

Item 23-0824: Fire Department Service Agreement for Gold Cross Ambulance

Safety and Licensing Committee

Wed, Jul 12, 2023, 5:30PM

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 01:06

No scheduled public hearings or appearances. We will move into our action items, and we will start with the second one because we have visitors in regards to this. 23-0824 is the fire department service agreement for Gold Cross ambulance, which was an attachment I hope everyone had a chance to review.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 01:28

A couple things with this. Mayor Woodford is not able to attend tonight. So, what I'd like to do with this item—and he may be able to answer some questions that some of us might have. I would like to take this up and have discussion but possibly hold it until our next meeting. That will give everyone an opportunity to hear the responses, digest the information in the in the agreement. If the committee feels you want to move it forward today, that's fine, but there's no harm in taking this up at our next meeting for a vote. So just so everyone knows that.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 02:05

Who from staff would like to start? Attorney Glad or Chief Hansen? Chief Hansen? Okay. District Four?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 02:14

Yes.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 02:15

Okay. Yeah, let's go ahead.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 02:21

Thank you chair. Attached to the today's meeting agenda is the service agreement with Gold Cross Ambulance for your consideration. This reason represents years of work guided by Mayor Woodford that has resulted in the first ever agreement between our two parties even though they've been providing service for the city of Appleton for over 35 years. I would like to take a few moments and provide you with a brief historical review of the emergency medical services in the City of Appleton. I feel it'll provide some background on where we've come from.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 02:58

So, I always like to start off every promotional ceremony with this line: the Appleton Fire Department has been protecting the communities since 1894, and like every modern Fire Department, it has evolved over the years to integrate new services and new activities to meet the community's needs. So back in 1954, the Appleton Fire Department purchased its first ambulance, and like every other fire department in the nation, in 1966 it adopted CPR. Whoo, cool—right?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 03:40

Moving forward to 1974 that is when the fire department started providing paramedic level service to the community. In 1986, though, there was a little bump in the road. The fire department lost the ambulance service through a public referendum. At the time, Mayor Johnson stated that it was necessary due to cuts in shared revenue. This ended emergency medical response by the fire department until 1998 when the fire department

resumed responding to medical emergencies at the level of first responder which is the lowest pre-hospital care level.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 04:20

In 2011, Appleton fire department developed a tactical EMS program with the Appleton Police Department. Here paramedics from the fire department utilize their skills to promote or provide assistance to injured officers and civilians. This program has become a model across the state of Wisconsin.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 04:42

In 2019, the city of Appleton, Town of Grand Chute, City of Kaukauna fire departments agreed to respond to all active threats and acts of violence within Outagamie County, parts of Calumet County, and Winnebago County. This is one more step towards improving our service that we provide to the community.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 05:03

In 2021, the fire department upgraded its medical service level from first responder, the lowest pre-hospital level, to EMT basic, which is in the middle. Many of you sitting on this committee approved that change that allowed us to upgrade our medical service. We currently have a plan—a plan in motion to move to paramedic level of service about this time next year.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 05:31

Since getting back into the medical response in 1998, the Appleton Fire Department has responded without interruption 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Last year, we responded to nearly 5,500 medical emergencies in the city of Appleton, which accounts for about 73% of all the calls we go on as a fire department.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 05:55

So, I want to touch on how we came to this agreement or how we developed this agreement, because that's a very long process as well. And I think by doing it the way it has been done, there's been a lot of opportunity for input. So back in December of 2019, we began tracking response time data for Gold Cross ambulance. We would re—we would track the time when we arrived, when the ambulance arrives, when we arrived together, and between the two, arriving together and when we arrived first, we obtain data for about 75% of all medical emergencies in the city.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 06:36

The first discussion that we had as a leadership team with Gold Cross occurred in on August 11 of 2020. Here, my Gold Cross leadership along with Mayor Woodford and I sat down, and we talked started to talk about community expectations and what we expect our community to receive. Response times at the time was a focus of that conversation.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 07:02

