

FREMONT COUNTY SPECIAL COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES
March 20, 2013

Present for the meeting was: Commissioners Lee Miller, Jordon Stoddard and Bill Baxter.

Also attended by: Clerk Abbie Mace, Deputy Clerk Laura Singleton, Coroner Bonnie Burlage EMS Director Bob Foster, Ashton Unit President Lynn Ballard, Medical Director Dr. Robert Wells, Island Park Unit President Lesli Walker, and St. Anthony Unit President Rod Chandler, there were many EMT's and members of the public.

Commissioner Miller called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

The commissioners held a special meeting to visit with the ambulance unit presidents, EMS Director Bob Foster, and Dr. Robert Wells to discuss the issues and problems in the county with the ambulance service. Commissioner Miller asked the unit presidents to discuss three things that are positive and three things that are negative and need to be worked on.

Commissioner Miller stated that radio communications have been a problem throughout the county and they have already discussed this with Teton Communications and are working to fix this problem.

Rod Chandler (St. Anthony Unit President) – Mr. Chandler stated the biggest advantage that they have is a larger number of people in the St. Anthony area. Because of this, they have many people who are able to go out during the day when they have emergency calls. He also stated the addition to the shed has been a great help and feels it was worth every dime. Training has also improved because standards have been raised. He also stated that classes can be taken on the internet. Radios are a concern because coverage has not been good and they end up using their cell phones. He does not like the trailer that is at the Sand Dunes that stores the sand rail. It is difficult to get the sand rail out of the trailer because the doorway is so narrow. He stated it would be better to have a bigger shed at the dunes. He feels they communicate as a group very well and resolve their issues within their group. There are 7 to 8 advanced EMTs in the St. Anthony unit. There is usually at least 1 advanced EMT on each run for the St. Anthony area.

Lynn Ballard (Ashton Unit President) – Mr. Ballard stated he feels that they have had a really good unit. They have faced some challenges but have overcome them. They have 2 advanced EMTs, 8 basics, and 2 drivers. They all have a desire to help out in the community. He stated that they do have a morale problem within the group and there is division between the north and south. He feels there is a lack of trust and therefore it is difficult to discuss things. Challenges have come up within the last year. They have difficulty covering day runs because people have other jobs. This is one of their challenges. They have a hard time getting people to come out and become EMTs because there is a lot of training and testing so you have to put in a lot of time and effort. Half of the staff has dropped in the last year. Mr. Ballard stated that it does not feel like a family anymore and there was a time that it did. They also have challenges because they share the facility with other departments.

Commissioner Miller talked about the frustration that we have with all the mandates that have come up and the training that has to be done.

Lesli Walker (Island Park Unit President) – Ms. Walker stated that their staff is awesome and are very giving of their time. They come to all the meetings that are held. They like the opportunity to help people. She also stated that the law enforcement officers are wonderful and always lend a hand. They love their new shed and appreciate it. One negative is the radios do not work well which creates confusion and it happens frequently enough to be a pain. Response times are also a challenge because Island Park is such a large area to cover. When there is a situation that they can't get to a victim, Search & Rescue helps out. They have 3 advanced EMTs, 6 basic EMTs, and 2 drivers. She stated that the daytime coverage is better than it used to be. There are eleven people on the crew with three more during the summer months.

Commissioner Jordon Stoddard expressed appreciation for the work that the EMTs do. He stated he would like to see problems handled within the unit and if it can't be handled by the president then it should be taken to the director.

Dr. Robert Wells – Mr. Wells stated he has a positive perspective on the program. He feels we care for the people in the county very well. He discussed what he does as a director for the area. He stated it is very difficult to become an EMT but we need to stay positive. We have a logistically difficult area because of the distance and rural nature of the area. He feels there is a lot of bickering over hurt feelings within the units. Everyone needs to pull together and we need to foster a cohesiveness to pull forward. There needs to be focus on being positive and providing the best possible care. He also stated that the lack of staffing in the Ashton area has been a problem.

EMS Director Bob Foster – Mr. Foster stated there are outstanding people in the units. The units are well equipped. He also feels we could resolve the radio issue quickly if we are willing to spend the money. The issue of challenges that arise due to training is not going away. He feels the structure is antiquated. He discussed creating an Ambulance Advisory Committee. He also discussed doing a level of service study.

Commissioner Stoddard urged the EMTs to get the Advanced EMT certificates and would like those who have quit, to consider coming back. He stated we are going to make this work.

Lynn Ballard asked if we could be able to work out a way to have county employees be compensated as EMTs also. Clerk Abbie Mace stated that this becomes a very complex issue in trying to figure out how to compensate the county employees and which budget it comes out of for overtime pay.

Commissioner Miller made a motion to amend the agenda to go into an executive session. Commissioner Stoddard seconded the motion. A full voice vote was heard with all commissioners voting in favor.

Commissioner Miller made a motion to go into executive session pursuant to IC 67-2345(1)(b) To consider the evaluation, dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent, or public school student; at 5:07 p.m. Commissioner Stoddard seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Commissioner Stoddard voting "Aye", Commissioner Miller voting "Aye" and Commissioner Baxter voting "Aye". Commissioner Miller declared the meeting open at 6:22 p.m.

Commissioner Miller thanked the EMT's for the service they have provided to the county. We will go forward with some things to try to improve the EMS Service in the County. We will go forward with a level of service study by an outside agency. We will still leave open the possibility of an advisory committee going forward. We will work harder on accountability to the unit presidents on why EMTS don't respond to a call. We will continue to work on training and recruiting. Commissioner Stoddard will be the liaison with the attending unit meetings. Again the commissioners appreciate the dedication and passion of those who serve as EMT's. We need to remain positive and pull together to go forward with serving the citizens of Fremont County. This is not a quick fix; this will take time to work together going forward.

Commissioner Stoddard stated he also appreciates everyone and asks everyone to continue to work together.

Commissioner Baxter stated no one has a magic wand to fix this we all need to commit to working together for the betterment of the County. He respects the EMT's for the service that they do.

Commissioner Miller stated this will take time working together to make a stronger EMT organization. We will go forward and stay positive in our efforts to make this work.

There being no further business to come before the board the meeting was adjourned.

LeRoy Miller, Chairman
Fremont County Commission

Attest: _____
Abbie Mace, Clerk