

January 18, 2011

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in special session at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room, Starke Memorial Hospital, Knox, Indiana, with two members present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

Joint Meeting of the Starke County Commissioners and Starke County Council

Re: Paramedic Intercept

Present – Dan Bridegroom and Kathy Norem, Starke County Commissioners;
Mark Smith, Dave Pearman, Mitchell Semans, and Tony Radkiewicz, Starke County Council.

Also Present – Kris Rannells, Mary Lyn Ritchie, Lisa Burger, David Emigh, Keith Emigh,
Charles Collins, Justin King, Lynda Fisher, Dr. Hassan, Roger Chaffins and Ted Hayes.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the procedure of paramedic intercept/paramedic chase. Kris Rannells informed the group that initially the committee started approximately one year ago, in response to improving emergency care. They met with the area fire departments. As of today, the Koontz Lake Fire Dept. is the only one to be BLS, non-transport certified. Knox, Washington Twp. And Hamlet fire departments have the paperwork filed to become certified. Bass Lake and San Pierre fire departments are working on the paperwork. North Judson Fire Dept. is still working on obtaining the necessary equipment. The fire departments are the 1st Responders, who can initiate treatment.

Kathy Norem advised there are three levels of emergency response care:

Level One: 1st Responders (fire departments)

Level Two: Basic EMT's

Level Three: Paramedics

Kris stated the committee has written a uniform protocol for emergency response.

In the past the firemen could only stand there and wait for the ambulance to arrive.

Now the firemen can respond up to their certified capabilities. They are considered non-transfer.

Tony Radkiewicz inquired if there is a difference in job descriptions between medical care levels and certifications. Kathy responded yes the state has different requirements.

Kris advised there are almost double requirements per level.

Kathy stated it was a big step to get the fire departments all on the same page.

Mark Smith explained it all started by Dr. Houston of the Laporte Hospital being concerned that there were no certified ALS paramedics in our county. Dr. Houston contacted our state representative. As a result of the first meeting a uniform medical protocol was established. The next step is how to handle the ALS in field.

Kris advised Starke County is one of two counties left in the state that does not have ALS certification. Kathy advised the next step is to establish the ALC Protocol: the paramedic chase/paramedic intercept. Kris advised the paramedic could be in a separate vehicle from the ambulance and then respond to a request from the Medic. The ALS paramedic would meet the ambulance and work on the patient. The chase vehicle would have the ALS equipment or the Medic ambulance could be equipped. The Paramedic equipment would be portable; usually carried in three bags. The logistics of what to do with the paramedic vehicle after the paramedic meets up with the Medic would still need to be worked out.

Kathy inquired how do we get where we want to be. We need to establish a financial pro forma showing the possible number of patients and revenue.

Lisa Burger and Mary Lyn Ritchie of EMS Dept. gave a presentation with statistics regarding the number of possible ALS calls. Kris speculated in Starke County the number of ALS related calls would be possibly 15% of their total calls.

Fees are based on the level of care they received at the scene, noting ALS paramedics could also assist on BLS calls.

Lisa's presentation gave a breakdown by township regarding the number of ALS calls.

Mark Smith stated he was financially concerned about their only being 1-2 ALS calls per month.

They advised that was per township and the whole county averaged 10-15 per month. Kris also added anything regarding pain management, seizures and diabetic comas, were also considered ALS calls.

Dave Pearman inquired if a paramedic could also be an ER/hospital employee that answers calls. They advised that has been discussed.

Kris stated the next step is to bring in an outside expert to look at the county and tell them what is needed to implement the next step.

Lisa stated that now the Grovertown Medic uses the paramedic intercept out of Plymouth. Dave also inquired if the hospital could handle more on site increasing what can be done at SMH instead of being transferred out. He stated he has been hearing from taxpayers that the hospital has become just a transfer station.

Kris advised the next step would be to bring in a consultant from Wheatfield and one from Clinton County. Kathy inquired if there would be a consultant's fee and Kris felt the initial evaluation would be free. Kathy suggested they meet with the consultant's and prepare a report to present to the Commissioners, possibly for the Feb. 21st meeting.

Mark Smith reminded them to use July as a time marker, for that is when the Budget process is initiated for the county.

Kris stated to be ALS certified, you have to be staffed 24/7. A paramedic's salary averages \$ 35,000. - \$40,000. Per year. Most counties already have paramedic ambulances. Mary Lyn stated of the \$ 606,000. Of last year's revenue, a large portion of that was received from transfers.

Kris stated that possibly the fire departments could become ALS non-transport. To have three shifts of paramedics, there would need to be at least five paramedics.

Kathy concluded that they should meet with the specialists, get the input and report back with a feasibility study. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM.

Dan Bridegroom, President

Kathy Norem, Vice President

ABSENT
Jennifer Davis, Member

Katherine Chaffins, Auditor and
Secretary to the Commissioners