During the spring of 2021, Appleton Fire Department, Grand Chute fire department, and Gold Cross exchange response time data for three months. Basically, we took raw data. We handed it to each other and said, "work your magic." And we took a deep dive into the month of March of 2021, and we found that the data that we have, that we build our response time numbers on, was off by nine seconds. That is what I consider statistically significant, right? We're not exactly the same, but we're pretty darn close. So that validated our data knowing that our data is fairly accurate.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 07:50

Next internally, the mayor and I worked on drafting some shared expectations. This document was then provided to Gold Cross leadership, and we had many discussions on it. We worked with the board president for Gold Cross. These discussions began in January of '22 and concluded last September when we came to a tentative agreement on five shared goals.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 08:19

Lastly, the city of Appleton Legal Services under the guidance of City Attorney Chris Behrens, developed a shared service and operating agreement based on those shared goals. The draft document was shared with Gold Cross board president and their leadership team, and after several versions, we came to an agreement with the version that is attached to this agenda.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 08:45

So, I'd like to just take a moment and say that that three years of hard work from the initial conversation to where we are today was a great exercise. It was very rewarding. I think there was hard work by all parties involved to look at what we want, what we can what we can accept, and what the capabilities of each agency has. So, I'm really happy to put this document for your consideration.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 09:15

Stepping into the agreement itself, I'd just like to highlight several areas. I won't go through it word for word, but I'll just take a moment to talk about some of the highlights, and then if you have questions for me, I'd be happy to answer them. Like on page 1 item 1 under "term" this would be a three-year agreement. Page 1 item 2 under "agreement to provide exclusive ambulance services." Gold Cross agrees to assist the fire department with expanding our medical services to paramedic under the condition that the fire department nor the city will obtain an ambulance and begin to begin a transport service. Gold Cross will be the primary ambulance provider for the city under this agreement. With the exception would be mutual aid, automatic aid, MABAS and/or any special circumstances that takes place where you know it's a very rare occasion, but it may happen.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 10:18

In under that—what was that? Under page 1 item 2, an important note is the city will owe Gold Cross no compensation for providing transport services to the city.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 10:31

Under page 2 item 3 "furnishing of ambulance services provided by Gold Cross" under "A"—just want to make sure I'm in the right spot here. Gold Cross agrees to provide both basic and life support—advanced life support ambulances in the city. Advanced life support ambulances will be staffed with at least one paramedic. Now I will say that similar sized cities across the across the state of Wisconsin staff with two paramedics for ALS calls. This does bring some concern to me; however, the fire department is looking to upgrade our skills to paramedic, and we will have a paramedic on every firetruck and then that will be a little more acceptable to me.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 11:18

Under "C" for item 3 Gold Cross ambulance employees need to display their medical license level. This is a—this will be increasingly important when we become paramedics ourselves, because it'll allow us—it'll help us know whether we can transfer patient care and who we can transfer patient care to.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 11:44

Under page 2 item 4 "furnishing non transport services by the fire department", under "A", the Fire Department will continue to provide EMTs on all emergency apparatus. And for what it's worth, almost every single person

on our fire department is either an EMT basic or a paramedic. We have a few first responders left, but we manage to staff those appropriately so there's always at least two EMTs or one EMT and one paramedic on every app—engine right now.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 12:18

Under "C", this language establishes a hierarchy of patient care. It addresses what are called private calls or direct calls to Gold Cross where a customer will call their seven-digit non-emergency number. Here, under this agreement, Gold Cross will have to assess that call and determine if it's an emergent. And if so, turn it over to Outagamie County where the fire department will be dispatched to that incident as well.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 12:52

Moving down to page 2 and 3, it's kind of the bottom of page 2, top of page 3. Under "D", Gold Cross has agreed to replace all consumable supplies and equipment used on medical incidents at no charge to the fire department. We're going to attempt to do this on scene if possible. If not, we will have a list of equipment that we used and then we'll be—we'll make arrangements to get that replaced at a later date.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 13:28

Page 3 items 6 "support training and education." Here we're going to collaborate, and Gold Cross will be providing training on a quarterly basis on topics that are approved by both parties, dates and times yet to be determined based off of, you know, basically the initiatives that we're working on as organizations.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 13:53

