

**Joint Powers Board
Minutes of Meeting September 13, 2012**

Members Present:

Doug Johnson – Chair
Ray Tucker – Vice Chair
Marcia Ward
Jane Olive
Ken Brown
Chuck Amunrud
Teresa Walter
Milt Plaisance
Richard Samuelson
Dave Harms

Advisory Members Present:

Don Hauge – Executive Director
Tom Beniak
Diane Benson
Dan Stensrud

Advisory Members Absent:

Mike Juntunen
Susan Trankel

Guest: Holly Hammann-Jacobs

Members Absent:

Dan Belshan

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Chair Johnson at 08:05 a.m.

II. Review Minutes of June 14, 2012 Meeting

Motion: Olive

Seconded: Samuelson

“To approve the minutes of the June 14, 2012 meeting as recorded.” **MOTION CARRIED.**

III. Administrative Report

Hauge began by introducing himself as the New Executive Director of the SE Minnesota EMS Regional Program. He thanked the board for giving him the opportunity to serve and he looks forward to working with the board for many years to come!

A. Financial Report

Hauge referred the Board members to the July and August expenditure reports that were emailed to the board prior to the meeting. As of the end of August, we have expended 18% of the FY 2013 State funds or \$13,444 dollars. I emailed board members an email from Ms. Deb Teske from the EMSRB which showed a chart of the Seatbelt dollars that were awarded to each Regional Program in Fiscal year 2012. In that email, Ms. Teske stated that the State Budget Office has adjusted the estimated amount of money that the Regional Programs should budget for in FY 2013 from 225,000 down to 202,500. Using the new budget amount, as of the end of August, we have expended 12% of the Seat Belt budget. We have also raised 19% of the yearly EMS Budget which is the money we raise on our own.

As Board members may recall, at the June meeting, the board approved eliminating 60,000 dollars from the Seat Belt budget to adjust for Seat Belt funding shortfall. This appears to have allowed us to make budget for Seatbelt funds for FY 2012. I will look for areas in our FY 2013 Seatbelt budget that possibly could be reduced or cut and bring those recommendations to an upcoming Board meeting.

Request motion to approve the July and August 2012 year to date Expenditure Report as presented to the board.

Motion: Brown

Seconded: Olive

“To approve the July and August Expenditure Reports as presented to the board.”

MOTION CARRIED.

Hauge referred to the June, July and August 2012 warrants that were emailed to the board prior to this meeting. He asked if Board members had any questions. He asked that the Chair will execute the documents.

Motion: Amunrud

Seconded: Walter

“To approve the June, July and August warrants and authorize the Chair to sign.”

MOTION CARRIED.

B. Progress Report: FY 2012 State Audit

Hauge stated that he and Administrative Assistant Cindy Gathje met with the Auditors on Tuesday Sept. 11th at the Regional Office. The Auditing Team explained the Audit procedure and what was required to complete the Audit. One of the Auditing team will be spending the day at the Regional office in about 2 weeks to work on the Audit.

As Approved by the board at a previous meeting, Linda Horth will be in the office no more than 3 days to assist with the Audit. Hauge has contacted Olmsted County HR Representative Dale Ignatius about paying Linda for her time during the Audit. Olmsted County HR informed us that there is a 30 day period that Linda cannot be on the Olmsted Co. payroll or it could jeopardize her PERA. Hauge asked Olmsted Co if Linda could be paid as an independent contractor like other persons who do teaching/short term projects for the Regional office. In an email from Dale Ignatius dated September 12, 2012, Dale said *“I don’t see an issue with her coming back to help you go through the audit since it is only for a few days, she will be an independent contractor or consultant, so she will claim the earnings on her taxes. If she does get paid more than \$600.00 you will have to issue her a 1099 form at the end of the year.”*

Chair Johnson stated he had talked with Linda Horth about working on the audit and she had stated that she would do this as a volunteer activity. The board felt that Linda should be paid for her time and it not be volunteered.

