

EMS Study Group

The EMS staffing crisis was discussed at the monthly Fremont County Communications meeting held on February 18th. JR Niblett and Sharon Zuidema attended the meeting along with personnel from the Fremont County Commissioners, Sheriff's department, fire chiefs and EMS providers including flight.

The staffing issue at Deer Mountain was echoed by the majority of the attendees and discussion included how to help each other when an emergency response is needed. There was talk around how to recruit and retain staff with the consensus highlighting wages disparities. Even if DM raised wages to \$15 an hour there is no guarantee staff would stay when other areas are offering \$18 per hour and above.

The subject of getting assistance from the state and/or county was brought up, along with the possibility of a county wide ambulance service. Dr. Numsen believes volunteerism will become obsolete in the next 5-10 years. Looking at the long-term picture this does not bode well for the district to use volunteers for EMS.

JR had multiple discussions with Dr. Numsen who is in favor of the county ambulance service. While this would be beneficial for the community there are potentially high costs involved which would be set by the county through property taxes. The Fremont County Commissioners could raise property taxes within a range of \$300 - \$1000 or more per year.

AMR has committed to sending people to man the DM ambulance, however a decision on wages, whether staff would be a straight 40 hours a week or on-call (no overtime) needs to be completed and voted on before that can happen.

Currently the property tax monies (*2021 Estimated tax = \$257,770*) received by DMFPD are not allocated toward EMS services. EMS services continue to rely on Wildland funds. Wildland funds are not a given and can't be included in the budget until **AFTER** they are received upon completion of the fire season. There is a federal bill originally introduced in 2017-2018 by John McCain that has been amended and is being reintroduce this year by Senators from western states. This bill (S. 4625) provides monies for multiple conservation projects, but a key piece of the legislation that affects DM Wildland income is described below. If the bill passes it could reduce wildland income greatly and impact monies usually used for EMS.

"help address the workforce capacity issue by appropriating \$300 million for both the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to plan, prepare, and conduct controlled burns on federal, state, and private lands."

The timeframe for a county wide ambulance service is unknown at this time. The district could solicit an increase in the mill levy again this year. The focus of the monies generated by the mill levy should be focused on EMS services only. Below is the costs JR has estimated for EMS costs with 2 wage scenarios. The mill levy would need to be doubled in order to sustain the EMS services until a county wide ambulance service is established.

Estimated EMT Services Cost

Wages

1. NO ON CALL TIME, NO OVERTIME
1 EMT @ \$15.00 per hour times 40 hours a week = \$600.00 times 52 weeks = \$31,200 year
1 EMT @ \$17.00 per hour times 40 hours a week = \$680.00 times 52 weeks = \$35,360 year
2. ON CALL TIME
On call time \$7.00 per hour times 40 hours a week = \$280.00 = \$14,560 year.
On call time \$8.00 per hour times 40 hours a week = \$320.00 = \$16,640 year.
3. 1 EMT 40 hours per week at \$15.00 per hour plus on-call time = annual cost of \$45,760. When including overtime with an estimated cost of \$8,300 annually it would raise the cost to \$54,060 per year.
4. 1 EMT 40 hours per week at \$17.00 per hour plus on-call time – annual cost of \$52,000. When including overtime with an estimated cost of \$8,800 annually it would raise the cost to \$62,200 per year.

EMS Operating Costs

1. Insurance = \$43,000 YEAR
2. Medical Expenses = \$15,400 (medical supplies, billing, training and expenses)
3. Communications = \$9,000 YEAR
4. Dr. Numsen = \$1,200

The operating costs above do not include fuel, truck maintenance, propane to keep them from freezing, building for storage and security or uniforms.

Final Estimated Costs including Wage and Operating Costs for a single work shift

1. 2 EMTs@ \$15 = \$91,520 + operating costs of \$68,600 = \$160,120 (no overtime)
2. 2 EMTs@ \$17 = \$104,000 + operating costs of \$68,600 = \$172,600 (no overtime)

*****Estimated annual overtime costs per person is \$8,300. This is not included in the above final costs**

The above estimates do not include costs of a driver or calculation of staff coverage for 24x7x365. Adding in the costs for 2 EMT 24-hour coverage along with a driver and associated costs raises the amount needed above the current total monies received by the district from annual property taxes. The district could look at a combination of 1 EMT for a 40-hour week and on-call for other shifts which would change the amount needed. Another factor to take into consideration are the receivables for the ambulance and EMT services. Expectation for medical income this year is \$52,000 and at this point we are below the amount and do not expect to meet that financial goal.

1 driver @\$13.00 per hour for 40-hour week = \$520 (no overtime or training hours) annual \$27,040
1 EMT @\$17.00 per hour for 168-hour week = \$2,856 (no overtime or training hours) annual \$148,512

*****168 = 24 hours times 7 days, \$148,512 = 168 hours per week times 52 weeks ((24*7)*52)**

*Contributors to this report: JR Niblett, Sherry Hasting, Sharon Zuidema, Dr. Numsen
March 13, 2021*