

UNAPPROVED OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

FLOYD COUNTY EMS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Date: October 24th, 2023

Time: 5:00 P.M.

Meeting called to order by: Patrick Lumley

IN ATTENDANCE

Voting Members: Patrick Lumley, Dawnett Willis, Jeff Sterling, Dave Luett, Dawn Staudt

Non-Voting Members: Dennis Keifer an alternate for Jim Jorgenson

Public: Mayor Andrews, Charles City Press Reporter, Sandy Smith (Osceola EMS), Jean McPherson (Jones County EMS)

Meeting Called to Order by: Council Chair-Patrick Lumley

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Dave Luett

Second by Jeff Sterling

Action Taken: Agenda approved by council.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST MINUTES

Motion made by Dawnett Willis

Seconded by: Jeff Sterling

Action Taken: August minutes approved by council.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH JONES COUNTY AND OSCEOLA COUNTY EMS

A roundtable discussion with Sandra Smith of Osceola County EMS and Jean McPherson of Jones County EMS attended via Zoom to answer questions about their EMS tax levy campaigns and successful implementation with their respective county.

The EMS Advisory council posed the following questions:

- When deciding on the funding source for the EMS Tax Levy, what dynamics drove the decision to utilize the Property Tax, Local Option Income Surtax, or a combination of both on the ballot and why? **Both counties utilized the property tax as a stand-alone option, due to the tax payor feeling like they would be double taxed if the Local Option Income Surtax was also added to the ballot.**
- How complex was the EMS Tax Levy language on the ballot? Was the ballot question simple to understand by voters and still follow the guidelines within the Iowa Code? **Both counties struggled with trying to keep the ballot language “user friendly” and stay within the Iowa Code. Each county simplified the wording as much as possible, staying in line with Iowa code and the chosen wording seemed easy to understand for respective voters.**
- What platforms (social media and other) did you use to communicate the significance of the EMS Tax Levy to the public? **Both counties utilized social media, such as city and county websites, Facebook, Newspaper inserts etc. to promote the need for the levy to support EMS. Jean McPherson stated that in Jones County, they started a brand-new Facebook page dedicated solely to the EMS Tax Levy. Both counties held town hall meetings, utilized press releases, had “open house events” at their EMS agencies, set up an information booth at their local county fair, used flyers and yard signs to get the word out to as many people as possible. Sandra Smith pointed out that in Osceola County they stressed to the public the time delay to wait for an ambulance to come from a neighboring county would be a minimum of 15 minutes no matter where you may be in Osceola County. Sandra Smith also pointed out that they stressed this message to the public: EMS is not a required resource in the State of Iowa like fire and law enforcement, if we can’t find a funding source, you may not have EMS available in your county when you call 911.**
- What was the overall message to the public regarding the EMS Tax Levy? **Both counties stressed the simple fact, EMS is currently not an essential service and is not required to be provided to the community. The wait time to get an ambulance from an outlying area could take 15-30 minutes. They both stressed that at the time there was no current funding stream to support EMS.**
- Were there other competing initiatives on the ballot with the EMS Tax Levy or was the EMS Tax Levy stand-alone? **Neither county at the time had competing levies or large bond referendums on the ballot other than elected officials being on the ballot.**
- Prior to passing the EMS Tax Levy, what were the EMS service dynamics (for profit, in-house, other) that propelled your county to proceed with the EMS Tax Levy? **Both counties, while different in dynamics, were essentially in-house not for profit service.**
- Looking back, if you were attempting to pass the EMS Tax Levy, what would you do the same, and differently in your approach? **Both counties expressed to factor in requiring more money than originally requested or forecasted. Due to the long wait time for tax levy funds to generate and unexpected costs, each recommended to add those as factors when determine annual costs prior to determining forecasted budgets as costs continue to increase.**
- When choosing a duration of the EMS Tax Levy, what local and or county level dynamics factored into the decision-making process and why? **Both counties stated that a short duration would not facilitate enough EMS cost change, plus having to go in front of the voters again. A longer duration may not actually capture the true EMS costs and actually limit the funds required to maintain EMS services. Both counties were in the middle with respect to duration of the EMS Tax Levy.**
- Even though the Iowa Code is very clear on how the EMS Tax Levy can be spent, did you encounter negativity towards the EMS Tax Levy in relation to the “urban myth” that the money

collected from the levy would not be spent solely on EMS and money would be reallocated to other expenses? If so, how did you address those concerns? **Both counties stated that they did not receive negative feedback with regards to the EMS Tax Levy, with constituents understanding the needs for EMS service.**

Public Comment-No comments

Discussion after roundtable: In the event the council decides to use yard signs, the number of signs needed was discussed, based on the number of signs that were needed for the school's initiative, 200 signs seem to be the appropriate amount to cover the county. The process of getting permission to put up yard signs throughout the county was also discussed. The movie theater marketing idea was discussed, and Pat Lumley was going to do some more research on cost to advertise at the local theater. Pat will pass along the media information from Osceola and Jones County when he receives them. Facebook and social media platforms discussed and will be further discussed at the next meeting. No actions taken at this meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is scheduled for 5PM 21 November 2023, in the Floyd County Board of Supervisors Board Room.

Motion to adjourn made by Dave, second by Jeff, action taken: meeting adjourned at 6:30 P.M.