

TONOPAH TOWN BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 1, 2017
Tonopah Convention Center
301 Brougner Avenue, Tonopah, NV 89049

Tonopah Town Board Chairman Duane Downing called the special meeting to order on December 1, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. Also present were Vice-Chairman Don Kaminski, Clerk Jerry Elliston, and Board Members Roni Link and Mike Sain. Twenty others were in attendance. Chairman Duane Downing led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Town Board took a recess between 9:59 a.m. and 10:08 a.m.

1. Public Comment

Rhonda S. Link stated that she is a 35-year retired teamster who, after the local hospital closed, became a member of the Town Board and the Northern Nye County Hospital District Board and an EMT volunteer. Ms. Link noted that due to this, she will be recusing herself from the vote.

Tonopah resident Horace Carlyle noted that he supports the Hospital District and their negotiations with REMSA about the "highest proposal". He added that Commissioner Wichman confirmed that the highest proposal can be sustained for 5 years. He pointed out that there is no right or wrong about today's decision and that it is about life and death. Mr. Carlyle stated that if the Town helps fund what Nye County is asking for, it will deplete the Town's budget and not leave enough funds for other projects. He stressed that having the EMT's on call can cost a fortune, whether they go on a run or not. He added that there is a history with EMS personnel saying there is no funding for this program. He noted that according to the local newspaper, there is no guarantee what will happen after the 30 days and that it could take until April of 2018 until anything else comes to fruition. Mr. Carlyle closed that he believes in sustainability for the long-term.

2. Discussion, deliberation and possible decision concerning a request from Nye County to fund single resource contracted paramedics or AEMTs for a period ending December 31, 2017 in support of the Tonopah Volunteer Ambulance Service currently experiencing intermittent coverage.

Nye County Assistant County Manager Lorina Dellinger noted that this agreement is to provide an EMT through REMSA to assist the local volunteers who are experiencing a lack of coverage. She stated that she has been working with volunteer Dawn Gudmunson on the schedule, but there are still a lot of gaps. She added that REMSA is offering coverage through the end of December 2017.

Chairman Duane Downing asked what Nye County is requesting in a monetary value. He pointed out that there were two options provided to the Board. Clerk Jerry Elliston stated that he does not understand these two options. Ms. Dellinger clarified that option 1 is to have an EMT one day a week and option 2 is two days a week. Administrative Manager Chris Mulkerns asked if this means that there will only be an EMT available one or two days a week which Ms. Dellinger confirmed. Ms. Mulkerns asked Ms. Gudmunson how

this will help the volunteers. Ms. Gudmunson clarified that she works and coaches basketball during the week so there would only be coverage from 6 p.m. through 3 a.m. She stressed that there would only be one person on call the rest of the time and that it is not legal to have a run with only one person. She added that they are trying to piece things together until a better solution is reached. Ms. Mulkerns inquired whether this will give Tonopah full coverage to which Ms. Gudmunson replied that it will not. She stressed that they currently only have three local volunteers to do the runs.

Vice-Chairman Don Kaminski asked if Lifeguard International was still helping. Ms. Gudmunson replied that they are assisting two days of the months but stressed that there is no agreement to let them run on the County ambulance. Mr. Kaminski asked if Lifeguard could be licensed on the County ambulances. Ms. Dellinger clarified that they were given that opportunity but they declined it. Ms. Gudmunson explained that a volunteer has to be licensed on the ambulances they will be running on. She added that she can only run on Nye County and Goldfield ambulances as she is not licensed for any other services.