Moving to the bottom of page 3, and mostly into page 4, one of the items we've talked about in the past is dispatch and response times. So here the National Fire Protection Association establishes response time goals for medical—fire and medical emergencies. NFPA 1710, The 2020 edition allows for 60 seconds for a turnout time, that's the time from receiving the dispatch to wheels moving and the vehicle is moving out the door, and then 480 seconds, or eight minutes, for response time for an ALS unit. That time begins when the vehicle starts to move until it arrives on scene. That's only possible if there is a first responder group that is agreeing to get there within roughly four minutes. We are the first responder group, the fire department and that is coming up just shortly here.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 14:52

So, when we we've decided to combine the turnout time and the response time and have agreed to eight minutes and 59 sec is the goal for an ALS ambulance to arrive on scene of a medical patient in need. Now, in the document it will talk about, this standard will be used for incidents coded with a C, Charlie D, David or E, Edward. That's an emergency medical dispatching process. A lot of questions that are answered—er asked and answered to determine where this patient falls in that spectrum of A through E. And those calls coded C, D, or E are typically emergency calls. And those are the ones that we will be tracking the response time data of eight minutes and 59 seconds for.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 15:46

Also, under "A" is—it'll mention that the fire department needs to be there within four minutes and 59 seconds is our response time goal. I can say that we are very close to that, within seconds. And we have been for literally years.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 16:04

Under D in that section, Gold Cross has agree—has agreed to notify the fire department if their response times will exceed 15 minutes for C, D and E calls as well.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 16:18

Moving down to "communications", page 4 number 8. Gold Cross will have the necessary equipment to transmit and receive on our main fire channel what we call fire—Appleton fire main. Effective and efficient communication is critical on for so many reasons. So, it's very important for us to be able to talk to the responding ambulance. This has been problematic in the past. I will say that over the past two years it has gotten it has gotten better. We do have a little more work to do here, but like I said, we are seeing improvements in this area as well.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 17:01

Like to jump down to page 5, and 6 item 12. Skipping over medical directors, separate employees, licensing and laws. And moving to "operational plans and reports". Under the—under Section "A", the AFD is asking Gold Cross to assist with the development of our EMS operations plan. This operation plan needs to be on file with the state and the state actually approves through Wisconsin—the Health and Human Services I believe is what it is, Wisconsin Department of Health Services that—and they regulate what you can do as an organization. So ultimately, we'll remain control—or retain control over our operations plan, but we're hoping to collaborate with Gold Cross and so that our agencies can work closely together with little to no interruption. Our next submittal for an operations plan will be in the coming months when we submit for our paramedic operations upgrade.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 18:11

Also under that area, under "B" both parties have agreed to provide copies of documents submitted to the state within 10 days of submitting them to the state. Now I hope that there's collaboration before that, so the final documents are just you know a nice to have and we are both organizations already know what the other is doing.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 18:33

Under "C" this section details our efforts towards transparency and accountability of system performance. The metrics include several items, such as total response incidents broken down by emergency medical dispatch, coding, the response time, performance; patient care metrics like stroke, STEMI, and trauma activations; on scene times with those patients. And then on a regular basis, we plan to meet with Gold Cross leadership to discuss all of those items, response times and patient care metrics, so that we can look at areas that we can we can, one, collaborate and, two, improve because that's always the goal is to provide the community with better services.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 19:21

Last item that I wanted to touch on is on page 7 and 8. Any party can terminate this contract with a 12-month notice. So, there is at least a long enough notice that if either party wants to exit this contract that the others can adjust their tactics, strategies, staffing, etc. as we move forward.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 19:50

Kind of in conclusion with this this policy or this agreement, since we've engaged in conversations to develop it, we've been oldest improved service, we've noticed decreased in response time, better radio communications. Again, we're not where we want to be, but we are, we're seeing improvements. So, we'll continue to monitor the number of paramedics that respond to medical emergencies to ensure the community is receiving the care that we feel they deserve. Overall, I feel this is a fair agreement based on the capacity and capabilities of both organizations.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 20:29

Thank you, Chief Hansen. Anything from the attorney's office at this point? Okay. All right. Before we get to committee questions, I would like to give the Gold—members from Gold Cross an opportunity to speak to the agreement if you'd like to. Approach the microphone name and address for the record. Please, thanks for coming.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 20:55

Yes, please. Oh, I'm sorry, podium. There we go. Gotcha.

