



# HYANNIS FIRE DISTRICT

95 HIGH SCHOOL ROAD EXT.  
HYANNIS, MA 02601

*Help us Prevent Fires*

**CLERK - TREASURER**

Verna R. La Fleur

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Dennis S. Sullivan

Peter Cross

Victor Skende

Demetrius Atsalis

Laura Cronin

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING**

**OCTOBER 19, 2017 – SPECIAL TIME 5:30PM**

PRESENT: Commissioners Peter Cross, Laura Cronin, Dennis Sullivan, Demetrius Atsalis, and Fire Chief Peter Burke. ABSENT: Victor Skende.

Chairman Cross called the meeting to order at 5:30PM

I. Open Session

1. Due to our guest speakers from PRO-EMS this evening, Commissioner Cross requested we take the agenda items out of order, and start with item 6a first, so they can do their presentation; All agreed.
  - a. PRO-EMS is an ambulance billing service and was asked by the department to present information to the Board of Commissioners on the service they have to offer. The Hyannis Fire District (HFD), is looking into submitting an RFP, to explore different options to updating our ambulance billing service.
  - b. Bill Mergendahl, JD, EMT-P, President and CEO of PRO-EMS and Tim Harren, Director of IT, were in attendance, and presented the company background and services they provide.
  - c. They are in 30 Towns, and specialty is in ambulance billing & technology; collecting the data and patient information more streamlined and efficiently, to be able to provide the Patient Care Report (PCR), more timely.
    - i. Currently HFD process is all done manually through EMS Supervisor Mike Medeiros, and can take several weeks to get all of the information and update the forms appropriately.
    - ii. Of note, during this review process, it was discovered HFD was not collecting some patient data, but this has been corrected, and we are now in compliance.
  - d. Bill M. discussed his preliminary review of the data we had provided them for this meeting, and of interest is the method by which we bill our ambulance costs, which is a locked into an amount over Medicare/Medicaid rates.
    - i. Their recommendation is to not use that method, in that it does not cover the true costs, and/ can go down in some years, but your department

- costs can remain the same, or go up; they recommend using actual costs for Advance Life Support (ALS), and Basic Life (BLS).
- ii. Bill M. provided some costs with other comparable towns, he used Natick MA as they have similar responses (approximately 2,500 calls), however they only use 2 EMT per call, and they charge on average \$650 per EMT per call, Hyannis is only charging on average \$424 per EMT call, some other area departments are up around \$800.
    - 1. Natick's average 20% non-transport, Hyannis is 23%. This could also contribute to lower collection rate we discussed.
  - iii. Bill discussed the collection rate percentages, according to the data we provided, which shows 95%. However, the current agency excludes the non-insurable calls, which is distorting the actual percentage. Doing a quick calculation, if you add all of the calls, we are actually only about 76%. This could be because of the high number of homeless and non-insurable population.
    - 1. Cambridge has similar homeless conditions to Hyannis, theirs is 15%, and they are at 75% collection rate.
    - 2. PRO-EMS uses a humane collection practice, the do not chase ambulance billings. They provide the patient with a form if they are unable to pay, or other communication to understand what their situation is.
  - e. Commissioner Sullivan said the district has been using the Medicare base cost for quite some time, and asked Bill M. if he knew where that came from, and why it would have been told the only method we could use?
    - i. The only reason Bill M. could think of is because it is easy to calculate, and maybe before Medicare rates were more stable; but couldn't explain why an alternative was ever mentioned previously. Bill M. assured the board that the actual costs is a widely acceptable cost method used.
  - f. Bill M. said, while they cannot guarantee how much increase we will show, there are a lot more other services and support PRO-EMS provides:
    - i. Report to CARES (Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival).
    - ii. Patient satisfactory survey – (average 18% - 20% return rate)
      - 1. Quarterly reports, scores and comments.
      - 2. Responses help you to track and develop trends
    - iii. Quality Assurance and clinical reviews quicker so opportunities can be addressed quickly. Because we do ours manually, currently Hyannis is 2-3 months behind, PRO-EMS will be able to get these turned around to us bi-weekly.
      - 1. Will alert us immediately if find a significant concern.
    - iv. On-site training facility available in their Cambridge office, for critical technical procedures to keep staff up to date with latest technology on HALO techniques (High Activity Low Occurrence).
    - v. Some on-line training is available, but the most effective is the on-site resources for training which is available quarterly.