Motion: Brown

Seconded: Samuelson

“To pay Linda Horth for her time working on the audit as a consultant at a rate determined by the Executive Director not to exceed her rate of pay at the time of her retirement and not to exceed 3 days.” MOTION CARRIED

C. GASB 54 Classification of Reserve Funds

(Handout) As the Board is aware, there was a request by the Auditor after the report on last year’s Audit that the Joint Powers Board has a classification of their Reserve Funds using the new Federal Regulation known as GASB 54. I am handing out a “summary” page which lists the definitions of the classifications that are used under GASB 54. This document is an example from the Central Region EMS program. Our Auditor has asked that we insert actual numbers into our proposal. I think we can classify our Reserve funds into 2 classifications, Assigned and Unassigned. Linda and Hauge worked on this and according to Linda (historian) we need to look at some history. According to Olmsted County, our fiscal agent, we have an average balance in our Reserve account of approximately \$325,000.00. A few years ago, the JPB voted to maintain a minimum of \$150,000 in the Reserve account to cover salaries and office expenses should we have a problem in getting our State or Seat belts funds. This money would carry the Regional program until other funding sources could be found. The \$150,000 I would put into the “Assigned” classification because they really do not have a “restricted” use and they are not truly “committed” to any one project. The board has the ability to change that amount at any time they choose should the need arise. The remaining \$175,000 could be classified in the “Unassigned” category which is the usual classification for the General Fund money.

My proposal to the Board would be to classify our Reserve funds under GASB 54 in the following manner:

Assigned funds would equal \$150,000 of the Reserve funds

Unassigned funds would equal \$175,000 or the remaining balance of the Reserve fund.

Commissioner Brown stated that he would be more comfortable if we put more money into the Assigned category because of his past experience with this and the possibility of having the funds reclaimed by the State. The board discussed Browns idea and felt it was wise to have more of the funds designated as Assigned to protect the funds for the use of operating the Regional Program should there be a problem with funding for normal sources.

Motion: Plaisance

Seconded: Brown

“To classify \$200,000.00 of reserve funds as “ASSIGNED” and the remainder of the reserve funds as “UNASSIGNED” funds under Federal regulation GASB 54.” MOTION CARRIED

D. MCIT Dividend/Premium

For the 22nd year running, the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) has allocated a dividend to their customers. As you are probably aware, the Regional Program has our Workers Compensation and Property and Casualty insurance through this agency. Our 2012 Dividend was \$149 for Workers Comp and \$2, 672 for the property / casualty coverage for a grand total of \$2,821.00. We also received an estimate of our 2013 premium from MCIT which will be \$3215.00. So as you can see, we get our insurance coverage for approximately \$400 per year if you take the dividend into account.

E. Rent Agreement

Hauge has been in communication with John Prow and has negotiated a rent agreement which would be in effect from September 1, 2012 thru August 31, 2013. The amount agreed to would be \$1,200.00/month which is what it has been for the past few years. In the rent agreement, it requests that the Board consider increasing the rent back to its original amount of \$1,565.67 for the year beginning September 2013.

Chair Johnson stated that this was one of the topics at the Executive Committee meeting and said that the space we currently have is a nice space and moving is expensive. He said that Hauge could look in the same building to see if there were any smaller spaces that may cost less but be more efficient for our needs to save money and lower rent costs. He also said that Hauge would look at the upcoming budget and see if we could afford to increase what we currently pay and if the money is available in the budget we could slowly increase our rent. Further discussion at future meetings on this topic.

Motion: Ward

Seconded: Harms

“To approve the lease agreement with Prow Companies for current office space in the amount of \$1,200.00/month from September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013 and have the Chair sign the contract.” MOTION CARRIED

F. Executive Director Spending Limit

One of the items that came up at the Executive Board meeting held September 6th was Hauge asking the Exec. Board about spending limits of the Executive Director and what amounts required board approval. The Exec. Committee told Hauge to place this item on the Agenda so that it could be re-affirmed. Hauge and Horth had discussed this topic and Hauge originally thought that the limit was \$1,000. After further investigation, Hauge found a document which is listed under Policies and Procedures – Additions and Approved by the JPB on January 8, 2004. This document states *“The Executive Director is given the authority to authorize and sign contracts/agreements for the JPB when such contracts are for items identified in the approved budget, are less than \$2,500.00 and within the set budgeted amount for that line item”*. It goes on to say that *“Contracts/agreements for amounts greater*

than \$2,500.00 or not included in the current budget require JPB approval and must be signed by an officer of the Joint Powers Board”.

Hauge stated that there are some current expenditures, such as the Hospital Education Grant which 10 of 12 hospitals applied for and are in the current budget line items. Each hospital is eligible to receive up to \$3000 after proof of educational expenses and each of these would require a board officer’s signature. Hauge is agreeable with the current limit but making the board aware of current situation.

Board discussion was that increasing the amount that the Executive Director could sign for by \$500.00 was ok as long as it was already a budgeted line item. Hauge stated that there were very few checks that would be above this \$3000 range in normal business operation. The two signature rule would still apply to warrants greater than \$3000 that are not a budgeted line item.