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 21:03

Good. Yeah, I would just kind of echo a lot of what Chief said. Really, the goal from at least Gold Cross's perspective was to memorialize the relationship that we already have with the city of Appleton. Like chief Hansen said, we've been doing business in the city for over 30 years. And a lot of what we have done has been on handshake agreements with previous administrations. So really, the goal was just to memorialize it, create expectations from both the city of Appleton and Gold Cross as the responding ambulance agency. And, you know, the conversations have been collaborative, and I think we've been able to meet in the middle on a lot of the items to make sure that we're both able to meet the expectations that are outlined in the agreement and also support each other as we move forward through this three year agreement.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 21:46

Great. Thank you. Anyone else from your team like to comment? No? Okay. All right, I just wanted to say thank you for coming again. And I know it's been a long time coming on formalizing this—three years, plus, Chief Hansen—to get to this point. So, it's, it's great to see that we were able to come to a mutual agreement on this and bring it forward.

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 21:46

So we're confident going into it, that we'll be able to meet all the expectations that are outlined and really kind of look forward to how this agreement will help improve not only our response, but also the quality and the collaboration on scene because that's what it's all about is the patients that we meet with and we make contact with and have to treat together as a collaborative team. A lot of this had that in mind in making sure that we can work together moving forward and have the best possible outcomes for the community in Appleton. So.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 22:40

I think it's really important that these—there's a lot of important information in here. As I was reading it and highlighting them highlighting some things that Aldersonperson Hartzheim said that I was wearing out the highlighter. But there's a lot of important information in here. I think it's great for both sides to understand the expectations and the parameters. And Chief Hansen—if you could, before we bring it to the table for some questions and comments and a motion—talk a little bit about this one-year review that is in in the "term" section. It's a three-year agreement, right. But it's it mentions here on the anniversary of the agreement parties—on the one-year anniversary of the agreement, the parties shall evaluate the performance of the agreement. You talk a little bit about that?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 23:26

And which page are you referring...?

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 23:28

Page one under the term.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 23:30
Okay.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 23:31

It talks about a performance evaluation at every one-year period, I believe is how I'm reading that. Is that correct?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 23:44

Yeah. Later on in the agreement, I believe it's further—it's either page 6 or page 7—it's something very similar in language. Once we get this agreement off the ground and signed and into practice, I think it's important for us to, to review the agreement after the first year to see if we got everything right or if we, you know, found something that we weren't aware of. And the other thing is, we also need to look and evaluate the overall performance on both parties to see if we're meeting the objectives of it, and you know, that maybe we maybe we set the objectives or the goals too high. Maybe we set them too low, and we have to readjust. So. I think that, in my opinion, that's what that's referring to.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 24:31

Okay. Thank you. And you're right, deeper into the agreement, there is reference to monthly reviews, quarterly reviews with senior leadership.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 24:39

So okay, let's bring it to the committee and let's get a motion on the table for discussion purposes. And then we can ask questions of Chief Hansen.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 24:47

Motion to approve.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 24:49

A motion by Alderson Wolff to approve. Is there a second?

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 24:52

Second by Alderson Siebers. Questions? Alderson Siebers, go ahead.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 24:52

Second.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 24:58

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm interested in the staffing levels of both fire department as well as Gold Cross. I'd like to hear from the chief. He stated that we will have, or the fire department, will have a paramedic on every fire truck—"will"—which indicates we don't at this point. I'd like to know, you know, what's the expectation from the chief in regards to having a paramedic on each fire truck? I'd like to hear from Gold Cross in regards to their present staffing level on their ambulances. Do they have two paramedics or one paramedic and one EMT? I'm just interested in that.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 25:49

Okay. Chief Hansen, do you want to start?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 25:51

Sure. Thank you, chair. So, I'm going to go back to 2018. When I was interviewing for this position, one of the things that I talked to the police and fire commission about was the vision to put paramedics on every fire truck. ALS engine companies is typically what it's called.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 26:13