1. Hyannis would need to budget dollars for travel to train at their facility each year.
  - vi. Staff would be trained on PRO-EMS software platform, we would continue to use ours until transitioned over.
    1. Their Software provides Web Training
    2. Tracks mandatory training requirements and provides status of department training.
  - g. Board asked what the hardest transition was:
    - i. Tracking payments; they use Lock Box, and electronic payments.
    - ii. They use deduction management, check the national data base to coordinate when the optimal time to present the ambulance billing for payment.
    - iii. Estimate approximately 2 weeks.
  - h. Bill M. said our biggest opportunity is the disparity between our ALS and BLS rates, they should be the same.
  - i. PRO-EMS Rate is 4% of collected billings.
    - i. Chief burke asked if they can assist us in what our rates could be, so we can know what to expect? Bill M. said yes, and with more information he could help to see what the potential is for the district.
    - ii. This could be the method we use each year to set the ambulance rates based on the actual costs of the district.
  - j. Next steps, Chief Burke will proceed with the RFP for the district's ambulance billing service. He will also reach out to Comstar to let them know an RFP will be going out, and they would have an opportunity to bid.
    - i. Comstar contract requires 60 day notice.
  - k. Commissioners thanked Bill M. and Tim H. for their time to meet with us, and appreciate the details of what PRO-EMS services has to offer. If anyone had any questions or follow-up, we would let them know.
2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – Special Meeting September 12, 2017 and Regular Meeting September 14, 2017. Dennis motion to accept, second Laura C.; unanimously approved both.
  3. CORRESPONDENCE: None
  4. PUBLIC COMMENT: None
  5. STREET LIGHTS: Commissioner Atsalis mentioned Marks Path inquiry from a resident, and he drove the area and it is not lighted from where he could see, nor could he find a light pole.
    - a. However, looking on the street light map, it indicates there is one near the end of the street; Commissioner Atsalis said he would do another drive-by, and talk to the resident, to see if it may be covered over, or if the light is out.
  6. OLD BUSINESS: None
  7. NEW BUSINESS:
    - a. Building Update and Change Orders – Commissioner Cross sent email to commissioners which provided all details of the project cost changes sent to him by CMS, totaling \$37,869.62 (copy of 10/11/17 email details attached to

minutes). Dennis S. motion to approve the change order, 2<sup>nd</sup> Laura C., unanimously approved change orders.

- i. PCO 4: Grease Trap = + \$1,213.82
  - ii. PCO 6: Antenna Foundation = + \$14,424.30
  - iii. PCO7: Delete Motorized Projection Screen = (\$2,500.62)
  - iv. PCO 10: Storm Drain Clean out = + \$7,363.72
    1. Commissioner Cronin asked if the storm drain cleanout dollars were for a one time cleaning, or a long term preventative design to the new facility. Chief Burke acknowledged this was a long term design in the drain layout to provide better drainage of run-off.
  - v. PCO 11: Structural Fill = + \$17,468.40
  - vi. In addition to the email, Commissioner Cross provided a copy of the September CTA Construction company monthly progress report.
    1. All work appears to be on time and on budget.
    2. Windows will be here within the next two weeks.
    3. Hope to be weather-tight by mid- November.
- b. By-Law Committee Report: Nathaniel Munafo provided a brief update:
- i. Chief Burke is a permanent member on the committee, replacing Deputy Chief Melanson.
  - ii. The changes approved at the annual meeting were verified against the meeting minutes provided by attorney, by Moderator Krau, to make sure all of the changes were included.
    1. By-Law committee approved to have them forwarded to HFD Clerk-Treasurer for printing a small number of copies, and to Commissioner Skende to have them uploaded on the website.
  - iii. Discussed Article III, Section 1 (h) - the Board of Commissioners responsibility for all job descriptions for non- collective bargaining positions, and/or the ones listed in the by-laws (Chief, and Clerk-Treasurer).
    1. Currently, these positions are the Chief's Assistant, FPO Administrative Assistant, Mechanic, and Maintenance. This sections specifies that these positions need to go through physical, medical, and psychological testing prior to being hired.
      - a.
    2. The committee discussed whether this was necessary to include in the by-laws, or could this be handled as a documented hiring procedure, and the applicable tests could be identified within the job descriptions instead.
    3. The Commissioners should work with the Chief to make sure all of these position's job descriptions are up to date. The committee acknowledged the FPO Administrative Assistant was recently done, and the Chief mentioned he believed the Mechanic was done. We will need to look at the other two positions to make sure they are in place.

