

Great Divide Ambulance
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 30, 2022
10am at the Great Divide Ambulance Station
43555 US Highway 63, Cable, WI 54821

Roy Bloom called the meeting to order at 10:09am. In attendance were Roy Bloom (attending late at budget discussion), Jack McGregor, Jack Iverson, Ron Gran, Laura Bjork, Rob Puls and Bobbi McCauley.

Employee Handbook updates – An updated handbook was presented. It included changes in PTO reflecting hourly benefits, not weekly and also FMLA updates from HR Representative, Anne Wettstein. MOTION made by Jack McGregor to approve the Employee Handbook updates as presented contingent upon approval from HR. MOTION seconded by Jack Iverson and carried.

Update on the activities with the ambulance service – Rob Puls stated that the service went into Sept about 60 runs behind last year. Last year we were 300 runs behind the year before. This month we have caught up a bit and are currently about 30 runs behind. The service remains on diversion in Duluth. We are traveling further distances due to the lack of staff at hospitals. We are short staffed as well. We are using 5 paramedics for the job that 7 paramedics did last year. There is a lot of overtime because of this. Rob Puls had taken himself off the schedule, but now is back on the schedule due to lack of employees. A paramedic left GDAS and moved to another state. An EMT just gave notice and is changing careers. There is a possibility of losing another EMT. Not only is there a lack of employees, but there have been employee issues that needed attention. The vehicles continue to need repairs due to high mileage. Two ambulances are out of service currently with a wait time for the repairs to get done. The vehicles are beyond age. The front wheel fell off one truck; thank goodness no one got hurt. Another truck is in need of an alternator. There is a 4 to 6 week wait just to look at the truck and then more time to get parts. We still have “first call out” in Hayward, but due to lack of trucks and employees we are turning down calls elsewhere. The new HR rep has put ads out for employment, but nothing has come out from that as of yet. Other advertising has been done previously, but unfortunately there has been no positive responses. The service is not sustainable, and the staff workload is not sustainable. Two new trucks have been ordered. They were supposed to be delivered in July. There is a possibility of delivery in January, but this is not a guarantee. There is a used truck in Gordon, a 2008 Ford One ton truck with a box on it. It has 54,000 miles on it and is a diesel. The asking price is \$40,000. He has requested maintenance records, and there is no accident record. It has been kept in good shape.

Update on Governor Evers EMS initiative – Great Divide Ambulance received \$117,770 from the EMS Flex Grant. However, we have not received notification on what the funds can be spent on as of yet.

Status of ambulance fleet; discussion on purchasing used ambulance – This was discussed in part during the update above. MOTION made by Jack McGregor to authorize Rob Puls to look at the used ambulance from Gordon and assess the worth and bid up to \$40,000 to purchase. MOTION seconded by Jack Iverson and carried.

2023 Budget – The 2023 budget was presented and explained in detail by Laura Bjork. The presented budget included an increase in subsidies from \$150/parcel to \$190/parcel. It was noted that this increase could be taken as a levy limit adjustment on the second page of the form, Line I. The budget also included a loan for the purchase of one ambulance and the purchase of another ambulance with funds being used from the Flex Grant. Retirement increased from 6.5% to 6.75%. It was noted that the 2023 budget included the second-year payment for medical equipment, a three-year commitment. The 2023 budget included the second-year payment of the Drummond Town sponsored loan for the building, a five-year commitment. Funds were still being used from savings to balance the budget! This year a projected \$188,459.01 is being used. The service continues to be unsustainable. There was discussion on the current hourly wage rates for EMTs and Paramedics and the overtime that the employees are putting into the service. Lack of employees, low wages and increased duties for management have put a strain on the service. There was a budget presented that included only transports to see what the cost difference would be to change the service to 911 response only.

There was discussion on setting rates for the service, however, there are mandates that need to be followed for those charges. Medicare rates are set by the government. Medicaid is federal funding which is given in portions to the state who then pays that apportionment out to services.

MOTION made by Roy Bloom to approve the budget as presented increasing town subsidies to \$190/parcel. MOTION seconded by Jack McGregor and carried.

There was discussion on the ad hoc committee for Bayfield County and the changes in legislature.

The meeting was adjourned @ 12:16pm.