Motion: Olive

Seconded: Ward

“To give the Executive Director authority to authorize and sign contracts/agreements for the Joint Powers Board when such contracts are for items identified in the approved budget, and increase the amount from \$2,500.00 to \$3000.00 or less and within the set budgeted amount for that line item.

Contracts/agreements for amounts greater than \$3000.00 or not included in the current budget require JPB approval and must be signed by an officer of the Joint Powers Board.” MOTION CARRIED

IV. Office Issues

A. Phone/Internet proposal

In the past couple of months, Hauge has become familiar with costs of running our Office. One of the costs that I thought I could look into was our Phone/internet costs. After talking to our current provider, CenturyLink, Hauge found out that this contract is the original one that was set up when we moved in I believe 2003. He has been told by staff that they recently have been having problems with the internet connection either being slow or freezing up and causing them to restart the entire system on a frequent basis. Another problem Hauge run into is that when researching a new Website template (our current website is obsolete according to our provider CWS), I found that I could not work with newer, larger website applications because of the speed of our internet connection.

Hauge checked with our current provider, CenturyLink and asked if they are able to increase our DSL internet speed and was told that what we have is the fastest available to our building by this provider. Current speed is 3 mgbt download/ .650 uploads which by current standards is very slow. Hauge has talked with 3 different Mayo IT staff and asked what vendor could deliver faster speed and also be dependable for the office. I was told that Mayo has many of their off campus connections that are supported by Charter Communications and they use them for Phone/TV/internet service and have very little problem. Hauge

done a price comparison between Charter Communications and CenturyLink. I chose only these providers because they currently have connections into our building. Our current phone/internet/800 # which includes 3 incoming phone lines, a fax line, 800 number and a Static IP address, costs about \$345.00/month. To reduce costs, my bids only includes 2 incoming lines plus fax line. The office has fewer people working than we did when we moved in so we feel we can get by with one less line. The bids were as follows:

CenturyLinks estimate was approximately \$265/mo with taxes and fees

Charter Communications was approx. \$242.00 with taxes and fees.

While the cost difference is not that much, the difference is that Charter Communications slowest internet speed is 20 mgbt which is nearly 7 times the speed of our current provider. I feel that this internet speed is needed to continue to advance our ability to communicate with our providers via the new updated website we are working on and our online education.

My recommendation is that the board approves the contract with Charter Communications for Phone/Internet with monthly cost not to exceed current costs.

The board discussed the issue and thought it was a good idea to have faster internet speed to make work easier for staff. The board also directed Hauge to monitor the use of the 800 number for the next year to see how much it is being used and if there could be additional savings there.

Motion: Amunrud

Seconded: Harms

“To approve the contract with Charter Communications for Phone/Internet with the cost not to exceed the current cost.” MOTION CARRIED.

B. Office Computers

Hauge stated the computers in the office are showing their age, we have 3 computers that were purchased in October of 2008 and 2 computers that were purchased in June 2009. Since Hauge has been in the office beginning in July, he has spent a few hours in trying to get computers to function correctly with the aid of the Mayo Clinic Helpdesk. We have been having problems with them freezing up, not being able to open files and just being slow which slows productivity. Another issue we are seeing is that the Mayo system is currently upgrading their computer systems to Windows 7 and Office 2010 and the problem that creates for our office is that we interact with many Mayo employees who teach, provide Medical Direction for our services and also are on our committees. Our office systems run on Windows XP and we have Office 2003 so when a Word document or PowerPoint presentation or Excel document is sent to our office, if it was not saved in an older version, we cannot open it if it was created on the newer version. This change of software probably happens every 6-8 years so not very often but it does create a problem for our office staff right now. Hauge has asked Mayo IT if we could upgrade our current computers with the new software and they felt that with the age of the computers, it would be better to replace them.

Hauge stated that this is information for the board and he is asking if he could make a proposal to present at the next board meeting to possibly replace the 2 computers that Diane and Cindy are currently using and make a computer replacement schedule that would allow us to budget for updates to our computer equipment in the future.

Board discussed this issue. Amunrud stated that it is important for our staff to having computers that are up to date and wondered what the pricing would be and if the board should approve the purchase today. Hauge stated that he would get pricing and come up with a replacement schedule so that we can budget for office computers off of that schedule. Hauge will bring his recommendations to the October Board meeting.

