



Town of Griswold

Board of Selectmen

Special Meeting

December 4, 2014

2:00 PM

Selectmen's Meeting Room/2nd Floor
28 Main Street, Griswold, CT



UNAPPROVED MINUTES

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call** – Meeting was called to order at 2:05 PM by Kevin Skulczyck, First Selectman

Members Present: Kevin Skulczyck, First Selectman
Steve Mikutel, Second Selectman
Philip E. Anthony, Third Selectman

Others Present: Lisa M. Wood, Executive Assistant
Erik Christensen, Finance Director
Bill Czmyr, Griswold Ambulance
Mark Czmyr, American Legion
Bob Holdsworth, Holdsworth Group
Len Guercia, Holdsworth Group
Gregory B. Allard, American Ambulance
Damian Rickard, American Ambulance
James Barrie, interested citizen
Todd Babbitt, Road Superintendent (arrived at 3:10 PM)

2. **Discussion and possible action on presentation and interview of companies of bids received in response to the RFP for Ambulance Services** – Discussion was held with Griswold Ambulance and American Ambulance

Griswold Ambulance – B. Holdsworth addressed most of the questions from the BOS. He confirmed that the outlook on reimbursement is not looking any better. Medicare/Medicaid patients are the ones that call the ambulance the most. The amount paid for any call for these patients is \$196 no matter what the circumstances. He confirmed they are still operating on a limited staff and are running through their savings. The amount requested for subsidy the past four years has remained roughly the same and the number you have in the proposal responds to the bid specifications which require them to pick up all the insurance and is approximately \$22,000 more than what they have said in the past is necessary to function. Their goal in the past is to negotiate a multi-year contract and stabilize the ambulance service. He noted the cost amount from the other private servicer validates the need for additional subsidy. He noted the numbers provided are for one ambulance with a backup as needed. If there is a long term contract and they are fiscally stable it allows them to plan in peak staffing for the second ambulance. He also noted that operating an

ambulance in a community and dedicating an ambulance in a community is two completely different things. Operating an ambulance means it may be located here, but not dedicated here. It was noted by the BOS that the Board of Finance will be the deciding factor in approving any amount agreed to by the BOS. B. Holdsworth noted that any proposal received that requires more than one ambulance guaranteed, has a subsidy amount. He also noted that Griswold Ambulance operates in a restricted area and their money only comes from that area. Other providers share resources from all over the place. B. Holdsworth noted the other proposal suggests one ambulance operating in Griswold at no cost, with a backup dispatched with a less than 14 minute response time. That is a degradation in service. Griswold's response time is averaging 8 minutes a call, including call backs. Mark Czmyr asked who will be charged with getting the BOF to approve the money no matter what company is chosen. S. Mikutel commented the BOF has to approve any funding. P. Anthony noted this is not a luxury item but is a state law to provide the service. K. Skulczyck noted the BOS will make a decision on a provider and the BOF will be assigned the task of funding the required service. L. Guercia noted the ambulance service has no control over the demographics of the people who use the service and they only get a certain dollar amount from the people they transport, most of which is Medicare or Medicaid. There is no other pool of funds they can go to. B. Holdsworth asked the BOS be sure to compare apples to apples and state his concern for the need to have a second ambulance in town. B. Holdsworth did not have any statistics on the frequency of using a second ambulance, and was not aware of any situations that have been declined since they have been operating the one ambulance with a backup only.

American Ambulance – G. Allard addressed most of the questions from the BOS. G. Allard commented they currently do provide backup ambulance service to the community as well as ALS provider, and have employees that live in the area. He noted if awarded the bid, the ambulance would be housed in the town, possibly the Soule Street building. If not it could be posted in town at any given location. D. Rickard noted there is an understanding with both fire chiefs that the ambulance could be hosted at either fire company. This option would not interfere with the operation of either fire department. The Soule Street building would need some renovations to be able to fit their vehicle in the garage door and it was noted in the RFP that American would work the Town to facilitate the improvements, as American Ambulance would not own the building. It was noted if they were given a long term contract that they would like to build their own building to suit multiple purposes and would go on the tax roll. Also, registering their vehicles that would be placed here and taxed here is a benefit to them. G. Allard noted they are a regional service, but once the PSA is assigned for an area, then they are responsible for providing service to that area. Mutual aid takes place when any first ambulance is out and there are no other sources in the PSA area, the mutual aid will respond. He confirmed once the PSA is assigned they are committed to cover the area. They are also committed to add additional staff from the area. First response would be for the Town of Griswold, then mutual aid, but would not be sent out to do transports from hospitals. A definite response time for a second vehicle cannot be given because it would be based on where the vehicle is coming from, which would be no different than mutual aid. They are talking about staging a second ambulance in Occum right off exit 83. Option B for the one sustained vehicle in the town of Griswold for three years was zero cost. G. Allard noted the commitment is for three years as provided in the RFP. If the contract is ten years and it is a zero dollar bid, then they are committed to the zero cost.

They are willing to entertain a ten year contract. There is no additional cost when a paramedic is needed. G. Allard confirmed they are willing to entertain a ten year contract with a zero cost so long as the town is willing to make the necessary improvements to the Soule Street building. He also noted he did not see any foreseeable circumstances which would create a need for the town to be billed for option B, unless in establishing the EMS plan something needs to be changed in order to meet some kind of standard. He agreed they would be willing to reopen a ten year contract if necessary and willing to relinquish the PSA if the ten years cannot be completed. It was suggested that a written acknowledgement from both fire companies be obtained in allowing them to house their vehicle their and that the Town will obtain some kind of quote to make the necessary changes to the Soule Street building based on the dimensions of the vehicle being provided to do so. It was affirmed that there would be one primary ambulance in town all the time. As soon as it receives the first call, the other would be dispatched. It was noted the BOS was favorable to the placing of a second ambulance at exit 83 to keep the response time to less than 8 minutes.

- 3. Discussion and possible action on applying along with the Borough for a Small Cities Block Grant for the senior center** – It was noted the deadline for application for this grant is sometime in February. K. Skulczyck noted the Borough decided to use their Small Cities Block Grant application for the senior center in hopes of co-applying with the Town. Consultants confirm that the towns/municipalities applying together stand out in considering the applications. S. Mikutel noted the previous money received to put towards a Griswold Senior Center does not have to be used to that specific site. This was confirmed by OPM today. K. Skulczyck asked to get that in writing. That raises the question of considering building a new senior center on property owned by the Housing Authority or expanding the existing building. The amount it would take to build a new center is unknown, but we need to compare that to what we would get by renovating the existing center for \$800,000. P. Anthony commented if the entire \$500,000 was awarded the allowed renovation to the existing building would only allow for 600 square foot increase, as confirmed by T. Babbitt, and that was based on figures three years ago. All members of the BOS were agreeable to further discussion to explore alternative options. K. Skulczyck noted if new construction were the case, that property is out of the Borough, but does not think that stops us from a co-application, but wants to discuss this with the Borough. It was agreed to hold a joint meeting with the Borough officials to discuss pros and cons of both options.

4. Adjournment

MOTION: Motion was made by S. Mikutel, seconded by P. Anthony, to adjourn the meeting at 3:30 PM. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

**Lisa M. Wood,
Executive Assistant**