

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
September 19, 2023

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kelly, Susan Wolff, Joe McKenney, Eric Hinebauch and Rick Tryon.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; City Attorney David Dennis and Deputy City Attorney Rachel Taylor; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler and Grant Administrator Tom Hazen; Public Works Director Chris Gaub; Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry; Municipal Court Judge Steve Bolstad and Court Supervisor Morgan Medvec; Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig; Fire Chief Jeremy Jones, Fire Marshall Mike McIntosh and; Deputy Chief EMS Jeremy Virts; Police Chief Jeff Newton; and, Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Justin Grohs, Great Falls Emergency Services (GFES), commented that he is available if the Commission has any questions pertaining to the proposed ordinance. On behalf of GFES, Mr. Grohs expressed support of the update and revision to the ordinance, particularly the section on the permission of Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances, as well as the current performance contract. Mr. Grohs extended an invitation to the Commission to do a ride along with GFES.

Dr. Dustin Stuart, Benefis Emergency Medicine Provider, explained that he is also the Medical Director for Gore Hill Fire Department, Belt Ambulance Service, Montana Air National Guard Fire Department (MANG) and GFES. He expressed appreciation to GFES for its support with regard to collaborative training, community outreach for CPR awareness and training, and increasing capabilities with Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) endorsements.

Mayor Kelly expressed appreciation on behalf of the Commission to Dr. Stuart for his efforts with regard to emergency response.

1. TITLE 8 – EMS ORDINANCE REVIEW AND UPDATE

Fire Chief Jeremy Jones explained that tonight's discussion is a continuation about managing and implementing the EMS ordinance and performance contract since its inception. This would put the City in a good posture moving forward with how EMS looks in the community with a fire-based EMS System.


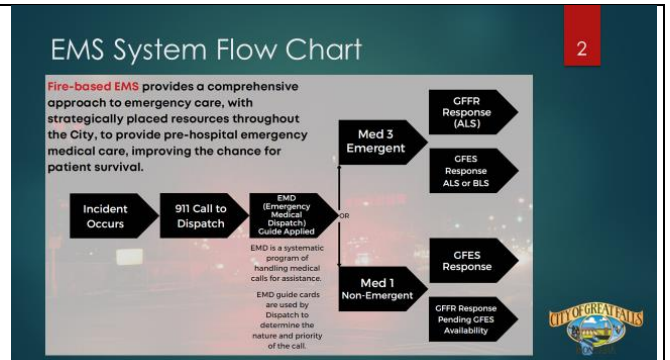
Fire Chief Jones and Deputy Chief EMS Jeremy Virts reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:

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City of Great Falls EMS System

TITLE 8 HEALTH AND SAFETY
CHAPTER 5 EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

3

8.5.030 C. (new I & J)


Current:
No current allowance for "Basic Life Support Service"

Proposed:

I. "Basic Life Support (BLS)" means basic life support level of care as defined in the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM).

J. "Basic Life Support Service" means an ambulance service or non-transporting medical unit that has the capacity, and is licensed by the State of Montana, to provide basic life support care twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.

Justification:
To allow for Basic Life Support ambulances in the City of Great Falls EMS system.




4

8.5.030 O.

Current:
"Grandfathering" means the City Commission may contract with an existing ambulance service provider without conducting a competitive process for ambulance service providers.

Proposed:
Delete

Justification:
Extensions of performance contract is addressed in 8.5.150 "Extension of ambulance service performance contract."




5

8.5.070 I.

Current:
The EMS 911 System Medical Director shall not have oversight over the non-emergent and inter-facility transport services that may be provided by any contracted ambulance service; and

Proposed:
The EMS 911 System Medical Director shall not have oversight over the private transport services work that may be provided by any contracted ambulance service; and

Justification:
The 911 EMS System Medical Director shall have oversight of Emergency Medical Services within the City and to other areas and locations where GFR may respond.




6

8.5.080 3.

Current:
Emergency Manager;

Proposed:
City of Great Falls Emergency Manager;

Justification:
The City of Great Falls Community Risk Reduction Manager performs all community risk assessments as well as provides emergency management duties for the City of Great Falls.




7

8.5.090 B.

Current:
GFR shall provide EMS first response services to all EMS calls the City and to other areas and locations where they may respond.

Proposed:
GFR shall be the Authority Having Jurisdiction over the provision of Emergency Medical Services within the City and to other areas and locations where they may respond.

Justification:
City of Great Falls delivers EMS services as a core function of local government. This function has been delivered through Fire Based EMS via GFR.




8

8.5.090 C.

Current:
GFR may transport patients when it is in the interest of the patient's health and safety. Standard operating guidelines or protocols shall be established by the EMS System Medical Director in conjunction with the EMS Advisory Board to determine when this is appropriate. GFR may transport when time is critical to patient care, when the patient is packaged and ready for transport, and when an ambulance is not immediately available or is delayed.

Proposed:
GFR may transport patients when deemed necessary.

Justification:
When no contracted ambulances are available for transporting of patient's and GFR resources are assigned to an incident, GFR will provide ambulance transport services.




