

**POCONO TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING TO REVIEW AMBULANCE SERVICES
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND 2016 BUDGET PRESENTATION
OCTOBER 6th, 2015**

5:00 P.M.

The Special meeting of the Pocono Township Commissioners to review the Request for Proposals for Ambulance Services was held on 10/06/2015 at the Pocono Township Municipal Building, Tannersville, PA, and was opened by President Richard Wielebinski at 5:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Rich Wielebinski, present; Jerry Lastowski, present; Tom Felver, present; Peter Nish, present; and Brad Wise, present.

Gregg Schuster, Township Manager; Regina Zuvich, Township Treasurer; and Pamela Finkbeiner, Township Secretary were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

INTERVIEWS:

G. Schuster explained the Board had requested RFPs for Township ambulance service. Five RFP's were received and the Board decided to conduct the interviews at a public meeting. Each company was allowed 30 minutes for their presentations and interviews by alphabetical order.

Central Pocono Ambulance - Roy and Linda Smith introduced themselves and gave a brief history of Central Pocono Ambulance's service since 1960 to Pocono Township. They have 10 fulltime employees and 6 part-time. R. Smith noted two employees recently left. They provide 24/7 coverage with someone at the building at all times. He noted the service has been struggling financially as shown in their audit. He felt strongly that if legislation change to insurance reimbursement changes in 2016, the financial difficulties would be corrected. Discussion followed on funding and wheelchair transports. P. Nish questioned if a partnership with the other hospitals was considered. R. Smith noted Pocono Hospital had given them a proposal but CPA did not commit. R. Wielebinski and J. Lastowski noted CPA has served the community for 50 years and the Township would like to work with them.

Monroe County EMS - John Crockett, Executive Director, and Jeff Snyder, Pocono Health Systems, explained they are partnering with non-profit local Ambulance services to provide high quality care and service to the area. The new hospital will be located in Pocono Township. They will provide 24/7 service, two dedicated trucks, honor CPA subscriptions, consider hiring the staff of CPA if qualified. They are partnering with West End Ambulance and have reached out to Pocono Mountain Regional. They have contacted CPA but were unable to make it work. Nick DeWitt, Suburban EMS, noted they are a non-profit in business for 56 years and have done business in Monroe for the last 13 years. Dr. Nche Zama, Pocono Medical Center, spoke concerning the quality of care offered with regional Ambulance services.

Pocono Mountain Regional - Heidi Pickard, Chairwoman, explained their service covers Coolbaugh, Tobyhanna, Paradise and Barrett Townships. Their proposal included a partial coverage or full coverage for the Township. H. Pickard introduced the staff. She noted three stations presently and the trucks are able to transmit EKG's directly to the hospital. They would require funding from the Township and offer a subscription program and will honor current CPA subscriptions. They offer community support, cover school events, and volunteer for events.

St. Luke's - Kermit Gromley, Emergency Management, reviewed their proposal. They would locate within Pocono Township and required no funding from the Township. They will work with CPA and noted as they grow with the completion of the new hospital in Bartonsville, they will provide additional services. The new hospital will provide a level one trauma center. They will honor all existing subscriptions and try to partner with the local non-profit services. They will provide services as soon as permitted if chosen.

West End Ambulance - C. J. Dickson explained they have served the area for 60 years with a Gold Standard of excellence. They have 40 employees, 1 ALS, and provide 24/7 coverage. They will not require funding but may ask in the future for a ½ mil for capital improvement. John Crocket, Pocono Medical noted they are working with West End concerning a merger. C. J. Dickson noted he felt regionalization was good for the community. Discussion concerning coverage for Camelback ski area, attending community events, and service areas.

G. Schuster, Twp. manager, thanked the services for attending.

Gary Hoffman, Director of Communications, Monroe County Control Center, noted it is the first time a Township is in the position of two new hospitals being built in their area. He suggested the Board consider a performance bond. He stated Jackson Township will be impacted by Pocono's decision. John Klaus noted they are seeing the transition to regional ambulance services. He noted transports are no less meaningful than ambulance services.

Next steps - R. Wielebinski requested 20 days to review. Discussion followed concerning the rating process. R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by P. Nish, to interview the top three ambulance services on 11/2/2015 at 4:00 p.m. and to authorize the Township secretary to advertise the same. Roll call vote: T. Felver, no; P. Nish, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; and B. Wise, yes. Motion carried.

The Board took a short recess.

2016 Budget - G. Schuster, Twp. Manager, reviewed the draft budget for the board. He noted the proposed budget does not change the mileage rate and the Township mileage is still somewhat higher than other Townships.

Key points discussed:

- a) Change to fund structure - G. Schuster explained since the Township is 1st class, the Township does not need to separate the funds. He noted the proposed budget eliminates the Park Fund, Emergency service fund, and the Debt Service fund and rolls them into the general fund. A new Capital fund will be added. J. Lastowski raised concerns over the change to funding.
- b) Additional employees - fulltime Zoning Officer, hiring of a part-time clerk for filing and filling in, and Zoning Hearing Board secretary. Non-union salary increases are not in the budget at present.
- c) Public Works - vegetation control - if the Township does not acquire a new bucket truck, an outside contractor will need to be hired.
- d) Recreation - HJP Funding has been removed.
- e) Debt Service - all debt will be finished next year, excepting the Sewer funds.
- f) Liquid Fuels has been increased by \$50,000.00
- g) Sewer Operating Fund - Funding is included for the Rt. 611 safety project. Discussion on future expenses expected with the repairs to the system.
- h) Sewer Construction fund - Three remaining items to complete - repair of hump, service lateral installation, and the redesign of the line.
- i) Capital Fund - R. Wielebinski thanked the CIP committee for their work on the Capital Improvement Plan. G. Schuster reviewed the proposed truck purchases, roadway overlays, buildings and grounds improvements. The fund balance for Capital Improvements.

S. Gilliland spoke concerning the Capital Improvement Plan and recommended a professional service inspect the buildings to assist with the creation of a 10 year plan for buildings. He noted a professional evaluation can be used to develop a prioritized plan and give better idea what the Township is facing for future costs. Discussion followed on building maintenance. The Board concurred to place the proposed Budget on the October 19th, 2015 regular meeting for questions.

G. Schuster noted if the Board wishes to retain the former emergency services fund, he will adjust the budget. J. Lastowski requested the emergency services stay as before. G. Schuster stated in the future there should be an agreement with the Fire Company. J. Lastowski will speak to the Trustees of the Fire Company. Discussion followed on an agreement with the Fire Company.

P. Nish requested the Zoning Officer's report be placed on the website.

ADJOURNMENT:

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by P. Nish, to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 p.m., Roll call vote: Roll call vote: T. Felver, yes; P. Nish, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; and B. Wise, yes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted

Pamela Finkbeiner, Township Secretary