



WHEATON CITY COUNCIL PLANNING SESSION MINUTES

MAYOR PHILIP J. SUESS

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL BARBIER | COUNCILWOMAN ERICA BRAY-PARKER | COUNCILWOMAN SUZANNE FITCH
COUNCILWOMAN LYNN ROBBINS | COUNCILMAN JOHN RUTLEDGE | COUNCILMAN CHRISTOPHER ZARUBA

WHEATON CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 303 W WESLEY STREET, WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60187

Monday, January 11, 2021

1. Call to Order

The Wheaton City Council Planning Session was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Suess. The following were:

Physically Present:

Mayor Suess
Councilman Barbier
Councilwoman Bray-Parker
Councilwoman Fitch
Councilwoman Robbins
Councilman Rutledge
Councilman Zaruba

City Staff Physically Present:

Michael Dzugan, City Manager
John Duguay, Assistant City Manager
Susan Bishel, Public Information Officer
David DiClementi, Emergency Medical Service/CRR Manager
William Schultz, Fire Chief

City Staff Present by Video Conference:

Robert Lehnhardt, Director of Finance
Daniel Peck, Public Relations Coordinator

2. Approval of December 14, 2020 Minutes

The Council approved the December 14, 2020 City Council Planning Session minutes.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Paramedic Service Fees

City Manager Dzugan stated the CY 2021 budget included a General Fund revenue increase of approximately \$700,000 to offset an approximate 36% increase of expenditures observed in the fund due to the City's new Emergency Medical Services (EMS) contract. He stated that Fire Chief Schultz and Emergency Medical Service/Community Risk Reduction Manager DiClementi would provide an overview of the City's current EMS fees and present potential approaches to restructuring fees that better align with the City Council's policy of recovering 90% of EMS operating costs. City Manager Dzugan stated that the fees were last adjusted in May 2016.

Manager DiClementi provided an overview of the statistical analysis conducted by City staff that reviewed EMS call volume, historical billing data, insurance payment information, and comparable community billing information.

Manager DiClementi stated that approximately 75% of all Fire Department calls are EMS related. He stated that EMS calls have steadily increased from 2017 through 2019, and he predicts there will be a continual annual increase based on historical call demand data.

Manager DiClementi stated the CY2021 budget for Emergency Medical Services is approximately \$2.3 million. Based on an analysis from the City's third-party billing services, he stated that the City currently collects approximately \$1.7 million, or 71%, of the EMS operating budget annually.

Manager DiClementi reviewed potential fee structure scenarios of adjusted rates for residents and non-residents that would increase annual collections by 19% to meet the policy goal of annually recovering 90% of operating costs.

In response to questions from Council, Manager DiClementi stated that people living in unincorporated Wheaton areas are categorized as mutual aid EMS calls, not resident EMS calls.

In response to questions from Council, Fire Chief Schultz stated that the City's Fire Department receives approximately 4,000 EMS calls annually, and an average cost per call would be difficult to calculate due to the amount of different variables with each service call.

In response to questions from Council, Fire Chief Schultz stated that the City provides 800-1,000 mutual aid service calls annually with approximately 70% being EMS related service calls. He stated that, as part of an intergovernmental agreement, the City can only bill insurance providers of recipients of mutual aid for the maximum fee rate of the jurisdiction where service is provided. He stated that surrounding municipalities' fees are higher than those of the City, and the City typically provides more mutual aid than it receives.

In response to questions from Council, Fire Chief Schultz stated that the City of Wheaton and the Village of Carol Stream are the only municipalities in the immediate area that utilize 3 ambulances.

City Manager Dzugan stated that City staff is seeking direction for what the City should set EMS fee rates for residents and then adjustments can be made to the non-resident rates to reach the City Council's policy of recovering 90% of the operating costs to deliver EMS.

In response to questions from Council, Manager DiClementi stated that Medicare and Medicaid will pay the fees that the City sets, but there are cap limits. Fire Chief Schultz stated that private insurers do not pay for non-transport fees.

In response to questions from Council, Manager DiClementi stated that target recovery amount is the net amount of what the City collects from EMS services and not what the City bills.

The Council requested that City staff provide 4 fee structure alternatives for review to recover 90% of the operating costs to deliver EMS. Alternatives include raising resident rates by 5% and non-resident rates by 62%; increasing resident rates by 10% and non-resident rates by 52%; raising resident rates by 20% and non-resident rates by 35%; and structuring the resident fees to the mean fee for comparable communities and applying the difference to the non-resident fees.

5. City Council/City Staff Comments

There were no comments.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel J. Peck