C. Pickwick FD Thank you
(Handout)

Hauge handed out an email dated July 13, 2012 that the Regional office received from the Pickwick Fire and Rescue thanking us for the Training funds that they have been awarded for FY2013. This money will help offset the cost of training their First Responders. Their application asked for funds to do initial training for 5 new members, recertification for 8 First Responders and Recertification for 3 EMT's on their FR crew. When the training is completed, they will send in an invoice for amounts paid to a training institution for this training and we will reimburse them \$175/person for EMR certification, \$100/person for recert of EMR and \$125/per for EMT recert. You can see they are very appreciative of all the funding that this board helps provide!

V. 2013 Conference Planning

Benson talked about the current planning for the 2013 conference to be held at the Mayo Civic Center on March 15 & 16, 2013. She stated that Hauge had secured Mr. Ken Bouvier, Deputy Chief of Logistics and Special Ops from the City of New Orleans as the National speaker. Benson stated that he has been at our conference in the past and was a BIG hit with our participants so we hope having him will be a draw to our conference! She also stated that we are not going to have a "host" hotel but advertise all of the hotels that we got prices from and let our participants decide where they want to stay. Some of them are connected to the Skyway and some would involve having to drive across town. Benson also stated that we were NOT having the pre-conference session on Thursday but instead going to have a one-day fall conference on a given topic to see how that went over with our region. Johnson raised the question of possibly combining conferences in the State like Wisconsin does? Hauge stated that we will continue to look at different options to increase participation at our conference and make it valuable for our participants.

VI. Other Business/Open Discussion

A. Education Standards

Holly Hammann-Jacobs talked about the new National Education Standards that are being rolled out to instructors in the Region at a meeting at RCTC tonight. She stated that students are having difficulty passing the exams and training programs are monitored and have to have a 80% passing rate for their students or their program is evaluated by the EMSRB. Johnson stated that the required training time for volunteers looks to be going up to possibly 160 hours for an initial EMT class and it is hard to find volunteers who are willing to commit to that amount of training time along with all of the additional training time required to keep up their certification.

Ward stated that Townships should be made aware of the increased training time and cost and thought that maybe these students might need to be paid by their city's or townships to take these classes. The board thought it would be nice to have some sort of letter to send out to Counties/Townships outlines the volunteer situation and training time and cost. Benson stated that Grand Meadow did this each year to their Townships. Johnson asked Benson if she would be willing to share that letter with the Board as a template for them to use in their own districts? Benson said she would give the letter to Hauge and he could send it to the Board members.

B. Coroner Service

Commissioner Amunrud asked other board members what they were doing for Coroner service in their counties? He stated that they currently have Dakota County contracted as their Coroner but they will be moving their services to Hennepin County as of January 1, 2013 and the cost went up significantly so his county is looking at going with Mayo Clinic for Coroner services. Other commissioners said they too are looking to Mayo for this service but not sure they will want to provide if all counties are looking at the same time.

C. Board Expectations of the Executive Director

Johnson stated that the Executive Committee recently met with Hauge and mentioned some items they had discussed. Johnson stated that he and Hauge had agreed to have a weekly phone meeting to help Hauge with any questions or situations that may arise. Hauge had also asked if there were any changes that the Board would like to see regarding how the meetings were run? Johnson stated that his feeling is that about 2/3 of the meeting should be business related and the other 1/3 is time for "educating the board" on various issues to keep them engaged in the EMS process. Johnson also stated that Hauge did not want to inundate the board with emails so Johnson told Hauge that emails pertaining to funding from the EMSRB would be good to pass on to the board

members as well as email Thank you from the providers or other items that Hauge thought may be of interest to board members and keep them engaged.

C. Full-time Position

Hauge briefly talked about activities in the office and how this was “quiet time” for the training program. He stated that fall and winter would be much busier and with the Program Coordinator position not currently being filled, we could get into a crunch to provide the services needed. Hauge explained that Diane Benson has expressed her desire to retire from her current position but is willing to stay until there is enough help in the office to cover classes. Hauge stated that Horth had talked to the board at previous meetings about adding a Full-time Education Coordinator who would be responsible for the training program and the Consortium/online education. Hauge states that with the contract for the Program Coordinator with Gold Cross being terminated and Benson being ready to retire, we need to look at a person to fill those needs. Hauge asked if he could pursue looking into the possibility of hiring a full-time person to cover the Training program needs of the office. It was stated that since Hauge is a Paramedic, that this position would not necessarily need to be a Paramedic but could be an EMT which we may be able to hire for less money. Hauge will gather information to bring back to the October meeting.

VII.

Adjournment

Motion: Harms

Seconded: Amunrud

“To adjourn the meeting at 09:55 a.m.” MOTION CARRIED.

Approved by:

Attested by:

Douglas Johnson, Chair
EMS Joint Powers Board

Don Hauge
Executive Director