

## Meeting Minutes

### **Board of County Commissioners Hyde County**

#### **Special Meeting – EMS Review Committee September 22, 2010**

Vice-Chairwoman Sharon Spencer called the Special Meeting of the Hyde County Board of Commissioners to order at 3:40 PM on Wednesday, September 22, 2010 in the Hyde County Government Center, Multi-Use Room, and the Ocracoke School Commons area using electronic conferencing equipment. The following members were present on the mainland: Commissioners Sharon Spencer, Anson Byrd, and Ken Collier; Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board David Smitherman; Deputy Clerk to the Board Justin Gibbs; and members of the public. The following members were present on Ocracoke: Commissioner Darlene Styron; Deputy Clerk to the Board Paula Privett; and members of the public.

Jeff Hibbard, Mainland Lead Paramedic, informed the Commissioners that they had prepared a demonstration that would illustrate a cardiac emergency and the skills practiced by the different emergency medical technician levels. First Responders entered the room and began an initial assessment of the patient. Mr. Hibbard stated the first responders would initiate cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the patient and connect the automated external defibrillator. Mr. Hibbard further stated the first responders could shock the patient if prompted by the device.

After the first responders initiated CPR the EMT-Basic and EMT-Intermediate entered the room. The EMT-Basic began to assist the first responders with CPR. The Mainland Lead Paramedic said the EMT-Intermediate has the ability to administer epinephrine, start an I.V., and intubate.

Lastly, the EMT-Paramedic entered the room. Mr. Hibbard stated the paramedic had the ability to perform any procedure that could be carried out in a hospital including but not limited to cardiac pacing, capnography, and administering a wide range of medications. The Mainland Lead Paramedic said the skills of the paramedic were extremely beneficial with an average transport time of approximately 35 minutes.

Jeff Hibbard thanked the first responders from Swan Quarter Volunteer Fire Department for participating in the demonstration and thanked Beaufort County Community College for providing the resuscitation dummy for the demonstration.

#### **Call Breakdown for Hyde EMS 2009-2010**

Jeff Hibbard reported during 2009-2010 Hyde EMS received 667 billable calls and 428 non-billable calls; non-billable calls consist of calls cancelled en route, fire standby,

fatalities, and patient refusals. Mr. Hibbard stated of the 667 billable calls 47% required paramedic level service to be provided, which would equate to 313 total calls.

**NC EMS Standards for Medications and Skills**

The Mainland Lead Paramedic presented the Commissioners with a breakdown of the number of medications and skills that could be administered at each emergency medical technician level and they are as follows:

	Medications	Skills
EMT	7	29
EMT-I	16	36
EMT-P	51	59

**2009-2010 Reportable Calls by Hour of Day**

Jeff Hibbard presented the Board with a graph depicting the number of calls received during 2009-2010 broken down by the hour of day. Mr. Hibbard reported the peak day for received calls was Tuesday.

Commissioner Collier stated that based on the graph the number of calls drastically reduced between the hours of 1:00 AM and 7:00 AM. Commissioner Collier asked if the number of staff could be scaled back during these hours. Mr. Hibbard replied that even though the number of calls reduced, the most severe calls were reported between these hours.

**Cost per Call for Hyde EMS 2009-2010**

Brian Carter, Ocracoke Lead Paramedic, stated the cost per call was \$857.80, this was calculated by subtracting the collections from the budget to determine the net county cost and dividing the net county cost by the number of calls received during 2009-2010.

$$\$1,236,534 \text{ (budget)} - \$297,248 \text{ (collections)} = \$939,286 \text{ (net county cost)}$$

$$\$939,286 / 1095 \text{ calls} = \$857.80 \text{ per call}$$

**Additional Counties EMS Breakdown**

Brian Carter presented the Board with additional EMS costs for counties throughout the state.

<b>County</b>	<b>EMS Level</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Stations / Units</b>
Davie	Paramedic	2.8 million	3 stations / 4 units
Hyde	Paramedic	1.5 million	2 stations / 2 units & QRV
Pender	Paramedic		
Washington	Paramedic	1.5 million	1 station / 2 units & 12hr unit
Yadkin	Paramedic	3.1 million	4 stations / 4 units, QRV & 12hr unit

Mr. Carter informed the Commissioners that they had requested figures from Pender County but they were unable to provide them. The Ocracoke Lead Paramedic also said 89 of the 100 counties in the State of North Carolina provide paramedic level services.