So, in my five years—this this Sunday, it'll be five years I've been here. So, since I started, we have been making steps. You know, some of the steps would be to upgrade from first responder to EMT basic, and then we started hiring only paramedic. We have changed our hiring requirements now through the police and fire commission that paramedic is required for all employees. We have roughly 20 paramedics right now. We're sending four to school this fall. We're going to be hiring four to six, next spring. So, by this time next year, we'll be close to 30 paramedics—25 to 30 paramedics on the department. And at that point, we will have enough to put one on every fire truck. So, we will be submitting—or we did submit on Monday—a budget request that will come to this members of this committee back in probably around November timeframe, where you'll see there are some startup costs that we will need, some funding for equipment, and then sustainable funding as well. So, the goal is to put paramedics on fire trucks in July 1st of next year. There are a couple funding things, funding items that can derail that a little bit. But that is the plan.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 27:39

July 1, 2024.

Aldersperson William Siebers (District 1) 27:39

'25.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 27:42

or

Aldersperson William Siebers (District 1) 27:43

'24.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 27:43

'24, yes.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 27:45

Tentative plan. Okay.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 27:48

And through this budget season, we will have a better idea if that's if that's achievable.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 27:53

Okay. All right. And I believe there was, the second part of that question was for Gold Cross if you'd like to come up to the microphone and address the question from aldersperson Siebers about staffing levels.

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 28:05

Yeah, you know staffing levels nationwide is a systemic issue, and public safety in general, but specific with paramedics. It's a challenge to find qualified staff to do the work. So that being said, we're doing everything we can to get paramedics on every single call, and we have been, and we will continue to do so. At a minimum they're getting—they're going to be getting one paramedic and one EMT on a call.

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 28:30

We do have several ambulances that are staff, dual paramedic as well. It's variable depending on the time of the day and where are those ambulances are located. But, you know, we we're committed to meeting the staffing levels that are outlined in the agreement.

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 28:46

One other resource we do have in our system, it's a second paramedic that would respond in a rapid response vehicle. So that single paramedic and EMT that are on that ambulance would respond and then that rapid response vehicle, who doesn't have the requirements to transport and restock at the hospital, they can quickly turn around and they get on multiple calls throughout the day to provide that second set of paramedic hands as well.

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 29:11

So, we've been doing our best to try to get creative to add more resources into our system to do the best we can to deal with these, you know, staffing shortages, that are really impacting not only Gold Cross, but all around the state and really all around the country. So, it's been a challenge, but we're, you know, we're being proactive as well. If you come close to our headquarters, you'll see we're putting up in new buildings in anticipation of becoming our own training center and being able to train paramedics in-house as well. This is a long-term issue that we feel is going to continue to be a problem unless we did something about it. So, we've, you know, committed to starting to train our own paramedics in house. This is something that the fire departments are doing as well. As chief Hansen said they're sending four into the paramedic schooling in order to achieve that certification. So that's where we're going to have to go with this. We're gonna have to train our own talent and, you know, make sure that we get as many as many paramedics as possible into this field.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 30:04

Can I ask a....?

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 30:05

Sure. Go ahead.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 30:07

Are you presently training your staff to be paramedics presently, right now?

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 30:13

You're not doing that right now?

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 30:13

We're training at the EMT level. Paramedic level is a little bit a little bit more challenging. There's an accreditation piece of that. And we're working with some of the local technical schools as well to get that started as quick as possible. But...

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 30:26

Not current state. No.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 30:27

Okay. Okay. But I don't have a question. I just have a concern. And excuse my lack of knowledge in regards to what services can be provided, but butt in an emergency situation, time is of the essence, and I think we can all

agree on that. An EMT is limited in regards to what that individual can do versus a paramedic, and so ideally, we would like to see a paramedic first on the scene and so I think it's important. I want to stress from my opinion that it's important chief that if you're going to be the first on the scene that we got to do our very best to get our staff to the level where we have a paramedic on every fire truck. Yeah. So, I appreciate your answer.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 31:25

Just to clarify, while you're still there. Did I hear you say that on every call you were you would have at least one paramedic and one EMT?

