

Item 4



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: May 21, 2013

Prepared By/Phone Number: Danny Hobby/854-4416

Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Danny Hobby

Commissioners Court Sponsor: County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

RECEIVE BRIEFING AND DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING FIRE AND EMS SERVICE OPTIONS IN TRAVIS COUNTY OUTSIDE THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

- A. Continue to contract with the City of Austin for emergency medical services in the county using new financial template and new county zones.
- B. Consider other EMS service delivery alternatives for emergency medical services in the county.
- C. Consider operational enhancements for emergency service districts in the development of a unified fire service in the county.
- D. Consider the feasibility of a consolidated fire-based emergency medical system in the county, using those affected county department representatives as needed.
- E. Review current county ambulance locations and unit utilizations, current deployment methods, populations, and call volumes to determine immediate and future service delivery options.
- F. Consider the hiring of an independent consultant to work with the area stakeholders in reviewing A-D above.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:

The purpose of the FY 2009 EMS Interlocal Cooperative Agreement ("Agreement") is to provide for emergency medical services and medical transport services to Suburban Travis County (the county's geographic area outside the City of Austin) through the use of City staff, City-owned equipment, County provided stations, and County-owned vehicles and other assets.

It is now time to review other possible service options to see if alternative methods will benefit utilization of resources, performance and cost of service. This is a review that will involve various stakeholders in the system and will allow participation by those who serve in our first responder organizations throughout the county.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Emergency Services recommends discussion with the Court on these possible service options in Travis County.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

County and City staff will continue to review recommendations or changes we feel may be necessary to benefit the service delivery and the cost of services for emergency medical services in Travis County outside the City of Austin. This is one such opportunity.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

To be determined once recommendations are developed.

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

Barbara Wilson, County Attorney's Office, 854-9567

Marvin Brice, Purchasing Office, 854-9765

Kapp Schwebke, Auditor's Office, 854-6628

~~Alan Miller, PBO, 854-9726~~

David Salazar, Judge's Office, 854-9555



EMERGENCY SERVICES

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*Emergency Management
Pete Baldwin, Emergency Mgmt.
Coordinator*

*Fire Marshal
Hershel Lee*

*Medical Examiner
Dr. David Dolinak*

*STAR Flight
Casey Ping, Program Director*

MEMORANDUM

To: Travis County Commissioners Court

From: Danny Hobby, County Executive, Emergency Services

Date: May 13, 2013

Subject: Briefing and Discussion on Fire and EMS Service Options in Travis County Outside the City of Austin

This agenda request is to provide a briefing and have discussion regarding county service improvements to our current fire and emergency medical system outside the City of Austin, and to receive Court direction regarding them.

I currently facilitate and work with various stakeholder groups throughout the county (An Emergency Services District Commissioners Group, An ESD Fire Chief's Group, A Small Cities and Villages Group, A Zoning Group with City EMS and Office of the Medical Director, and a stakeholder group made up of various stakeholders, CAFCA). I feel these working groups can evaluate and produce the recommendations that are needed to improve our fire and emergency medical system outside the City of Austin.

I will brief and ask for discussion on the following service options:

A. *Continue to contract with the City of Austin for emergency medical services in the county using new financial template developed and new county zones established.*

This service option has shown real improvements over the last few months that encourages more dialog and discussion regarding service delivery in the county by the City of Austin. FY14 contract negotiations are underway at this time. This review would consider the overall services provided, the performance measures established and outcomes, and the costs associated with contracting with the City, both short term and long term.

B. *Consider other EMS service delivery alternatives for emergency medical services in the county.*

This service option would review alternative service delivery options in addition to the current first responder and ground transport services we currently utilize in the county. This would consider using other service providers around Travis County in a joint service contract where appropriate; using private ambulance services where appropriate in the county; using ALS squads in geographic locations around the county, assisting with patient response and better utilization of fire equipment and staffing; using small cities

and villages in providing funding for equipment, staffing or property; and using fire districts as appropriate for ALS on engines.

C. Consider operational enhancements for emergency service districts in the development of a unified fire service in the county.

This service option would review operational enhancements for districts in moving toward a full unified fire service in the county. This review would consider assisting with funding for staffing, equipment, and other resources deemed appropriate for the improvement of both fire and first responder services in the county. A 1998 report stated this type support was needed to assist district operations in the future, so it is time to review this once again. This could be implemented with our current interlocal agreements being turned into performance contracts, and the hiring of a fire coordinator within the county Emergency Service budget.

D. Consider the feasibility of a consolidated fire-based emergency medical system in the county, using those affected county department representatives as needed.

This service option would look at the feasibility of a county fire department for those districts choosing to participate. This would look at district staff becoming county employees and operations (fire and medical response) being run through the county in providing fire, first response and ground transport where appropriate. This review would consider and examine all the support services (fleet, dispatch, medical supplies, etc.) needed to create this department. Those affected county departments would need to be involved in this review.

E. Review current county ambulance locations and unit utilizations, current deployment methods, populations, and call volumes to determine immediate and future service delivery options.

This review option would continue the good work underway with the Zone Group, developing better delivery methods and alternatives from what we do today in the county. This would consider and evaluate moving current county stations with low utilizations; using STAR Flight more in response to appropriate county medical calls; changing dispatch deployment for greater utilization of county units; comparing populations with call volumes to determine immediate and future service needs, and using response time standards that better define the service levels in the county.

F. Consider the hiring of an independent consultant to work with the area stakeholders in reviewing A-D above.

This review option would be requested if area stakeholders felt the need to use an outside expert to review their review options and recommendations. It would be anticipated this type request would involve an hourly contract and not a full blown consultant work contract with one firm.

In summary, it has been rewarding to work with all the stakeholder groups and I think we have made real progress toward getting to improvements in service, but it is important to now take the action steps that will implement change for the better and also put to rest the fears and unknowns about who is doing what and for what reason. Our residents deserve the most appropriate resources and response we can provide them and our taxpayers deserve the due diligence necessary to make sure the cost of service is balanced and reasonable.

Thank you for our consideration in this matter.