Mr. Kaminski pointed out that Lifeguard International has been helping Tonopah for a long time and asked whether they were given the opportunity to bid on this contract. Ms. Dellinger clarified that Lifeguard is an air ambulance with ground support and that REMSA is an ambulance service. She stressed that she feels that if Nye County had reached out to another service, it would not show the support for the negotiations the Hospital District is having. Jerry Elliston noted that he was of the understanding that the agreement that is being negotiated by the Hospital District is for a clinic, a nurse hotline and a paramedic, not emergency services. Ms. Dellinger explained that EMS integration will take place. There will be a 24/7 paramedic running with a County volunteer. Mr. Kaminski inquired what the plan is for the time after December 31st. Ms. Dellinger stressed that Nye County is working with the Hospital District. She added that if the volunteers cannot be scheduled at that time, the County will work on intermittent solutions. Don Kaminski stated that he was under the impression that the Hospital District was formed so the Town of Tonopah could have a hospital, not an ambulance service. Jerry Elliston emphasized that he is frustrated because the Town is being asked for taxpayer's money, but they are "sitting in the blind" as the Town Board does not know what the Hospital District or Nye County is working on. He pointed out that he feels he is not getting a whole lot of answers. He stressed that the Town cannot sustain assisting with the funding forever.

Dawn Gudmunson noted that there are eleven people who are being drug-screened so they can be drivers which will help the volunteers but not fix the problem as they still will not have enough EMT's. She stressed that a new EMT class will start in January and that there are 42 people interested in participating and 12 who have confirmed that the class schedule works for them. Duane Downing asked how long it will take before these volunteers can go on a run. Ms. Gudmunson explained that this is dependent on the person but takes up to nine months from the start of the class. Jerry Elliston asked how often the classes are offered. Ms. Gudmunson answered that they are offered every few months. Mr. Elliston stated that he waited for seven months to participate in a class for

drivers but nobody offered a class in Tonopah and got back with him. He emphasized that he expects the Nye County EMS Director to take care of this. A member of the public suggested the Director needs to be fired. Chairman Duane Downing stated that he will not allow accusations to be made against anybody who is not here to defend themselves. He emphasized that the meeting was scheduled to find a temporary solution. He addressed Ms. Gudmunson and emphasized that he believes the volunteers are amazing and have saved lives. Members of the public in attendance applauded. Mr. Downing thanked Ms. Gudmunson for her service. He stressed that the volunteers are overworked and that the Town needs to see how they can help. He pointed out that it is not the Town's responsibility to provide emergency services. He added that the Town cannot afford this and it will therefore not be sustainable. He noted that Nye County is asking for some help and that the Town will consider whether they can provide this on a temporary basis. Mr. Downing stressed that all other issues should be discussed at another time.

Jerry Elliston asked if the Town will be informed what days there will be coverage provided by REMSA. Lorina Dellinger clarified that the schedule will not be as flexible as they would like. Mr. Elliston questioned whether there will be times when there will be no coverage to which Ms. Dellinger replied that this is possible. Roni Link pointed out that she is a licensed EMT but does not feel comfortable going on a run by herself so she volunteers as a driver. Mr. Downing asked Ms. Gudmunson if she is an Advanced EMT which Ms. Gudmunson confirmed. She added that there are currently three AEMT's including her. Ms. Link noted that there are other licensed EMT's who choose not to go on runs.

Mr. Elliston asked how much coverage the Town will get with option 2. Ms. Dellinger clarified that option 2 will give the Town two days of coverage a week, probably on the weekends. Mike Sain questioned whether this agreement could possibly continue after December 31, 2017. Mr. Downing emphasized that it is the County's responsibility to provide services after that date.

Tonopah resident Cecil Lang noted that he was born and raised in Tonopah and spent 26 years volunteering. He asked Ms. Dellinger if Nye County is expecting the Town to fund the contract which Ms. Dellinger confirmed. He questioned what Nye County is funding. Ms. Dellinger clarified that they provide the housing. Duane Downing asked Mr. Lang if he was aware of what Nye County has already provided. He clarified that the County paid \$50,000 to get 24/7 coverage in Tonopah provided by REMSA for two weeks. Mr. Lang stated that he believes it is not just the Town of Tonopah that needs services, but a problem for all of central Nevada.