Nick Romensko (Gold Cross Representative) 31:33

Correct.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 31:34

Okay. And Chief Hansen in this in this agreement, is that outlined clearly?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 31:41

It is, yes.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 31:41

The expectation from them, is that?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 31:43

Yes, it is.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 31:45

With the hope that it would maybe be two paramedics?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 31:47

Correct.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 31:47

Okay. Yeah,

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 31:48

At a minimum.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 31:49

Okay. Any other questions for Gold Cross? Alderson van Zeeland.

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 31:53

Thank you chair. I was going to ask questions about staffing. So, thank you to Alder Siebers. I'm taking some courses right now in healthcare administration, and healthcare delivery, and they're talking about the staffing issues. And what they're finding is that they have care providers who are working very long hours, and that's turning into safety issues. Do you have any sort of controls for rest or time off?

Nick Romensko (Gold Cross Representative) 32:19

We do. And actually, over the last really six months, we've been peeling back the hours worked requirement for our staff members. When I first got into this industry, it was—56 hours a week was very common. 24-hour

shifts. That's kind of how you made a good living was predicated on a lot of the overtime that you were able to work in this field. And really, we've shifted over the last six months, quite a bit away from that. About four or five years ago, we went to 12-hour shifts versus 24-hour shifts. And then over this last year, full time requirement for us is 24 hours a week. That comes with single benefits and things like that, and we've modified some of our hourly rates.

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 32:55

So, most of our staff right now is on what's called a point 6 or point 9 rotation in healthcare or 24 hours a week or 36 hours a week, which is a full time equivalent for us, which is benefits eligible. So certainly, acknowledge that provider fatigue is huge for us. And that actually, you know, when you have a fatigued provider, they don't make the best decisions. So, we are being very conscious of that and safety minded and moving back.

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 33:17

The problem with that when you go from, you know, having somebody that can work 56 hours a week now is working 36 hours a week, you need more bodies to do the work. And that's some of the other issues that we're running into is now that we don't have the requirement for the overtime, we have less—we have more people that are required to fill the same amount of hours in the week.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 33:35

Sure. But you're not having issues with that to where you think it would affect your service?

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 33:40

No.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 33:41

Great. Thank you.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 33:43

Any other questions? Aldersperson Van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 33:46

Oh, no thank you.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 33:48

Aldersperson Schultz and then Alder—Aldersperson Wolff.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 33:51

Well, yeah, I guess I was gonna ask a very similar question on effectiveness of service. If an individual is OD-ing or is having a heart attack, and there's one individual that you have to treat, I can understand that one EMT or one paramedic on site would be sufficient. But I think, you know, how many instances do we have multiple vehicle collisions, where you've got to have several qualified individuals on site to triage the situation, take care of individuals in need. And my question was going to be very similar to like, have you been in instances or situations where having that singular paramedic wasn't sufficient to manage the scene when you arrived?

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 34:28

And I know we're dealing with a lot of arbitrary things where the call goes out and I don't know if the fire department is there first or they're there first and you—that's, the meat and potatoes of this agreement is essentially how do we manage this situation where a call comes in and one of one of you is gonna arrive first,

who takes responsibility and who hands it off. So that's—I commend you for getting to this agreement because that's a lot of tricky language and responsibilities to hand off one to another, but I guess I want to understand the effectiveness of what you provide the city at a cost to the resident versus what the Fire Department provides the city at no cost to the resident and whether what you provide is sufficient given there may be situations where you have multiple injuries and aren't able to do the triage on site until there's more people that arrived to manage it.

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 35:21

Yeah, I think it's important to understand too, that the paramedic level work is really that that upper level work that is required to be done, and we've done some good data diving, at least on our on our internal data, that you know, of the 25,000 calls that we respond to only about 2 to 3% require that upper level paramedic level care. So, one of those high acuity situations but low volume we're not encountering it all the time. We're having to intubate the patient's, you know, put their breathing tube down, or doing a defibrillation or cardioversion with those patients. So those situations are certainly few and far between. But the good thing is that a single paramedic has the same scope of care, even if he has an EMT partner or if he has a paramedic partner, so there's no degradation of care when you have only a single paramedic.

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 36:06

Now, certainly with anything, if you have a little extra set of hands, it's it doesn't hurt. And that's why we have that rapid response vehicle that really targets those high acuity calls to help and assist with, but he's in the room and I can tell you most of the time, he's just helping assist, moving bags, lifting, that type of thing. So, you know, like I said, it's a small percentage of the calls that we encounter actually require paramedic level skills and expertise.

