/Medic Lara McLean (not present)

Will be discussed in the future.

1E. Improve EMS Data Collection

Chief Sears would like to upgrade to a time-stamped charting system. If all districts used the same charting system all the data would combine. Once the BCAD decided what charting software they will be utilizing Dr. O'Connor will train personnel how to chart efficiently and accurately.

2. Financial Accountability

2A. Evaluate EMS Revenue & Expenses

Will be discussed in the future.

2B. Evaluate Contractual Model for BCAD

Pomeroy will sit with all the fire districts and to review FY2023 contracts.

2C. Evaluate BCAD Funds for Sustainability

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

3. Improve EMS Level Staffing

3A. Determine Staff Needs

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

3B. Support First Responder Health

Chief Robrahn and Blaine County Sherriff's are researching different mental health programs available for first responders.

3C. Staffing for Community Health and Education

Will be discussed in the future.

3D. Special Events and Major Incident Staffing

All local fire districts are working together on how to respond to these calls and how to handle them.

4. Improve Interagency Cooperation

4A. Improve Interagency Communications

Will discussed in June.

5. Improve/Maintain EMS Response Performance

5A. Develop Response Goals and Performance Benchmarks

Will be addressed in the future after communication system study.

6. Capital Facilities/Equipment to Support EMS

6A. Improve Communications for EMS Response

Will be addressed in the future after communication systems study.

6B. Capital Allocation Analysis

Will be addressed after data management system finalized.

ADJOURN

At the hour of 12:00 p.m., with no more business before them, the County Commissioners adjourned.

Attest: _____ Approved _____
Stephen McDougall Graham Dick Fosbury
County Clerk Chairman