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| <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">8.5.120</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; color: white; background-color: red; padding: 2px;">9</p> <p>Current: All persons who wish to operate, conduct, advertise, engage in, or profess to be engaged in the 911 emergency ambulance business or service of the transportation of any patient by ambulance upon the streets or any public way or place within the City, shall only do so upon the execution of an ambulance service performance contract issued by the City.</p> <p>Proposed: All persons who wish to operate, conduct, advertise, engage in, or profess to be engaged in the 911 emergency ambulance business shall only do so upon the execution of an ambulance service performance contract issued by the City.</p> <p>Justification: This ordinance only pertains to ambulance services that contract with the City to provide for 911 EMS patient transport in the City of Great Falls and protected areas.</p>  | <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">8.5.130 A.</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; color: white; background-color: red; padding: 2px;">10</p> <p>Current: An ambulance service performance contract can only be issued by the City Commission by "grandfathering" or completion of a competitive process in accordance with Montana state law. The City reserves the right to issue an interim contract to any ambulance service provider for the City under emergency circumstances such as when the contracted ambulance service provider fails to perform the services under its performance contract and this Chapter.</p> <p>Proposed: An ambulance service performance contract can only be issued by the City Commission by completion of a competitive process in accordance with Montana state law, or by automatic annual renewals as provided in this Chapter. The City reserves the right to issue an interim contract to any ambulance service provider for the City under emergency circumstances such as when the contracted ambulance service provider fails to perform the services under its performance contract and this Chapter.</p> <p>Justification: Aligned language with 8.5.150 "Extension of ambulance service performance contract" and provide for periodic, systematic review.</p>  |
| <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">8.5.150</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; color: white; background-color: red; padding: 2px;">11</p> <p>Current: The City Commission will determine the length of an ambulance service performance contract, by resolution or approval of a contract. At the discretion of the City Commission, contract extensions may be granted, or the contract may provide for automatic annual renewals based on achievement of performance measures and customer service requirements specified by the City.</p> <p>Proposed: The City Commission will determine the length of an ambulance service performance contract, by resolution or approval of a contract. Upon recommendation from the City Manager and/or designee and at the discretion of the City Commission, contract extensions may be granted, or the contract may provide for automatic annual renewals based on achievement of performance measures and customer service requirements specified by the City.</p> <p>Justification: The City of Great Falls provides for and manages the ambulance service contract. Recommendation of contract extension will be made on performance of services in its entirety.</p>  | <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">8.5.170 B.</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; color: white; background-color: red; padding: 2px;">12</p> <p>Current: The ambulance service provider must provide emergency medical services at the ALS level, throughout the City, twenty-four (24) hours per day, and seven (7) days per week;</p> <p>Proposed: The ambulance service provider must provide adequately staffed ambulances made up of Advanced Life Support and Basic Life Support ambulances as outlined in the performance contract throughout the City, twenty-four (24) hours per day, and seven (7) days per week;</p> <p>Justification: Allows for the use of Basic Life Support ambulance in the City of Great Falls 911 EMS system.</p>  |
| <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">8.5.170 C.</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; color: white; background-color: red; padding: 2px;">13</p> <p>Current: Each responding ambulance shall be staffed with a minimum of one (1) Montana Certified Paramedic and one (1) Montana Certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT);</p> <p>Proposed: Each ALS responding ambulance shall be staffed with a minimum of one (1) Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic (NREMT-P) and one (1) NREMT-Basic (EMT). Each BLS ambulance shall be staffed with, at a minimum, two (2) NREMT-Basics (EMTs). The driver of the ALS or BLS responding ambulance must possess a valid Montana drivers' license.</p> <p>Justification: Defines the certification requirements for ALS and BLS ambulances by a third party national certification standards.</p>  | <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">8.5.170 D. (new)</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; color: white; background-color: red; padding: 2px;">14</p> <p>Current: No current language regarding this provision.</p> <p>Proposed: The ambulance service providers shall comply with all protocols and procedures implemented by the City of Great Falls and the EMS system administrator pertaining to the delivery of service in the 911 EMS system;</p> <p>Justification: So that all EMS system components understand and operate consistently within the City of Great Falls 911 EMS system for continuity of services in our jurisdiction.</p>  |
| <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">8.5.190 G.</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; color: white; background-color: red; padding: 2px;">15</p> <p>Current: A party may appeal an adverse City Commission decision to the Montana Eighth Judicial District Court within thirty (30) calendar days of the Commission's pronouncement.</p> <p>Proposed: A party may appeal an adverse City Commission decision in the courts of competent jurisdiction.</p> <p>Justification: Attempt to be consistent with other areas of the code and the timing of the appeal would be determined by Montana state law.</p>  | <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">8.5.210 A.</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; color: white; background-color: red; padding: 2px;">16</p> <p>Current: The 911 emergency ambulance service provider shall provide security in an amount equal to the City's reasonably anticipated operating costs for two (2) months of 911 emergency ambulance services.</p> <p>Proposed: The 911 emergency ambulance service provider shall provide security in an amount equal to the City's reasonably anticipated operating costs for three (3) months of 911 emergency ambulance services.</p> <p>Justification: In the event that the contract transport provider was to default or terminate the performance agreement, the costs of providing 911 EMS transport services would fall onto the personnel of GFFR. The costs to provide these services, even on a temporary basis, would pose a burden on the City of Great Falls' general fund.</p>  |