Alderman Alex Schultz (District 9) 36:33

Chair?

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 36:33

Go ahead.

Alderman Alex Schultz (District 9) 36:34

I guess I would just direct a question to the chief. Is that your experience as well as that it's a very limited number of situations where experienced personnel are not quite on site, where you'd want them as quickly as you'd want them, either from city staff or from Gold Cross?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 36:53

Yeah, I think anytime there's a medical emergency of significance time matters. One of the sayings is time is brain cells. So, we have to provide definitive care as quick as possible. So, getting those paramedics on scene fast is important.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 37:13

The other aspect is, you know, whether one or two paramedics, and there's data on both sides that say, you know, one works, two are better. And I've—you know, this has been said before, some of the best calls I was ever on when I was on the ambulance in Eau Claire, we had five—three paramedics on the fire truck and two on the ambulance. Because when you have a very serious call, you don't have time to let one paramedic start an IV, then the paramedic go and do the airway, and then the paramedic do this, draw medications. It's now you have two three paramedics on scene, and all of that has happened simul—simultaneously. So, the critical calls that

we're talking about, that 5% That 10% of EMS calls, you need those paramedics there. You need more than one. That's my personal opinion and my experience.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 38:10

Thank you. Okay. Alderson Wolff.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 38:16

Thank you, Chair. And thank you Mr. Romenesko. So, my question is about the 15-minute notification to the police department and fire department. Like, he was just saying time is of the essence. So how would you know if it's going to be more than 15 minutes? Or like? Like, how would you determine that? And how soon would they know that in advance?

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 38:41

Yeah, so our system that's in our dispatch center has GPS connectivity to all the ambulances. And as soon as we input that call, and activate and assign to an ambulance, it gives us the ETA right away. So, we know that within seconds of assigning the call that there's going to be a delay, and also gives us the information of whether or not we want to use a mutual aid resource to help us with the situation. It's a rare circumstance but certainly want to make that determination quickly so that we can get an alternative resource to the call.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 39:08

All right, thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 39:10

Okay, anything else? Alderson Siebers.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 39:14

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I like to ask Gold Cross or maybe the chief, again, lack of knowledge. Is it my understanding that Kaukauna Fire Department has their own ambulance, right?

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 39:31

They do. Yep.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 39:32

And are they required to have two paramedics?

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 39:36

They are.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 39:38

And how is Gold Cross different from Kaukauna?

Nick Romenesko (Gold Cross Representative) 39:43

So, there was a rule change recently, that states that an ambulance system [indecipherable] is required to have a minimum of two paramedics on at least one ambulance, and this is something that we worked really closely with the state of Wisconsin DHS office EMS office, on how this is gonna look for us. So, we always have a minimum of one dual paramedics ambulance in our service. And the rest we can have variable staffing on. We could have two EMTs on an ambulance if we choose to. We don't choose to. So, it's not a requirement to have

two paramedics, depending on your population is what—population is also a part of that statute as well. So about 10,000 people within your service area requires a minimum of one two-paramedic staffed ambulance.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 40:33

Okay. How many ambulances are designated for Appleton?

Nick Romensko (Gold Cross Representative) 40:42

So, none of our ambulances are designated for any specific municipality within our service area. We staff anywhere from—in the city at a minimum we have two at all times that are you know, stationed in the city. We ramp up during the day. We add a significant amount of resources. We'll add three additional resources within our system that are floaters that will backfill and continue to always be in the city of Appleton. But it's variable throughout the day. But typically, our station five which is St. Elizabeth, and AMC is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 41:16

Okay. And one last thing. You provide services as far as Waupaca?

Nick Romensko (Gold Cross Representative) 41:23

Yep. We have ambulance service out west to Waupaca. So, there's three stations out there that are really dedicated in that area. If we get busy, we do pull them down, or if they have a transport down to the valley, they're going to—if they're the closest resource to an ambulance call, we'll pull them into the system to help with that. But we do—our region is quite expensive. Yeah.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 41:41

And then Chilton?

