

### **Emergency Services Committee Meeting 3.26.2018**

Members Present: Bruce McGee, Police Chief Rick Musson, Irv Wilke, Richard Klose, Pat Kimmet, and Clete Knaub

Others Present: Clerk/Treasurer to take minutes

1. Irv Wilke called the meeting to order at 17:33, as the Committee Chair Bruce McGee was running late.
2. Public Input:

Vince Ricci at 1231 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. He wanted to address the concern of how does the City fix the ambulance issue. He witnessed an incident at Walmart and was concerned if the City had a crew available. The City needs to find some ways to fix this issue. The Committee asked if Mr. Ricci had heard any good suggestions on how to fix the ambulance issue. Mr. Ricci stated that he had not, but it comes down to how the fix is going to be funded. That is the big question, where is the money going to come from? The Committee asked if there was any help that Mr. Ricci could provide at the State level. Mr. Ricci stated that the state is no different than the City in that they are searching for money too. Mr. Ricci could bring a bill to the house floor, and if it's approved, it will go to the appropriations committee and be voted down because there is no money. Mr. Ricci feels this is an issue for the citizens of Laurel and the citizens need to find a way to fund a fix. The Committee asked Mr. Ricci if he remembered the results of the safety mill levy, which 75% against and 25% were for. Mr. Ricci stated that given recent events the citizens might realize the need for the safety mill levy, and it may pass now. This safety mill isn't a luxury; it's a necessity. Mr. Ricci stated that it seems as though people do not trust the government and that needs to change. With the safety mill levy, how was the message relayed to the public? Maybe there needs to be more communication regarding a levy, to the public, so they understand the importance. The Committee stated that the City could not use taxpayer dollars for that. Mr. Ricci stated that a citizen could offer to help provide those services.

Jason Summers 304 Cedar Ave., stated he is going to keep coming to these meetings until an answer is found to the ambulance problem. The City has a major problem that gets worse and worse every day. Last week there were three calls, no answer. He doesn't know where the funds were going to come from, but he did know that only 17 percent of the mill levy was going to the ambulance. His main concern is the Ambulance Department. If he has to buy bottled water because the intake doesn't work, he doesn't care, but if he dials 911, he wants an ambulance to show up. He doesn't want any more excuses. He wants the City to start figuring out something. He's going to keep coming to the meetings and calling the news stations until it's fixed or someone dies, and the City gets sued; then the City will really be worried about money.

Taryn Massa 304 Cedar Ave #3, stated she would like to volunteer for the committee to help get things done. The Committee stated that when there is an opening on any committee the public is notified. They then have to submit a letter of interest to the Mayor. Taryn asked if there were any current openings. The Committee stated that there were none at this time.

Joseph Loether 712 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, stated he is a paramedic for AMR and volunteers for the City of Laurel Ambulance. He wanted to attend the meeting to see what it is all about. He is part of the solution. There are lots of great things going on in the Ambulance Department. He is willing to be the Ambulance Director for the Ambulance Department, but the City would have to pay him. He gets paid \$3.50 an hour when he is on call. If he transports, he is then paid \$15.00. He puts in time every week, and he is the EMS Captain. His heart is in Laurel, and he wants to make this ambulance department great. The ambulance is starving and needs money. The committee asked if he had any suggestions for fixing the ambulance problem. Mr. Loether stated that it was his job to provide suggestions to the Chief and the Chief could present them to the Committee.

3. Motion made by Irv to approve the minutes from the February 26, 2018 meeting. Richard seconded the motion, all in favor, motion passed 5-0.

4. Old Business:

Presentation by Kallie Parsons regarding a Volunteer Program. Kallie Parsons is the coordinator for the Billings Police Department Volunteer Program. Every year the Volunteer Program saves the City of Billings roughly \$100,000. The Volunteer Program can offset most costs to the City, and the volunteers are invested in the community and willing to train and do anything they can. For a city the size of Laurel, five volunteers would be appropriate. It could be less or more depending on the services needed. The volunteers are trained with seasoned volunteers and are held to the same standards as officers. The volunteers do not require weapons or any other training. If the City is looking at parking, then two volunteers daily would probably eliminate any problems. That is putting in 3-4 hours a day every day. The Committee wanted to know where the authority to create the program came from. Kallie stated that the City Administrator gives them the authority to write parking tickets. The Committee asked if the program was created by a resolution through City Council. Kallie said that was most likely the case. The Committee wanted to know about the liability issues. The volunteers are covered under workers compensation. The City is responsible for the liability of anything else. The Committee wanted to know how volunteers differed from reserve officers. The Police Chief stated that volunteers are difficult to get and keep. The reserves are required to put in 8 hours a month. This program would be a whole different program. The volunteers could help with vehicle issues. The reserves are required to attend a local academy whereas the volunteers would not be. The Committee asked what the hour requirements of the volunteers are. The volunteers are required to work four hours a week for one year. Since most of the volunteers are retired, there is a lot of flexibility. The volunteers go out in teams of two for safety reasons. The Committee

asked if the scope of the volunteer's work was only parking tickets and abandoned vehicles. Kallie stated that Billings has several different departments. It would be dependent upon the needs of the City.

Chairman McGee asked for thoughts on the idea of the Committee has a mission statement. Irv stated that the idea sounded good. Pat asked if it was going to be an effort that was carried out across the board. Bruce stated that he thought it would be helpful to define what the EMS Committee should be doing. He knows the Committee is a sounding board but what else can they provide the community. A mission statement would help the committee stay on track with what they should be doing. The committee meets and talks but does anything productive come out of those meetings and discussions. The committee agreed that a mission statement would be good and Bruce will bring some examples to the next meeting.

Chairman McGee stated that the Committee still needed to elect a co-chair. Irv Wilke stated that he would be willing to be the co-chair. Pat made a motion to elect Irv Wilke as the co-chair of the EMS Committee. Richard seconded the nomination, all in favor; motion passed 5-0.

5. New Business:

The Committee had a brief discussion regarding Neighborhood Watch programs in the City. The Police Chief, Rick Musson, stated that Neighborhood Watch programs are great tools if the citizens are willing to put in the time. A good Neighborhood Watch program requires a leader who is willing to put together meetings and schedules. Also, the homeowners involved in the program need to pool together resources in order to purchase signs for the neighborhood. The Police Chief reminded everyone that there is a Crime Stoppers program that receives one call annually.

6. Clete Knap stated that this meeting would be his last. He has enjoyed serving on the EMS Committee but feels it is time for new members to come on board and bring new ideas to the table. He stated that the Committee is filled with a great group of men and women that can do great things. He thanked everyone for their commitment to the City

Chairmen McGee adjourned the meeting at 18:28.