### **Additional Services**

Mr. Carter stated that at the previous EMS Review Committee Meeting the Board asked the Emergency Services Director to research the possibility of providing transport services. Mr. Carter said that there are three types of transports and they are convalescent transports, critical care transports, and specialized transports. The Ocracoke Lead Paramedic recommended that the possibility of providing these services should be revisited in one year when the EMS system was in a better state for such an addition.

### **Billing**

Jeff Hibbard, the Mainland Lead Paramedic, reported the 2009-2010 billing was brought back in house because a better collection rate was anticipated. Mr. Hibbard said that the current collection rate was 42% and of the \$701,522 billed the County had collected \$297,248. Mr. Hibbard recommended that the County outsource the billing because the collections could be tracked more efficiently by a third party and it was possible that a third party agency could guarantee a higher collection rate. The Mainland Lead Paramedic also stated that a collection agency would have more resources within Medicare/Medicaid and even though they may charge eight percent, a collection agency could increase the collections.

### **Fee Schedule**

Mr. Hibbard presented the Commissioners with a proposed fee schedule for the charges per call and per mile, he stated that the County approved \$750/call and \$10.60/mile but he felt a tiered fee schedule could increase the County EMS collections. Mr. Hibbard proposed a three tier system that would charge \$500/call for Basic Life Support, \$600/call for Advanced Life Support non-emergency, and \$700/call for Advanced Life Support emergency. Mr. Hibbard proposed no change for the per mile fee. The Mainland Lead Paramedic said that Medicare/Medicaid only reimburses the County at a

flat rate of \$377.42/call and \$6.74/mile, but that the rate per call fluctuated throughout the year. Jeff Hibbard also informed the Board that if the County decided to outsource the billing, the proposed fee schedule could change.

**Personnel Cost**

Brian Carter, Ocracoke Lead Paramedic, presented the Commissioners with the projected personnel costs to provide each level of emergency medical services and the staffing requirements necessary to provide the services.

<b>EMT -</b>	<b>\$597,543</b>	16 EMTs w/ additional summer truck (need to hire 12 EMTs)
	Reg - \$444,071	
	OT - \$89,122	
	PT - \$64,350	
<b>EMT I -</b>	<b>\$708,026</b>	10 EMT-Is and 6 EMTs w/ additional summer truck (need to hire 3 EMT-Is and 2 EMTs)
	Reg - \$523,939	
	OT - \$106,203	
	PT - \$77,882	
<b>EMT P -</b>	<b>\$870,678</b>	8 EMT-Ps, 7 EMT-Is, and 5 EMTs w/ additional summer truck (need to hire 3 EMT-Ps & 1 EMT)
	Reg - \$669,786	
	OT - \$140,892	
	PT - \$60,000	

**Contract - No Responses**

Mr. Carter stated the prepared figures would be reduced due to the change in the work schedule to two days on and six days off, he also said the overtime figures would be drastically reduced because the prepared figures were not based on the compensatory time based schedule.

**Net Cost**

Lead Paramedic Brian Carter stated the net costs for each level of service would be:

	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Operating</b>	<b>Collections</b>	<b>Net</b>
<b>EMT -</b>	\$597,543	\$653,089	\$240,000	\$1,010,632
<b>EMT I -</b>	\$708,026	\$665,089	\$390,000	\$983,115
<b>EMT P -</b>	\$870,678	\$670,089	\$390,000	\$1,152,767

**Contract - No Responses**

**Change in Service Level**

Mr. Carter informed the Board that in order to change the level of service being provided to the County the Medical Director would have to agree to cover the reduced level of service, NCOEMS would have to be advised of the service level that the County would be going to, the system plan would have to be altered to reflect the change in the level of service, and the DEA would have to audit and dispose of the current narcotics.

Allan Johnson, Eastern Regional Manager for NCOEMS, stated that Hyde County has progressed substantially in providing its citizens the same level of medical treatment as Wake and Mecklenburg Counties. Mr. Johnson said that the previous NCOEMS Director allowed Hyde County to operate at two differing levels of service because of the unique circumstances; but if the County decided to reduce the level of medical services being provide on the Mainland, then another exception would have to be made. Mr. Johnson stated that he wanted to help the County maintain the current level of service.