Nick Romensko (Gold Cross Representative) 41:43

Chilton, we have a management contract with the hospital system. So, we staff their ambulances, and we do some management for them, but we don't...

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 41:51

How far east do you go then?

Nick Romensko (Gold Cross Representative) 41:53

Chilton's as far east as we go.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 41:55

Okay. How far north and south?

Nick Romensko (Gold Cross Representative) 41:59

North, the cut off is Shiocton, Black Creek, Seymour. They have their own Volunteer Ambulance Services. And then south goes as far as south the town of Oshkosh.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 42:09

Thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 42:09

All right. Alderson Schultz.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 42:14

Pass.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 42:14

Okay. Alderson van Zeeland.

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 42:16

Thank you, Chair. Chief Hanson, how often will the reviewed information come to us at the committee?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 42:26

How often would the committee like it?

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 42:27

I guess I can't make that determination by myself.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 42:31

In the past, I've only experienced it once, but Gold Cross provided an annual report. So, we could definitely look at doing something like that.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 42:45

Yeah, I would say at a minimum an annual review or an annual update or recap of how the past year went. And then maybe throughout the year, if there's some more reduced updaters or just...

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 43:00

Or perhaps just communication with the chair is appropriate.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:03

Right.

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 43:04

We can certainly do that.

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 43:05

Thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:06

Alder Wolff, go ahead.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 43:09

Thank you, Chair. Chief Hanson, so a few years ago, I remember a meeting like this taking place, and I just can't remember. What is the preferred response time. Was it six minutes? [...] minutes?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 43:26

The preferred response time is 60 seconds turnout time. Again, that's dispatch to wheels turning. And then four minutes for the first responder to get on scene, and eight minutes for an ALS unit to get on scene. So, call it five minutes and nine minutes.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:49

And that's exactly what's in this agreement?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 43:51

Correct. Yes.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 43:53

I don't know why I had 6 stuck in my head. But I have one more. So, in our—this contract lasts for three years. My question is about the third year, and whether or not one party wants to end in that third year. Does that go into the fourth year? If one party wants to end in the third year?

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen 44:11

I hope that's not the case. I hope around, you know, year two, year two-ish we are already working on a on the next contract.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 44:21

I just wanted to check on that. Because I wouldn't want it to cut off you know, at that.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 44:28

Attorney Glad anything you want to comment on that question? Go ahead.

Darrin Glad (Assistant City Attorney) 44:37

Yeah, so I think—I was a little confused on the question. Like, because there's the 12-month notice. Like, were you wondering that if it went into the start of that year three, if we didn't give notice, would that automatically push this into year four?

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 44:52

Yes.

Darrin Glad (Assistant City Attorney) 44:52

Yeah, I think it's a three year max unless this gets extended. Otherwise, that's my understanding of the read of this. So.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 44:59

Thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 45:00

Okay, thanks. Okay, any other questions from committee members? How about other alders in attendance? Fenton? Alders Fenton, Jones, Thyssen? No. Okay. All right. Alderson Siebers?

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 45:15

Mr. Chair, I'd like to ask the reason you would like to hold this.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 45:22

Oh, I just threw that as an option, as in—because Mayor Woodford couldn't be here, and he was clearly part of the work that took place on this. I thought if there was questions for him, we might want to hold it. I'm fine with bring with moving it forward if that's the Committee's purview. I just wanted to throw that out there as an

option, but I'm—based on what I've heard, I think we're comfortable with—unless there's more questions we can.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 45:50

I—Gold Cross seems to be in agreement, Fire Department's in agreement. Questions have been answered and asked. I'm ready to vote.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 46:02

I don't have any opposition to taking a vote on it and moving it to Council. We always have the option of referring it back if we need to should there be some new questions or something. But any other questions from committee members? We do have a motion and a second to approve the service agreement. Okay, seeing none. Okay, let's take a vote. All those in favor of the agreement signify by saying aye. All opposed? Chair votes aye. It's five zero. That will go to the full city council as a recommendation to approve the agreement between the fire department and Gold Cross ambulance.

Nick Romensko (Gold Cross Representative) 46:38

Thanks for having us.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 46:38

Okay, thanks for coming. Thanks for answering the questions.