Tonopah resident Cindy Kaminski noted that there is the possibility that Tonopah Town taxpayer's funds are used to pay for runs outside of Town and she questioned what the auditor would say about this. Duane Downing clarified that if this agreement is approved, the Town would assist Nye County with the funding for their services even outside of the Town as they would be honoring the MOU's that are in place.

A miscommunication between Nye County and Nye County Dispatch was discussed and it was noted that this issue has been addressed since then.

Tonopah resident Matt Kirkland pointed out that the contract does not list the contract amount, only the attachment does. He added that he believes this matter is not an emergency as it has been known for over a year and a half that there are scheduling issues. He stressed that this will not give the Town 24/7 coverage. Mr. Kirkland noted that no matter what the Board will vote, they will be the “bad guys”. He added that Lifeguard International is licensed.

Jerry Elliston asked if REMSA will run on the County ambulances which Ms. Dellinger confirmed. Mr. Kaminski inquired how long it takes to license someone on the County ambulance. Dawn Gudmunson explained that a drug screening is necessary, that the EMS Director has to approve them and that the State has to approve it. Mr. Elliston questioned why this was done for REMSA, but not for Lifeguard International.

Don Kaminski asked how many EMT’s are part of the Tonopah Volunteer Fire Department (TVFD). Chief Rob Elliott replied that they currently have six EMT’s, Mr. Elliott is the only AEMT and they also have about six EMR’s. Mr. Kaminski asked if they could run on the County ambulance. Chief Elliott noted that it is simple to add someone to a license per State requirements. He pointed out that it is Nye County that adds additional requirements. He noted that Lifeguard International is permitted to work in the State and that he does not understand why they were not selected as another option to provide coverage. Chief Elliott stated that he will support whatever decision the Board will make.

Duane Downing asked what it would take for the TVFD to run on the Nye County ambulance. Chief Elliott noted that he thinks EMS would have to be separate from Nye County as the volunteers do not agree with Nye County Administration and the way things are run for the EMS department. Duane Downing noted that this needs to be addressed. Don Kaminski emphasized that Nye County is asking the Town for funds for lack of volunteers, but their EMS Director is asking volunteers to step down.

Mike Sain asked if this contract will allow the volunteers to not have to be on stand-by. Lorina Dellinger clarified that one of the volunteers will be teamed with the REMSA staff member. Mr. Sain pointed out that this is not taking a lot of load off the volunteers. Dawn Gudmunson stated that two days are better than no days. Ms. Dellinger stressed that Nye County is trying to provide a temporary solution.

Louis Mendiola of REMSA noted that even though the agreement only lists EMT’s, it will most likely be a paramedic who will be on call. They just cannot guarantee a paramedic for all shifts. Chief Rob Elliott pointed out that the permit for the ambulance service only allows the permit’s highest level of care which is an advanced EMT permit. He asked how that would play out if a paramedic is running on the County ambulances. Mr. Mendiola clarified that REMSA has had conversations with the State and that they believe they can operate under an intercept agreement.

Jerry Elliston asked if Nye County could match this funding so that there would be more coverage. Ms. Dellinger explained that REMSA can only commit to two days at this point. Louis Mendiola of REMSA noted that they might be able to cover 72 hours. Mr. Elliston asked Ms. Dellinger if Nye County could possibly add additional coverage by matching the funds by the Town. Ms. Kaminski suggested having Lifeguard International cover additional days. Ms. Dellinger noted that all options will be explored. Mr. Elliston asked if the contract will be signed as soon as the Board approves the funding which Ms. Dellinger confirmed. Roni Link asked if signing the contract will stop any negotiations with any other entities that might be able to provide additional EMS services. Ms. Dellinger stated that Nye County is open to talk to anybody. Duane Downing noted that Ms. Dellinger should expect a phone call about this in the afternoon. Don Kaminski said that he would like to table the decision until phone calls are made and the Town has worked with Nye County on additional coverage as he believes the two days a week will not make much of a difference. Jerry Elliston agreed and added that he is concerned that Tonopah will not have the coverage needed. Chris Mulkerns asked what kind of coverage the Town would have if no action was taken today. She stressed that the Board cannot take action until another special meeting can be scheduled. The earliest a meeting could be held, due to posting requirements, would be December 7, 2017. Dawn Gudmunson clarified that they currently only have one person on the schedule and that she can only run when she is available.

