

Great Divide Ambulance

Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, February 9, 2024 Minutes

11am at the Cable Community Center

13660 County Highway M, Cable, WI 54821

Roy Bloom called the meeting to order at 11:13am. In attendance were Roy Bloom, Ron Gran, Dahl Alvin, Jack McGregor, Jamie Holly, Rob Puls, Tony Lang and Laura Bjork and Sue Rosa.

2023 Financial Report – The financial report was presented by Laura Bjork. The highlights were the amount of donations received, increase in event fee income, ARPA funds and increase in FAP funds, increase in interest received, sale of the 2 vehicles from WI Surplus, increase received in patient fees, and the decrease in payroll expenditures. MOTION made by Jack McGregor to put the balance of loans into a designated loan fund and \$200,000 to designated ambulance vehicle replacement fund to reflect on the 2023 Financial report. MOTION seconded by Jamie Holly and carried.

Great Divide Ambulance update – Rob Puls stated that the service continues to need more employees. He noted that the results of the financial report were made possible by only 6 employees. January was a very good month, but it could have been better if there was better staffing. February has been extremely slow, which is a result from low tourism, lack of snow and lack of recreation in the area. Employees are working 6-7 days a week, 24 hour shifts. Our equipment is in good shape. The medical equipment requested to be purchased from donations is in the process (IV infusion pumps and stair chairs). This service is very dynamic. Just to cover the schedule is a day-to-day process because of the lack of employees. The county is moving forward with looking into county wide ambulance service. They just hired a consultant for \$45,000 to complete a study for county wide ambulance service. The ad-hoc committee has been reinstated by the county. Tony Lang will be representing GDAS on this committee. Many services in the area are not responding, and GDAS has responded to Iron River, further side of Grand View and Mason on 911 calls. Rob was notified that OSHA will be updating their guidelines, which will create more compliance regulations from employees. Tony Lang stated the new ambulances are running well. Acuity with patients is increasing. Employee skills are down right now because there are not as many accidents needing intricate service. Tony Lang talked about the medical facility status in the area, such as Marshfield and Essentia, etc.

Vehicle to Sheriff's Department – Rob Puls stated that it would be reasonable to request \$2,500 to \$3,000 for the 2016 Ford ambulance. Tony Lang stated that the sheriff's dept was requesting a donated ambulance. We will wait to hear from them if they are still interested.

Accounts at Superior Choice Credit Union – Laura Bjork discussed opening accounts at Superior Choice Credit Union with the townships as beneficiaries to increase the insured amount at the bank and receive higher interest rates. MOTION made by Jamie Holly to set up an account at Superior Choice Credit Union with the townships as beneficiaries to allow for increased insurance coverage. It is noted that this is contingent upon township approvals. MOTION seconded by Dahl Alvin and carried. (It is noted that this was not pursued due to the townships not needing to be beneficiaries, but signers on the account.)

New hires for driving only – The state is now allowing anyone with a license to be a driver with a CPR certification for a transfer with a paramedic in the back. The board agreed to have Tony Lang and Rob Puls to work on a job description. The job description was to include a clean driving record, CPR certification, EVOC training, be able to assist with loading and unloading patients and driving an ambulance to and from hospitals on non-emergent transfers (no lights and siren) with a paramedic in the back doing patient care. The more pressing issue is what to pay them. Rob Puls noted that scheduling is also an issue. The employees would have to be on schedule because it would not be possible to call them every time they needed to go out on call. There also needs to be consideration regarding the pay rate. It must be minimum wage to be on call and then a higher hourly rate when behind the wheel. There was a discussion about insurance liabilities. The board considered requiring a CDL license. The board suggested considering Fire Dept. personnel that already have EVOC training. Follow-up needs to be done with our insurance agent. The board agreed to offer this position as part time work under 20 hours per week with no benefits.

New hires as RNs – Tony Lang stated that the state has made it easy for registered nurses to apply to be a provider. The Service Director and Medical Director need to approve them, and then they are approved to work as a provider on the ambulance. This would give paramedics a reprieve. It would allow for one paramedic to be on schedule and one RN. The RN would take the transfer calls, if it was not an intubated patient, and the paramedic would stay behind for 911 calls. RNs cannot do critical care transfers. A lot of RNs don't have EMT training, but we could require that training. The employees would preferably come from RNs working in the ER, not on the floor. Rob Puls stated Ashland Fire sends the RNs on transfers, Ashland hospital pays them, and Ashland Fire still gets paid for the transfer. RNs are required to have EMR training in Ashland to be trained for the circumstances of ambulance services. There is something to be aware of: if a critical transfer comes in, then the paramedic must go, and the nurse stays, but then the service is not serving the community at paramedic level. If nurses could take training, then this would not be an issue. Rob Puls and Tony Lang will continue to work on this and put together a job description.

Social media page – Tony Lang requested the board consider having a social media page for the ambulance service. This would be a place to be able to list job openings and pics of things the ambulance is involved in. It was noted there is a social media policy within the employee handbook. Laura Bjork stated that the Town of Cable and the Town of Namakagon have included the ambulance service on their website. There would need to be someone to maintain the website, and it takes quite a bit of time. The service can request postings to the townships. Tony Lang stated that this would not be a website, but a social media page that he would handle. The board agreed to start a Facebook page that Tony Lang will manage. It was noted that the comments would be turned off on the page.

Roy Bloom adjourned the meeting at 1:03pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Bjork