**Recommendations Moving Forward**

Mr. Carter recommended hiring three additional paramedics and one intermediate to get to full staff; he said this would reduce the dependency on part-time employees.

Commissioner Collier asked if members of the current staff could be trained to the paramedic level to fill the vacancies. Jeff Hibbard replied that he had been working with Beaufort County Community College to provide training for the current staff members, volunteer firemen, and high school students.

Bobby Swain, Beaufort County Community College, stated that the college would be offering an EMT-Basic to EMT-Paramedic course in July and the course would be held at the college. Mr. Swain said that the course would have to be held at the college in order to obtain the required number of students for the course and that he had been working with Jeff Hibbard to provide transportation for the current staff members who are interested in enrolling in the course and scheduling part-time staff to fill in for the employees attending the course. Mr. Swain said that a portion of the course would be offered online. Mr. Swain informed the Board that the course was 1,500 hours and would take the employees several months to complete.

Commissioner Spencer asked if the employees would have to pay for the course. Mr. Swain replied that the employees would be fee exempt and they would only have to purchase the books for the course.

Commissioner Styron said that the County would need to have the employees attending the course sign a contract retaining their services for a certain period of time.

Mr. Carter recommended a change in the work schedule to two days on and six days off, he said they had implemented this change on the mainland and they would be implementing the change on Ocracoke in October. Mr. Carter also proposed limiting part-time to two days in a pay week.

Commissioner Spencer asked Mr. Carter if he felt that they would obtain the part-time help needed if they limited the number of hours they could obtain in a pay week. Mr. Carter replied that they had already received commitments for next month.

Mr. Carter's final recommendation was to outsource the billing and collections.

Commissioner Byrd asked how the County could charge more than the rate reimbursed by Medicare/Medicaid. Commissioner Spencer replied that the insurance companies may pay the fees charged by the County.

Commissioner Styron stated that she wanted the Lead Paramedics to have an estimate prepared for the percentage of claims that were processed through Medicare/Medicaid. Commissioner Spencer replied that she estimated that seventy to eighty percent of the patients transported were covered by Medicare/Medicaid.

Commissioner Byrd asked how the collection rate could be improved. Mr. Hibbard replied that they would need a better understanding of Medicare/Medicaid in order to increase the collection rate.

Commissioner Spencer stated she felt there were a number of people certified within the County that were not being contacted. The representatives from NCOEMS stated that they could provide the County with a list of all the people certified within the County.

Commissioner Byrd said he felt the EMS system within the County had been grossly mismanaged and the presentation the Lead Paramedics prepared was not bad, but wanted to know where they stood in the budget for this fiscal year. Mr. Carter replied they had expended approximately thirteen percent of the salaries line item and twenty-five percent of the overtime line item.

The Interim County Manager asked Mr. Carter if hiring the staff members needed to bring the service to full staff would save the County money. Mr. Carter replied that if the County authorized the positions to be filled it reduce the dependency on part-time employees and would reduce the overtime expenditures.

The Interim County Manager said that the EMS System had been mismanaged because there was no continuity in the leadership.

Commissioner Styron stated the presentation delivered by the Lead Paramedics was much more thorough and had addressed a number of the questions that had been posed by the Board.

With no further questions from the Board, Vice-Chairwoman Spencer asked for a motion to adjourn the September 22, 2010 Special Meeting of the Hyde County Board of Commissioners.

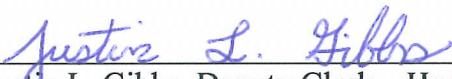
Commissioner Byrd made a motion to adjourn the September 22, 2010 Special Meeting of the Hyde County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Collier seconded the motion, the motion passed by the following vote:

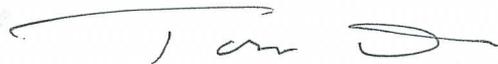
Ayes – Commissioners Spencer, Byrd, Collier, and Styron  
Nays – None

The September 22, 2010 Special Meeting of the Hyde County Board of Commissioners adjourned at 5:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Minutes approved on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2010.

  
Justin L. Gibbs, Deputy Clerk – Hyde County Board of Commissioners

  
Tom Davis, Chairman – Hyde County Board of Commissioners

