ASB Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2023, 1:30 P.M.

Present
Chris Wyrobek, Don Malone, Daron Bement, Frank Soto, Jr, John Leavell, Ken Johnson, Lonnie Rash, Mike Nokes, Mitch Metzger (Zoom), Tom Hatley, Tom Jenkins; Paul Priest (AMR), Jack Busch (AMR), Patty Ruggiero; Andrew Massey (AMR), Kevin Morcom (AMR Union Steward), Robert Beezley (AMR Union Steward), Joel Kuhn (Teamsters), Adam Jackson (Teamsters Business Agent Local 690)

Approval of Meeting Minutes
Motion to approve, Chief Johnson
Second: Chief Malone
July 12, 2023 ASB Meeting Minutes approved.

Agenda
There was nothing formally on the Agenda.
We will continue to meet monthly as the AMR contract will expire in about ten months.

Announcements

Small committee to negotiate the next contract with AMR
Chief Don Malone is the head of the small committee. To get started, he sent out an e-mail asking what three things are working and what three things are not working. Please send him your responses. He wants to start those meetings in early September. There are currently three on the committee. Chief Wyrobek volunteered. The committee members are now Chiefs Don Malone, Daron Bement, Jim Walkowski and Chris Wyrobek.

District 8
Chief Lonnie Rash advised he is leaving at the end of August. Chief Wyrobek will be the interim Fire Chief until they complete the process to fill the Fire Chief position. Chief Jenkins thanked him for his years of dedication and hard work, especially in Spokane County and wished him well. He will be sorely missed. Chief Rash will send a message with his work product so far regarding the compliance group for the next contract (not the negotiations).
AMR
Paul Priest advised they just completed negotiation; it is in the signature phase at this time. Minimum wage debacle; In 2018 minimum wage was $11.50. Today it sits at $15.74. This is a near 37% wage increase. This is due to the devaluation of our dollar and Washington being the highest minimum wage state in the U.S. second only to Washington DC. AMR wages under new contract; EMT, $19.91; Paramedic, $25.29; Dispatcher, $22.65.

Reimbursement is based on payer mix, Medicaid first increase since 2004, marginal collection.

Contractual factors in play; This system requires ALS responses. There is zone equity and a ton of geography. Readiness is AMR's largest cost. There is no reimbursement associated with non-transports. This could be amended to lower costs. Wall-Time (arrive at the hospital but can't deliver the patient as they refuse to accept them when they have no space for them).

Union Negotiations; Engaging DOH, DEM, EMS Council; All the stops were pulled out, picketing, media, calling AMR people scabs. AMR was served with a last and final from Teamsters Local 690.

The CBA Agreement; It is a 27% increase over 3 years for the CBA. Year one: 13% to base wages equating to 2.4 M increase to payroll. Year two and three carry additional 7% increases each year.

Rates Needed; Year One: near $2,700 Base Rate required.

Possible Solutions:
One-year extension of current ASB contract, Consideration of an RFP, Aid rates, Mileage increases, Utilization of BLS Units, GEMT Partnerships, Mitigation of contractual fees, Subsidy, Shared Staffing Models, Tiered Responses, Nurse Navigation, QRV's Partnering Legislatively.

Chief Jenkins said we want to maintain good AMR employees in our county and maintain a good partnership/relationship with them. We need to have conversations about hospital capacity. Chief Soto asked who determines where you transport? Paul Priest said the patient has the ultimate choice, protocol situation, then the closest facility.

Chief Soto asked why doesn't it get leveraged? Why isn't there a cancel charge? Doctors don't get paid if they don't see patients. Paul said doctors are now more than happy to have a break from getting patients. Chief Rash said the EMS Council as a whole is a collective.

Tom asked AMR to let us know what works in other areas. Ken Johnson asked if AMR has some legislation examples from other states that we could utilize?

Chief Soto asked how impactful is sending ALS units on BLS responses? Why has it been such a big push to have ALS coverage on BLS calls? Chief Leavell said several years ago SVFD used to have two Paramedics on the spot, but they changed that since AMR had a Paramedic at the scene. Chief Jenkins said he remembers Beta testing BLS. Chief Leavell mentioned that telemedicine and 911 education are other options. Paul Priest agreed Nurse Navigation will help. Chief Jenkins suggested we could refine EMS calls. Paul Priest agreed.
SVFD will be stepping out of ASB
Chief Soto advised at his last meeting with his Fire Commissioners that it was agreed SVFD will be stepping out from the ASB at the conclusion of this contract.

Teamster comments
Joel Kuhn said he has been the Teamster’s representative for three contract cycles with AMR. AMR has been doing a great job in this area, but this was a very difficult situation. The constant theme over the last year was the need for a living wage. Chief Jenkins thanked him for his comments and said we are fighting multi-system systemic issues with health care in our nation. We want to maintain a great partnership; we are all rowing the same boat.

Adjournment
Motion to Adjourn: Chief Hatley
Second: Chief Johnson
Adjourned at 2:15 PM.

Next Meeting:
Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at 1330 hours, at the SVFD Admin Building