

GRANDVIEW FIRE DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shane Fisher, City Administrator
COPY: Anita Palacios, City Clerk
FROM: Pat Mason, Fire Chief
DATE: February 11, 2024
SUBJECT: Ambulance ILA Services

Shane,

Below you will find some additional information in reference to our recent discussions concerning ambulance services supplied to the City of Grandview.

History up to this point with Sunnyside:

- A. In 2018 & 2019 we evaluated local ambulance services and decided to start an ILA with the City of Sunnyside for them to provide us with primary ambulance services. We would pay them \$163,440 per year to help them with their financial losses. This helps ensure that the ambulance service is financially viable and will continue to be available to our community. In addition, they would make arrangements to have an ambulance in town to shorten response times and assist with other duties up to 12 hours per day as the call volume allowed. This ILA was put together and implemented on Sept. 1, 2019.
- B. In 2020 I did a study and we started an Ambulance Utility Fund in May 2021. The current rate is \$5.95 per ERU. Approximate revenue annually, \$306,000. Additional EMS Revenue comes from the Yakima County EMS Levy. Approximate revenue annually, \$147,000.
- C. There have been some ongoing discussions about some aspects of the ILA in regards to what the personnel would do while they're stationed here in Grandview. These discussions have been on and off over the years and have been affected by changes in personnel and internal contract negotiations in Sunnyside.
- D. In 2023 there were additional changes to personnel in Sunnyside and further discussions about what the personnel would do while they were at the Grandview station. In response to these discussions, Sunnyside discounted our fee for part of 2023. We ended up paying full price for 2 months and 50% of the cost for 10 months. In addition, during 2023, there have been concerns raised by Sunnyside as to whether they have enough personnel on staff to be able to station a crew in Grandview during the day. As a result of these concerns, the ambulance crew now rarely spends any time at the Grandview station.
- E. Although through the ILA agreement, Sunnyside is currently obligated to provide us service through most of 2024 at the current cost, they have asked to renegotiate the agreement. They would like us to either discontinue the agreement, and let them respond as needed from their station in Sunnyside, or pay them \$434,330 annually for a 2-person ambulance crew to be stationed at the Grandview station for 12 hrs. per day.

Additional information:

The last 2 to 3 months I have been having discussions with Prosser Hospital Ambulance in regards to whether they would be interested in providing this service and what they would charge for it.

Options:

1. Continue to pay Sunnyside the current \$211,500 per year and hold them to the agreement for this year. They indicated that they would only have an ambulance in Grandview when the size of the crew allowed. When asked, they indicated that would probably be less than 10% of the usual time. I would anticipate that by the end of this year they would go through the formal process to end the ILA.
2. Pay Sunnyside \$434,330 annually. This would allow them to hire additional FTE's and they would then make sure there was a 2-person crew in town 12 hrs. per day as call volume allows.
3. Negotiate with Prosser Hospital Ambulance to pay them annually to help offset their financial loses similar to what we're now doing with Sunnyside. In return they would negotiate providing approximately 8 hours coverage per day from a crew located here at the Grandview station as call volume allows. The annual cost would be based on a percentage of what they lose financially on the calls they would run in our jurisdiction. Currently it's anticipated that the cost would be similar to or a little less than what we're currently paying.
4. Start our own ambulance service.
5. Discontinue paying anyone for ambulance service and go back to requesting an ambulance from Sunnyside or Prosser as needed. This option doesn't ensure that we would always have an ambulance service available to our community. Depending on financial burden to the organizations involved, they could close their service at anytime because they have no contractual obligation to us to provide the service. In addition, if we choose this option, then we would need to discontinue the Ambulance utility Fund since we're not providing the service anymore. This would mean some of the fire department expenses covered by that fund would need to be absorbed by the General Fund.

My recommendation is to pursue Option 3 and negotiate an ILA with Prosser Hospital Ambulance at our earliest convenience. In addition, I recommend that we research Option 4 in regards to starting our own minimum 10 hour per day ambulance service operated by a combination of FTE's and Volunteers.

If you have any questions or need further information please let me know.

Thanks,
Pat