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| <p>Conclusion:</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>If the City Commission agrees to the proposed updates pertaining to Title 8 Chapter 5 of the OCCGF, the process will begin by conducting first reading of the Ordinance with the proposed updates on October 3, 2023, and then second reading/public hearing on October 17, 2023. If adopted, the Ordinance would go into effect 30 days after adoption – November 16, 2023.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"></p> | <p>17</p> |
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Commissioner Tryon inquired if GFFR sends a fire truck to respond to someone with flu-like symptoms and if there is ever a situation where GFFR would not respond.

Deputy Chief EMS Virts responded that GFFR’s interpretation of an emergency versus the public’s may be different and if it is not a law enforcement issue, then it is a GFFR issue.

Fire Chief Jones added that it depends on the nature of a call and the transport unit’s availability. If the current provider has a BLS ambulance, it would respond to someone with flu-like symptoms; however, if an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance were available, it would respond. GFFR would not typically respond to a non-emergent call; however, once 911 is activated, GFFR responds.

Mayor Kelly received clarification that occasionally a GFFR paramedic will ride in a GFES ambulance with the patient to the hospital and a fire truck or battalion chief will pick up the paramedic from the hospital.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that the current ordinance does not include a current allowance for BLS service because every ambulance has to have a paramedic and maintain ALS levels. The City’s 911 EMS system does not recognize the use of BLS ambulances within the City’s EMS system.

Commissioner Hinebauch received clarification that currently GFFR is operating under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will expire with the expiration of the current performance contract in May 2024.

Commissioner McKenney received clarification that Dr. Stuart’s purview is for private work and Dr. David Simpson is the Medical Director for the City.

With regard to the “8.5.090 B” slide, Mayor Kelly received clarification GFFR shall be the authority having jurisdiction over the provision of EMS within the City and to other areas and locations where GFFR may respond.

Commissioner Tryon inquired if there is a lack of qualified ALS or BLS personnel and if the added language presents a challenge contracting with an ambulance service provider.

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Fire Chief Jones responded that private ambulance companies, locally and nationwide, have had staffing issues since the COVID pandemic and paramedics and EMTs are not entering into the field. Allowing ALS and BLS ambulances in the system should ease up some restrictions from before and make it easier to provide more transport units. He added that it is important having ALS and BLS ambulances available so GFFS can transport within a timely manner.

Mayor Kelly received clarification that the driver of a BLS ambulance must possess a valid non-CDL Class C Montana driver's license.

Fire Chief Jones added that during the COVID pandemic, there was an emergency allowance for the use of non-medically trained ambulance drivers.

Commissioner Tryon inquired how difficult it is to receive the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) as opposed to the Montana Certified Paramedic designation.

Fire Chief Jones responded that the Montana Certified Paramedic designation was redefined with the NREMT, which is the gold standard. GFFR requires its paramedics to be Nationally Certified.

With regard to the "8.5.190 G" slide, City Manager Greg Doyon inquired if there is a time requirement to make an appeal.

Deputy City Attorney Rachel Taylor responded that it depends on the claim and whether it is a breach of contract or a negligence claim that was set by the statute of limitations.

With regard to the "8.5.210 A" slide, Mayor Kelly inquired if the security amount for 911 emergency ambulance services would be put into an interest-bearing escrow account.

Mr. Grohs responded that the security amount is guaranteed through a bank and GFES would provide documentation to the City.

Commissioner McKenney received clarification that the Title 8 EMS ordinance updates were a collaboration of the Legal Department, Administration, Fire Chief Jones and Deputy Chief EMS Virts. The private sector was not involved because it is a City ordinance. He further received clarification that allowing BLS ambulances into the EMS system is an example of coming together with a private contractor.

Commissioner Wolff expressed appreciation to GFFR and GFES for working well together when responding to calls and focusing on the patient.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that an increase in calls has placed a burden on the 911 System and additional transport units are needed.

Deputy Chief EMS Virts commented that the MOU is a good start because it would allow the BLS ambulances into the City's system and secure its workforce down the line. BLS personnel would receive

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more experience, be more comfortable in their positions and possibly further their education and training to a paramedic level.

Mayor Kelly expressed appreciation to Commissioner Wolff for doing ride-alongs with GFFR.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that a street department annual update will be a topic for the October 3, 2023 work session. A semi-annual TIF application and growth management plan – RFP updates will be topics for the October 17, 2023 work session.

Mayor Kelly requested that a CDBG revolving loan funds for an apartment project be a topic for either the October 3, 2023 or the October 17, 2023 work session.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of September 19, 2023 at 6:20 p.m.