- iv. Discussed the penalties HFD charges for false alarms.
  - 1. Currently our by-law has a specific dollar amount, and is low compared to other departments.
  - 2. Committee discussed changing this to remove the dollars from the by-laws and have it be part of a fee structure reviewed by the Chief periodically, and present any changes to the Commissioners for approval; rather than requiring a by-law change.
- v. Other discussion came from suggested improvements to the administrative tasks and process around the annual meeting. These suggestions are coming from residents, and the District Moderator Krau.
  - 1. The committee will present these as suggested protocols to the Commissioners, once they are finalized, for review and consideration.
  - 2. As an example, there is no procedure in place to approve the minutes from the annual meetings, nor is there a procedure in place to have them translated into meeting minutes the general public can easily read. They are stenographer notes, and are not easy to read.
    - a. Commissioner Sullivan noted that these minutes should be approved by the voters, they are the ones who voted on the warrant items.
    - b. The committee will come up with a proposed procedure to request Moderator Krau to work getting the approval included in the annual meeting agenda.
  - 3. Another request was to make sure any changes made to the warrant, after it was published, be available on a separate sheet and handed out to members at the district meeting so the information matches what is being presented for approval.
  - 4. It is the committee's hope to have these adopted as best practices and procedures, rather than including in the by-laws.
- 8. Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting. – None
- 9. CHIEF'S REPORT:
  - a. Reviewed updated Gifts of Funds Policy draft the Chief gave the Commissioners last meeting (replaces the old Rescue Fund).
    - i. Chief Burke confirmed with Verna, this is kept in a separate account and fund.
    - ii. Dennis S. motion to accept, Demetrius A. second, approved unanimously.
  - b. There are 4 new firefighter candidates being interviewed - interviews went well.
    - i. Hope to have candidates to present at one of the next commissioners meeting, after the testing and background is done.
  - c. Open FPO position is in the process of negotiating the job description to bring the position requirements current to the department needs.

- i. Internal applicants may not have all of the qualifications initially today, but these are skills they can absolutely be acquired once in the role.
    - ii. Will keep us updated on the progress.
  - d. Deb Schiavi submitted the ambulance reimbursement paperwork to the state, and they will be sending us approximately \$330,000.
    - i. This is a program to recapture differences in revenue we received vs. what Medicare paid.
    - ii. This is all done manually, a tremendous effort on Debi's part to pull all of this together.
    - iii. If PRO-EMS should get the bid for our ambulance billing, this will be minimized, we'll be getting the money quicker, and it will be all automated so it will make this a more efficient process.
    - iv. Commissioner Cross said he would send Debe a note of appreciation on behalf of the Commissioners for her work.
  - e. We were officially notified we did not get the SCBA Grant. The Chief said he is in the process of developing a schedule to get the new SCBA gear replacements in as soon as we can.
    - i. Commissioner Cross said he would send a thank you note to FF Clough on behalf of the commissioners, for all of the work he did on trying to obtain the grant.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- a. Mike Dalmau reminders:
  - i. Photos on Saturday, 10/21/17 at 8:30AM; group photo and head shots immediately after.
  - ii. Shave the Date: Saturday 10/21/17, starting at 11:00AM, they have volunteer barbers and hairdressers to do the clipping. A lot of family events, and Police Dept. will be bringing their SWAT vehicle for the "touch-a-truck".
  - iii. Healthcare update – Wed., 10/25/17, 6:30PM
- b. Mike Dalmau also wanted to thank the Commissioners for all of the support we have given to Chief Burke in his vision for the department, and helping to make these changes and improvements happen.
- c. Commissioner Cross wanted to let the Commissioner know he had some thank you cards made up, with the HFD Commissioners name on them, so we have a way to say thank you, or drop a personal note to anyone. They will be in a box on top of the mail box.

11. POTENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

12. ADJOURN:

- a. Motion to Adjourn Dennis S., 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter C., all in favor, meeting adjourned at 7:57PM

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner, Laura Cronin