

Great Divide Ambulance
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 8, 2021
7pm at the new Great Divide Ambulance Building
43555 US Highway 63, Cable, WI 54821

Roy Bloom called to order at 7:04pm. In attendance were Roy Bloom, Rob Puls, Jack McGregor, Larry Ludzack, and Laura Bjork.

Update on the activities with the ambulance service – Rob Puls reported that as of today, Great Divide has gone on 927 runs, compared to last year at 1,039 runs. These are good numbers. The summer has been busy. Last year was quite unusual due to COVID and no longer operating in Ashland County in January. There was a meeting recently with Senator Tammy Baldwin, who basically stated that the state has to move forward with ambulance service in all communities. Ashland County did a lot of complaining. Her solution was to buy Glidden an ambulance. The county is moving forward with a committee for area-wide service. Rob has mentioned interest in the committee, but the county has not yet chosen the members. Duluth was on divert all summer, so the service has been traveling longer distances, i.e Eau Claire, Lacrosse and St Paul, MN. This is causing many miles to be put on the vehicles and keeping crews gone for long periods of time. Two Braun trucks have been ordered, but they could not be guaranteed until February 2023, however, it might be possible to see something in July or August. Jack McGregor suggested putting new engines in an ambulance to hold them over. Oil changes are now being done in house with John Tuttle. This saves a little bit of money, but mainly saves time. The new building has allowed them to consider this option. The service has an aging fleet with lots of miles on them. Earlier this year billing companies were changed, and it is a mess. The new billing service has downgraded a lot of our runs due to state regulations. The state downgraded Critical Care, which effected out billing. Great Divide is no longer doing transfers for Park Falls. Occasionally, there will be a call, but not very often. Ashland Fire is vigorously covering Ashland Hospital. We became first out for Hayward as of June 15th. We covered every call from them, except for three runs. Another crew was staffed to be able to keep the coverage. They would like to extend their contract with us, but something should be done in writing. There is not much coming out of Spooner, as the contact there was fired. The service lost two full time employees recently, one paramedic and one EMT. We may need to advertise the need for employees, because currently we only have three crews. We do not have enough employees to staff a fourth crew. There were two new people in EMT class. One dropped out right away, but the other one looks to graduate in January.

2022 Budget – A preliminary budget was presented. Changes were made as follows:

August income was received for 2020 - \$227,564.50 total and Sept/Oct estimated total changed to \$200,000.

Billing fees were changed for 2020 August was \$14,066.03 and estimates were changed to \$7,000/month for 7% of the \$100,000 of patient fees.

Patient Fees for 2022 was changed to 1,300,000.

Town Income for 2022 was changed to \$401,250 as rates were increased from \$70/parcel to \$150/parcel.

Building Sale for 2022 was changed to \$100,000.

Tracking devices were added to 2022 budget with the following changes: (\$1,400) to Uniforms and (\$1,000) to Training and \$2,400 added to Radios.

New ambulance expense was deleted for 2022 and a new engine rebuild was added to repairs \$50,000.

These changes allowed for the budget to be balanced. Laura Bjork will get notices to the 4 townships for the increases. The board also considered the cost for just providing 911 care to the area. The cost was approximately \$400,000 just in payroll including the benefits that are provided. The Board approved the 2022 budget with these changes.

Roy Bloom adjourned at 9:12pm.