

**Elk Rapids Township  
Special Meeting Minutes  
March 20, 2014, 7:00 PM.**

The special meeting of the Elk Rapids Township Board was held at the Elk Rapids Government Center located at 315 Bridge St., Elk Rapids. The meeting was called to order by Supervisor White at 7:00 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was taped to provide accuracy.

**PRESENT:** Supervisor, William White; Clerk, Shelley Boisvert; Treasurer; Michael Szymanski; Trustee, Aaron Isenhart  
Absent: Dorance Amos

**Also Present:** B. Derman, E. Hedin, Pete VanDenBerge, Matt Holtcamp and Steve Meyers from MMR and George Korthauer and Wendy Dawson from Allied EMS Systems, and: 31 others in the audience.

Presentation from MMR – Mobile Medical Response: Matt Holtcamp and Steve Meyers.

There was a question and answer period after the presentation:

Board members: Szymanski: Q) What call center would you use up here? A) They are willing to use the 911 dispatch center located in Bellaire. White: Q) We sent you a letter we received from an attorney stating that you may not have disclosed all of the law suits that MMR has been involved in. Please address it. A) Matt stated that someone did a google search to look for some law suits that have been filed against MMR. There were several of the stated suits in the letter that were not even filed against MMR, others were much later than the years requested in the proposal. He stated that MMR has been sued. They are a large company. The things they have been sued over are things that may happen when they do an organizational restructuring that may eliminate some upper positions to balance out the budget. Some people have left and are not happy when they leave, and some people have chosen to get a lawyer and try to sue for those reasons. It happens, and will probably happen again. Based on the size of our company and the area we cover, the amount of people that we transport, there have been suits but definitely not enough to cause a black eye. We don't like it but it is one of those things. Every time we transport a patient there is possible litigation. The big thing we want to look at would be the malpractice suit against a paramedic. Those are not the events we are looking at here. In their opinion, they have disclosed what was requested.

Boisvert: Q) Does MMR count on the local Fire Department as back-up as part of their normal everyday operations? A) They would like to have the Fire Department get involved on the medical side, but that is not a deal breaker. They encourage it but do not count on it.

Szymanski: Q) What about our current employees? A) MMR is an equal opportunity employer. Everyone would be eligible to apply. They would be looking to hire 12 full time people. Six full time paramedics and six full time EMT's. These would be benefited positions. They would do a job fair right here in this community and see who they could hire. If they come short, they may have to have people drive here to work.

Szymanski: Q) What kind of fringe benefit package do you offer? A) Blue Cross/Blue Shield health benefit plan, dental, vision, education reimbursement, 401K plan and offer \$1,600 to all full time employees that they can use for anything beyond medicine.

Isenhart: Q) What would you say your average years of employment for your paramedics and EMT's are? A) The city markets, where they do 10 or 12 calls a day, the turnover rate is higher because that is hard exhausting work. They don't see the longevity like they do in the more rural areas such as in Crawford County, there are people there that were hired in the year 2000. They have low turnover rates. He can get us a copy of that bench mark.

Questions from audience members.

