

MINUTES
Lake Crystal Ambulance Commission
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 21st, 2025 5:30 pm
City Council Chambers
100 E. Robinson St.

Commissioner Fleming called the meeting to order at 5:33 P.M.

Members present: Betsy Kilmer, Kelly Fleming, Gina Cooper, and Tammy Petterson.

Absent: Mike Mauer

Staff members present: City Administrator Angela Grafstrom; Rhonda Ingebritson, Lake Crystal Ambulance Service, Jeanine McDonald, Ambulance Staff Liaison

Others present: None

Approve Minutes:

Motion made by Commissioner Petterson to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2024, Ambulance Commission Regular Meeting as written, motion seconded by Commissioner Kilmer and carried unanimously.

Staff Reports

Ambulance Director Report

Director Ingebritson shared the call volume for 2024 totaling in 499 with 413 reports being written. The remainder included mutual aid and cancellations.

As of Jan 21st, 2025, the call volume is 38 calls. Ingebritson discussed cot issues that are currently being addressed. The ambulance ZOLL EKG/Defibrillator/Vitals Monitor machine has been repaired and cleared for use. Ingebritson announced the new ambulance officers and their positions.

Ingebritson explained how the ambulance leadership is addressing schedule coverage issues, by implementing new volunteer staffing requirements consisting of 60 hours per month, 36 hours of weekend coverage per quarter, 36 hours of holiday coverage annually.

City Administrator Report

Grafstrom reported the City Council will be considering approving 4–5 sessions of individual on-site counseling for ambulance staff impacted by a recent critical incident.

New Business:

None.

Old Business:

None.

Motion made by Commissioner Kilmer to appoint Commissioner Fleming as Ambulance Commission Chair for 2025, motion seconded by Commissioner Petterson and carried unanimously.

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The committee discussed: No discussion

Pay Scale Discussion

The commission reviewed existing pay structures and discussed transitioning from a fully volunteer model to a hybrid paid/volunteer structure.

Concerns about high turnover, onboarding costs, and compensation levels for volunteers.

The Proposed models included: One full-time staff member at \$25/hour (approx. \$52,000/year including benefits). Volunteers paid \$19/hour for duty hours (meetings, training, response). A total estimated annual cost for volunteers: \$166,953. The current ambulance payroll: \$248,000/year with city contributions of \$136,000/year.

Pay Scale Streamlining

The commission discussed the elimination of weekend call pay, introducing one flat on-call rate, with two different work rates for the EMT and EMR, while providing Ideas for staff incentives and retention. One being a tiered pay scale based on longevity with the idea this could incentivize members to remain a member of the service longer. Another idea was PERA eligibility for volunteers with contributions from volunteers and possible city. City Administrator Grafstrom pointed out that volunteers have a free membership to Rec Center as an incentive, approved by the city council one year ago.

Turnover Causes Discussed

The commission held a discussion about the high turnover rate, some examples being, college students leaving the area, preference for paid over volunteer roles and general life transitions.

Staffing

Internship Program Discussion

The City of Lake Crystal, Ambulance Director and Ambulance leadership are looking into options, one being collaborating with South Central for EMT internships. South Central would pay a wage: \$12/hour for 600 hours. Internships applicants would be vetted and subsidized. In addition to working with South Central Coop. the commission discussed creating an internal city internship program with a set rate, set hours. Utilizing

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Interns to help fill staffing gaps while providing experience for the interns. The City Administer will review with the city attorney about the legality and structure of city-defined internships.

Comments and Observations

Commissioner Flemming expressed gratitude for the ambulance service and acknowledged the changing work/life balance in society. She noted the importance of adapting to sustain EMS services. Discussion included the future role of technology in EMS, including AI, Teladoc, and expanding community paramedicine roles for EMTs and paramedics.

Next meeting: scheduled for April 22nd, 2025, at 5:30 pm

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Petersen, seconded by Commissioner Kilmer and motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business of the Lake Crystal Ambulance Commission adjourned the regular meeting of October 15, 2024, at 6:42 P.M.

Meeting Chair

Angela Grafstrom, City Administrator