Chief Jenkins welcomed Chief Daron Bement back to Spokane. He is the new Newman Lake Fire Chief.

Approval of Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2023 ASB Meeting Minutes approved. 
Motion to approve: Chief Frank Soto, Jr.
Second: Chief Lonnie Rash
Approved

Agenda Items:

Old Business
1. ESO
Paul Priest said they will likely be going with Image Trend nationally. They are not pulling the trigger until everything lines up. They want to keep the interface capability intact. They have had a positive experience with them in the past. They have worked exhaustively with ESO pricing and customer service. There will be an interface with Image Trend and ESO. They are actively involved in negotiations now; will give an update in July.

New Business
1. SCFD #4 ALS Ambulance Transport License Application
Chief Jenkins said yesterday the EMS Council discussed District 4 asking for an ALS license. That still needs to go through the DOH for final approval. Deer Park is still serving Spokane County. They (D-4) have a second contract with AMR and a contract with ASB and now they are asking for an ALS license.
Chief Neckels said for the past 2 ½ years, they have struggled with EMS transport. They had poor luck with Deer Park Ambulance. There were a couple hour and twenty-minute waits for an ambulance. It wasn’t working or providing what their citizens deserve. They have been receiving great service from AMR since last December. A few weeks ago, they received an odd anonymous complaint that they were operating ALS with a BLS license. They applied for an ALS transport license. Yesterday it passed local council, now it is back to DOH. They expect it to be approved unless there is some unexpected reason for denial. The whole point of that license is to provide redundancy for their system. There is no intention of changing anything they are doing. They have a great program going with AMR and ASB. Chief Jenkins said we’re always finding out about issues like this on social media. He asked for transparency to ASB so we know what is going on in the Districts. Chief Neckels advised there has been an arduous struggle for 2 ½ years. He thought everyone was well-aware of the situation. He thinks they are finally where they need to be to serve the citizens of their District.

Chief Rash said we know where we are now. He doesn’t recall District 4 asking for help in ASB Meetings regarding transport. In hindsight, it would be great to have them come to the ASB to ask for help. The terminology of Mutual Aid is to respond in and out of ASB versus into District 4. In his perspective, there is no Mutual Aid to District 4. There is a contract AMR has with the ASB is for a contractual geographic area. They either meet or don’t meet that contractual obligation. When a unit impacts our service delivery, then we would address them not meeting their contractual obligations. There is probably Mutual Aid from the entity of District 4 into ASB. That’s the only Mutual Aid he can see.

Chief Rash asked what terminology Mutual Aid means to service? As a Board, we need to pay attention to the next year to be sure we are in place long term given the current environment. After conversation with Chief Neckels, the contractual language has impact to our ASB, as a whole, when we get into negotiations. Those are the sort of things we need to look at long term. As the County grows, we need to get in front of it.

Chief Walkowski said he mentioned at yesterday’s EMS Council meeting that they felt as an agency the need to stand up regarding AMR’s level of service. He believes that discussion will need to take place. We all struggle with growth and demand for service. Chief Walkowski stated that by District 4 seeking (and with expected issuance) of an ALS transport license places all of the fire districts in Spokane County in a unique position. He further stated in the future when more fire agencies apply for an ALS transport license, they too should expect the same level of overwhelming support from the County EMS Council, the Region, State DOH, and AMR.

Chief Soto advised there are only a certain number of transport licenses per County. Right now, there are three ALS; Deer Park, AMR and possibly District 4. The number depends on the County. Chief Rash said environmental changes can change the number. Paul Priest advised the State and WAC standards play into the needs assessment.

Spokane County has 2 ALS licenses (AMR and Deer Park) and 4 BLS licenses {AMR, Deer Park, Fairfield, and Waverly(?)}. Some counties in the State of Washington have 20+ ALS licenses. Chief Jenkins said Municipalities need to follow a different set of rules than the Fire Districts. Lonnie Rash said he thinks it is an interesting exercise what the Districts and Municipalities on the east side does vs what the west side does.

Chief Dan Williams said they won’t come into the area because (inaudible). Chief Jenkins said Cheney needs a venue like ASB. Chief Rash said no way Fire District 8 would be able to
transport without ASB. Paul Priest said they could make it look different; figuring out how you want it to be; they can make it happen.

2. Compliance with Agreement (Violation) Reporting Process

We have a year left on our current agreement with AMR. Chief Jenkins said it was a good exercise to address possible violations. We only see our side and can’t see AMR’s data. In the future, a violation should be vetted by ASB before it is passed along to the Contract Administrator. We should have a process to follow to address possible violations. He handed out a draft memo that Chief Walkowski put together to use as a format for complaints to address non-compliance that would be given to the Contract Administrator. It could be used as a starting point for the grievance process.

Paul Priest said relationship is key. They hope if there is something going on, they will have an opportunity to discuss, digest and correct any issues. They have been able to tackle some tough stuff and hope they can do that here.

Chief Jenkins said for consistency, any possible violations for trend analysis should go through the Contract Administrator. There was discussion about if there is a concern and the District vets it out on their side, do we go right to AMR or does the Contract Administrator have all the data? When an Agency feels resolution is not obtained, should they submit all the data to the Contract Administrator? He recommended forming a small group to review the expectations for the Contract Administrator.

Chief Walkowski recommended getting a small group together since the ASB lacks a formal submittal process. The group would bring back their work product to the ASB. When they submitted their violation concern, they didn’t have a process to follow, forms or documents or expected method to verify proof of violations. We need to define what research detail should look like. How do we prove it? We should review the response that would be sent to the AP before it is sent to the AP so if any additional information is needed to support the complaint there is an opportunity to do so. In addition, the district which files the complaint should be notified of the hearing date/time.