Jerry Elliston asked if Nye County is willing to send EMT's from Pahrump to provide coverage. He added that he cannot believe that anybody at Nye County would sit back and see how things go. He thanked Nye County for the coverage they provided through REMSA for the last two weeks. Lorina Dellinger clarified that Pahrump Fire and Rescue is its own entity. Mike Sain asked when the contract would go into effect. Ms. Dellinger replied that it will go into effect today and that Nye County will continue to have negotiations. Jerry Elliston asked if REMSA would cover this weekend to which Mr. Mendiola replied that they have a contingency plan for this.

The Town Board took a recess between 9:59 a.m. and 10:08 a.m.

Duane Downing noted that he believes all needed discussions were had and that he feels the Board needs to either have a decision. He added that he does not want to table the item.

Lorina Dellinger pointed out that REMSA has offered to extend their services by providing instructors for training and assisting with drug testing, etc. Louis Mendiola added that REMSA will assist with payments for hotel rooms if volunteers need to attend training sessions in Reno. REMSA will allow volunteers to ride along on calls to learn on their ambulances. He pointed out that they have about 12-14 calls during a 12-hour shift.

Don Kaminski stated that he is against helping Nye County with any funds until the Town sits down with the County, whether it be managers or commissioners, to work out the problems together. He stressed that the Town has the resources when it comes to instructors and volunteers. Lorina Dellinger noted that the County recognizes the

deficiencies and what improvements have to be made. It is the County's goal to rebuild the core system of the ambulance system. She suggested having groups working together regularly and stressed that she is committed to reworking that system.

Horace Carlyle emphasized that everyone has been aware of the ongoing issues for many years. He pointed out that Ms. Dellinger lives in Tonopah and that he believes she is showing a good faith effort. He added that he feels the cost for the Town can be contained and that this is a matter of life and death. He stressed that this is a moral and ethical question. He noted that he thinks it is important that the Town Board supports this. He encouraged the Board to take action.

Jerry Elliston motioned to approve supporting the Tonopah Volunteer Ambulance Service currently experiencing intermittent coverage for the period ending December 31, 2017, in an amount not to exceed \$12,315.20. Nye County to submit invoices to the Town for reimbursement for said services provided pursuant to the Professional Services Agreement between the County and REMSA. Mike Sain seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried 3-1, 1 abstention. Assistant County Manager Lorina Dellinger thanked the Town Board.

3. Public Comment

Cecil Lang stated that he hopes that meetings will be set up with County Management and possibly personnel and volunteers from Tonopah to come to a permanent solution for the problem. He stressed that volunteering is not as popular as it used to be, but he pointed out that solutions can be found if everyone works together.


Dawn Gudmunson thanked the Town Board for helping in this matter and Assistant County Manager Lorina Dellinger for being a great asset and great advocate. Members of the public in attendance applauded.

Don Kaminski emphasized that the Town of Tonopah does have the resources needed to solve this problem as there are certified EMT's and certified instructors. He stressed that as long as Nye County does not allow the Town and County to work together, he will not support anything that has to do with the County.

4. Adjourn

The special meeting adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Minutes transcribed by:



Kat Galli, Deputy Town Clerk

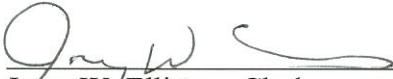
Approved:



Duane Downing, Chairman



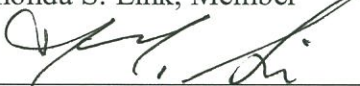
Don Kaminski, Vice-Chairman



Jerry W. Elliston, Clerk



Rhonda S. Link, Member



Michael Sain, Member