- Jim Braun: Q) Given the difference in response times of eight minutes for our EMS and in your proposal fourteen minutes and the method of computing those times, yours being 80% of the runs and ours being 100% of the runs what would be the effect of your proposal, cost wise, for a 10 minute response time, 24/7 for 100% of the time? A) For an average of 10 minutes response time there would be no cost change. For the proposal, the township used a benchmark of 14 minutes for response but in an area like this a 10 minute or less response time is very do-able. Matt pointed out that the truck will be parked in the same place as it is now, and the routing will be the same as it is now so there is no reason why the response time should vary greatly.
- Danielle Dymora: Elk Rapids Paramedic: Q) Is it possible for her to work for MMR along with another Ambulance service? A) As of this time MMR does not have a "no compete clause" so yes she could work for both.
- Dan Patton: North Flight and Elk Rapids Paramedic: Q) MMR used to have a no compete clause, meaning that an employee of MMR could not also be working with another Ambulance system. So that has changed? A) It depends on the territory. Matt H. said that here there is no "no compete" clause and that they work well with North Flight so people would be able to work for both, but that MMR will be looking for full time employees.
- Toby Way: Milton Township: Q) If both ALS rigs are out on calls, who would cover if something else were to be called out. A) There would be mutual aide agreements in place with companies like North Flight or Allied to cover times when volume supersedes their equipment.
- Trisha Pearlman: Q) She listed ambulance run demographics and stated that the Village and Elk Rapids Township have the highest run volume. Based on that, why would MMR move a rig from here to the fire station between Torch Lake and Elk Rapids if one of their ALS units were called out? Matt said that that would be a good central location for them to reach Torch, Elk Rapids or Milton within a good response time. He said that in their service territory, in their minds, geographical boundaries would be erased.
- Don Reynolds: How many open or pending lawsuits has MMR been involved in including ever having been fined, local state or federal or been required to pay any amount of monetary restitution. A) Matt said that he is the operations guy and he does not have that information. Q) Based on the proposal from Elk Rapids Township with specific questions, and a later inquiry regarding law suits, Don thought MMR could have come more prepared to answer questions like that.

- Chris Keenan: Q) 501 C3 Status, If MMR is a non-profit organization exempt from income tax whose purposes is to provide transportation and services to members of the general public without regard to the ability to pay, why does MMR file so many law suits for collections for customers that have not paid? Is that standard practice? Also has MMR's 501 C3 status been revoked or reinstated because it does not appear to be active on the State website? A) The status is active and regarding showing up on the web site that is being looked into and is being corrected, but they are a 501 C3. Matt said that taking people to court for collections is not standard practice but there are cases that need to be followed up on. Because they are a 501 C3 they have to render care to anybody that calls them regardless of payment. That is a state law. They have a charity care services, utilizing a sliding scale based on the poverty level and of the ability to pay. If you can't pay you provide them with the documentation confirming that. Cases of collections that end up going to court is where bills are sent repeatedly with no response at all.
- Thane Pressman: In your proposal you are proposing two ALS ambulances 24/7 365 for \$650,000 a year and the other two services were going to charge somewhere between \$850,000 and \$900,000 a year for the same service but after his interpretation of the proposal all the proposals are seemingly the same because MMR would make the collections and keep the run fees where the other firms would return the run fees to the township. He thinks that MMR would be exactly competitive with the other firms.
- Karen Ferguson: Attorney for the Concerned Citizens Group: She wanted to clarify the question in the proposal: It asked that you provide a summary of any pending lawsuits against your company and what judgments have been made against your company or its employees over the last three years and you answered none. Today you said the only claim filed against you are claims from an unhappy employee who were fired. She stated that there seems to be numerous lawsuits against MMR that don't seem to fit that category. Q) Why was the response time so long in the case of Paul Weber and why there was such a long response time to Darling Major down in Clare County? Matt stated that he would provide those answers in writing.
- Tony Baker: Q) Do you plan to take the Elk Rapids ambulance outside of the area for transfers? A) No.

Meeting Recess: 8:50 pm

Meeting called back into session at 9:05 pm

Presentation from Allied EMS Systems – George Korthauer and Wendy Dawson.

There was a question and answer period after the presentation: Some Board members had questions and then the public was invited to ask questions. There were 4 questions from audience members.

Szymanski: Q) Does Allied utilize the Antrim County call center for 911 calls. A) Yes  
 Q) I understand that Allied does the billing services also, do you keep the fees? A) Allied does the billing and use the revenues generated from those invoices to off-set the expenditures and costs for the Township. Q) What about the equipment? A) The equipment and the facilities would be the Township's and Allied would lease those for \$1.00 per year. That way if you ever change providers everything still remains yours. Q) What about our current EMS staff? A)

Allied would hire the current EMS staff, making certain they would be qualified, but then Allied would pay them and provide benefits like any other Allied employees.

