

AMSA BOARD
Area Metropolitan Services Agency
City of Battle Creek Airport Administration Building
15551 South Airport Road
Battle Creek, MI 49015
Thursday, January 17, 2019
3:00 PM

Members Present: Rebecca Fleury , City of Battle Creek: Tim Hill and Steve Buller, Emmett Township: Kevin Catlin, City of Springfield: Dave Morgan and Barb Darlington, Pennfield Township:

Members Absent: Susan Baldwin, Chris Simmons and Marcie Gillette, City of Battle Creek: Rande Johnson and Marty Uldriks, Bedford Township: Terry Blanair, City of Springfield: Jason Farmer, Convis Township: Troy Radcliff, Newton Township: Laveta Hardish and Doug Chapman, Leroy Township: Steve Frisbee and Kelli Scott, Calhoun County (non-voting members).

Guests: William Scutt, Charter Township of Bedford

Others Present: Vicki Houser, Battle Creek City Clerk

Call to order/Recognition of Quorum: Mr. Morgan called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm, noting a quorum was not present.

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

Discussion

Mr. Buller recommended the board members be polled on a more convenient time to meet each quarter, hoping to find a better time and date to ensure a quorum.

Mr. Hill recommended more collaboration of services among all municipalities, providing an example of the numerous fire stations within close proximity in the different municipalities. Mr. Hill stated more uniformity in equipment may allow better purchasing opportunities.

Mr. Scutt agreed working with local fire departments when purchasing equipment would provide better pricing. As to the ladder truck in Bedford, Mr. Scutt noted the VA helped with the purchase.

Mr. Morgan stated the Fire Department was the highest cost for Pennfield Township, stating municipalities needed a strategic plan for the entire area to ensure no duplication of services or equipment, stating they needed to better collaborate to reduce costs. Mr. Morgan also stated there was a government purchasing website available to municipalities to purchase equipment.

Ms. Fleury noted there were conversations happening amongst fire chiefs, stating they should encourage continued conversations. Ms. Fleury noted most calls received in Battle Creek were for medical calls. Ms. Fleury also informed the board that there was a 1980 study in Calhoun County, but it was not completed. Ms. Fleury agreed it was good to consolidate equipment to strategically place equipment in the county. Ms. Fleury thought it might be best to have the fire chiefs frame the discussion and to leverage services.

Mr. Morgan agreed collaborating could be a win-win for all municipalities.

Mr. Scutt informed the board that Bedford Township did not run medical calls, it was done by LifeCare.

Mr. Catlin stated Springfield used a smaller truck for medical calls, not the large fire apparatus.

Mr. Scutt stated Rockford Ambulance provided training to the Oakfield Fire Department when he was a fire fighter. Mr. Scutt also noted mutual aid agreements would alleviate the need to take large apparatuses to simple medical calls.

Mr. Hill suggested a pilot program to see what might work.

Mr. Buller suggested board members research other municipalities that have a fire authority.

Ms. Fleury recommended Chief Sturdivant provide more information to the Board, stating he has a really good idea for medical runs. Ms. Fleury noted Life Care should continue to be a partner in the community,

noting they want to change some of their response units from ALS, Advanced Life Support, to BLS, Basic Life Service.

As to consolidation of services, Ms. Fleury asked if there was any more discussion of consolidating inspection services, noting all municipalities were facing a shortage of trade inspectors, asking if they could create a pool of inspectors.

Mr. Hill asked if Battle Creek preferred to have inspectors on staff or to contract out for their services.

Ms. Fleury stated she did not have a preference, she just wanted to ensure the best service for residents.

Mr. Hill expressed his belief that on-staff inspectors have more ownership in the community, stating some of their township experiences have not always worked out.

Mr. Buller stated that most of the inspectors at a recent Code Officials Conference were retired contactors, often 60 years and older. Mr. Buller informed the board that the State has taken steps to change requirements, with the Skilled Trades Act, no longer requiring a boss to sign off a trades person's experience.

Mr. Hill stated he was worried about the politics of eliminating staff inspectors, but that consolidation is the right way to go. Mr. Hill stated conflicts of interest could be eliminated if inspection services were consolidated, stating a professional board of members to oversee the process would ensure no favoritism or nepotism, while also controlling costs and applying regulations.

Mr. Buller noted building inspectors should be specific to the municipality so that they are involved with, and understand, the municipality's planning/zoning, assessing and community development needs and requirements.

Mr. Fleury noted it made sense to have an individual building official for each municipality, but that the trade inspectors be consolidated and shared.

Mr. Morgan noted Calhoun County has also discussed consolidating inspections, possibly a county-wide inspections department. Mr. Morgan suggested they could start on a small scale, possibly with Battle Creek and Pennfield, instead of trying to get all the municipalities at one time.

Mr. Catlin agreed it would be good to meet with professionals to gather ideas, to collaborate and partner for improved efficiencies, sharing of services and cost savings.

Mr. Hill informed everyone that Grand Valley State has a great program for their Police academy.

As to a 911 Surcharge ballot initiative, Mr. Hill asked if there was any movement on forming a committee to initiate the ballot proposal, noting most residents want to know what the municipalities will do with the surcharge funding as it will not have to come from the general fund.

Ms. Fleury noted that she and Mr. Catlin were both appointed officials, not elected, noting a committee to research the potential of a surcharge proposal was normally formed by elected officials. Ms. Fleury stated each municipality was to provide a resolution demonstrating support of a ballot initiative.

Mr. Morgan recommended the board schedule a meeting to discuss placing a 911 surcharge proposal on the ballot. Mr. Morgan stated MTA could provide resources on a fire authority.

Mr. Catlin suggested the board consider the way the United Way informs and reports what extra funds will support, to provide residents information on the importance of the surcharge and what the municipality will do with the savings.

Mr. Morgan confirmed board members would invite their fire chiefs to the next AMSA meeting on March 5, 2019 at 10:00 am, to receive input and encourage conversation.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at 10:00 am at the Department of Public Works, on Kendall Street.

Adjournment: Adjourned 10:52 am