There are some perceptions what the Contract Administrator is supposed to execute with the contract. We need to have a process in place to address a grievance. There is nothing in the contract addressing a grievance process.

Chief Leavell said if there is a problem with response time, he should be able to contact Paul or Jack to discuss to quickly resolve the issue. It is a two-way street with AMR. Tom Jenkins said each District should decide that for their District unless there is the same issue everywhere. Lonnie Rash said this cleans up the process.

Chief Jenkins said without the data, we don’t know the hot spots. He recommended we put together a small group to come up with a process to review any reported violations. He recommended having the Contract Administrator, Chief Soto and Chief Leavell to be part of the committee.

Chief Soto said what is on the draft memo that was handled out is all we need. He doesn’t think it needs a committee. It is the job of an Agency to present the documentation for a grievance.
If you’re going to go after someone, you need to have proof. Chief Rash agreed that the paper is a good starting place.

Chief Walkowski said he thought he submitted enough information/documentation, but apparently more was needed. Chief Neckels said in the future, the Contract Administrator would advise if more were needed.

Chief Soto said he wasn’t asked about contributing to the contract two years ago.

Chief Jenkins asked if the Contract Administrator gets information that we are not privy to? He said the BLS issue was with SREC, not AMR.

Paul Priest said it should be viewed as a grievance process. Step one ought to be meet and confer. If it is a reoccurring issue, that could be escalated to a Step 2.

Chief Ken Johnson said we have the agreement with AMR for services. Their Dispatcher asked SREC for BLS service. Paul Priest said it is listed in the contract to follow that procedure. Chief Rash agreed that the process is that they asked.

Tom Jenkins said per the audio recording for the Cheney incident, it was the AMR Dispatcher asking our Dispatcher if Cheney Fire would want a BLS unit. Our Dispatcher replied to go ahead and send it without asking the Agency. Chief Rohrbach said that is the way it is unless we want a different process.

Lonnie Rash asked Chief Soto, with his experience, what else should be on the paper/checklist? How do we do this better? Chief Soto said the expectation is to do due diligence to justify it. Did they break the contract or not?

Chief Jenkins said as we are entertaining SREC as Contract Administrator, we should draft a good product now. Tom asked if there is value in setting up a small group?

Chief Rash said the hardest part is the definitions, such as radio traffic recordings. At some point, you send in what you have. If the Contract Administrator asks for more, gather more documentation.

Chief Jenkins said the Contract Administrator shouldn’t have to make the decision if it is a violation or a non-violation. An Agency should do their due diligence and submit their findings to the Contract Administrator. The CA could have a small group to review the violations. Chief Rash agreed that the Contract Administrator shouldn’t have to do the leg work. We can work the details out.

Chief Rohrbach said he appreciates the process has been exercised and we learned from it. He asked if Chief Soto has recommendations going forward? Chief Soto said the biggest issue is anything that is on the border. The easy part is whether a BLS or an ALS unit transported. The harder part is the human factor; can’t fault the Dispatcher for making the call on which side of the border it was located.
A small Committee will develop a formalized process and bring it back to this group to discuss; formalize the data to submit future concerns; will bring it back with recommendations.

- Lonnie Rash, Chair
- Don Malone
- Mike Nokes
- John Leavell
- Jim Walkowski

3. 2025 and Beyond Ground Ambulance Service Agreement

Some options to consider for the future:

- AMR can build what we want in the County; there is a price that comes with that.
- RFP
- Doing something completely different than we’re used to.

Chief Jenkins recommended increasing the tempo of this meeting to once a month to prepare for the future contract. Chiefs Rohrbach, Neckels and Johnson agreed.

Chief Soto advised he isn’t sure if SVFD is going to stay in the ASB; have had the same issues with sharing a Medical Director with other Agencies. He has discussed this with his Staff and Fire Commissioners. There is a ninety percent chance that SVFD will be out of the ASB and have own their own contract with AMR. Chief Soto advised SVFD will stay in ASB at least through the end of this contract.

Chiefs Jenkins and Rohrbach both said they appreciate the transparency and asked if there is anything they can do to correct? We all benefit having SVFD at the table.

Chief Rash said we may need to put the Contract Administrator position on hold until we know about SVFD. We need to make sure we have the right long-term planning.

Chief Jenkins said Attorney Snure said he will have something back to him next week. SVFD picked up the burden as the Contract Administrator. What other agency could take it on?

Paul Priest said they can look at all these options. It probably won’t be at the current rate, but the current agreements rates are some of the lowest in the State. They are $200 lower than the City. They want to provide excellent customer service. They want the ASB to clearly articulate their desire so we can implement those in the next agreement.

Chief Jenkins motioned to schedule monthly ASB meetings.
If we don’t have anything for a meeting that month, we will cancel it. There are some conflicting ideologies between ASB and EMS Council. Discuss ASB issues, the next contract with ASB, EMS Council conversations.

Second: Chief Daron Bement
Approved.
Patty will send out the meeting notice for monthly meetings.
4. Zoom option instead of Microsoft Teams
Chief Jenkins mentioned that SVFD IT Department wants us to use Microsoft Teams for the ASB Meetings instead of Zoom. He said he always has problems with Microsoft Teams. He asked if we want to keep using Zoom, do we need to fund Zoom through ASB? He will follow up with Chief Nathan Jeffries about using the IEFCA Zoom account.

5. District 2 and District 12 have expressed some interest to join ASB.
Chief Jenkins asked for a vote for the Chiefs from District 2 and District 12 to attend ASB. No issues.

Roundtable
Nothing

Adjournment
Chief Tom Hatley motioned to adjourn the meeting.
Chief Cody Rohrbach seconded the motion.
Meeting Adjourned at 1452.

Next Meeting
Wednesday, July 12, 2023, at 1330 hours, at the SVFD Admin Building