White: Q) What are the benefits that Allied provides? Health insurance for full time and part time employees, health includes, optical, dental, disability, workman's comp., life insurance policy and a 401K program, along with clothing.

White: Q) That's all wrapped into your personnel cost? There aren't any extras charged for that?

A) Yes, that is all wrapped in under the Administration fees; administrative overhead, billing services, vehicle maintenance, training and quality assurance. Q) Is the maintenance at the cost of the Township? A) Allied has a full time mechanic on staff who would periodically handle vehicle maintenance and they have put some estimated cost into the proposal to that normal stuff but if there is a large capital cost, the Township would have to take care of that.

Boisvert: Q) What about purchasing normal everyday supplies? A) Allied would purchase those, they believe they have an advantage of buying in bulk that would save the township money.

There are estimated costs in their bid already covered under Administrative services. Q) What about utilities and phones for the station. A) That would stay as a township cost, but if the township wanted to make arrangements for Allied to handle those too they could be flexible and work something out.

Szymanski: Q) How many transports did Allied do last year? A) About 7,000 calls annually system wide and a little over 15,000 inter-facility transfers. The transfers are basically services provided in areas with hospitals right there in the area. Q) How many times have you been sued? A) Allied has never been sued and there are no pending cases. But there was an incident where a pedestrian was struck and they have been notified there may be a case there.

Boisvert: Q) What about gasoline? Is that a normal cost or one that the Township would pay?

A) That would be a township cost, mostly due to the fact that municipalities get a tax break that would benefit them, and Allied would not.

White: Q) Do you anticipate doing any transfers with the equipment out of here? A) I don't think so but once again if you want us to provide that kind of service we can. There may be occasional transfers like you currently do.

Boisvert: Q) What about community events, like Harbor Days, football games and such? A) Those type of services are already a part of their proposal. Also provide CPR classes and health day type events for the community.

- Trisha Pearlman: Q) Does Allied have a "no competition" clause? A) Throughout their systems they have many employees who work for multiple agencies, but they ask that if Allied hires them they would consider Allied as the full time employer and work other things around it. Q) So do you work well with North Flight and other agencies? A) Allied doesn't really have anyone employed that also works with North Flight but they have many people with multiple jobs as long as your other job doesn't interfere with your job with Allied. They could certainly get along with North Flight. Q) What about pay scale? A) In the proposal there is a pay scale.

- Chris Keenan: Q) In the request for proposals, Elk Rapids asked for 2 ALS ambulances. Can you explain why your proposal did not clearly itemize your cost to provide 2 ALS ambulances but instead referenced the Allied staff assumed it was not the intent to provide an ALS level crew in each of the two townships but if so the cost would be double; and also did not detail how you would cover with on-call staff, where those people would come from and what the estimated wait time may be. Why did you do your proposal this way? A) Allied thought that based on the territory and the run volume they believed they could handle it with a single ALS crew with a standby crew. If they went with 2 ALS crews the cost would be slightly off-set by not having the on call crew necessary because the ALS crews could back each other up. George stated that basically Allied could do it however we needed them to do it. The backup crew would come from the Elk Rapids area, and when people are hired they would commit to scheduling.
- Thane Pressman: Q) His impression from the meeting held at Torch Lake Township was that they want and need an ALS presence in their township. A) Allied can do that and if the township wants to take on the cost of that they can provide that. It was their thought that they could do it a different way but if that is what they want they can do it that way.
- Male did not identify himself: Q) How much is the fire department involved in this. A) As much as they would want to be. There are some areas that do not get toned out with the ambulance.
- Jim Braun: Q) If you were to obtain our service contract would you have someone on the site supervising the three township operation. A) Probably not, they thought that Wendy could oversee the operation from her Antrim County location with support from the main office after all the initial set up has been taken care of. Q) What would happen to the current chief and key subordinates? A) Their structure would be to be overseen by the area manager but they would have some lead positions here.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM