

**BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**July 14, 2020, Ambulance Meeting Minutes**

The Board reconvened at 7:00 p.m. in the Public Meeting Room of the Administrative Office Building, with Commissioners Dan Allhands, Jim Hart, and Ron Nye present. Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk, was present to take minutes.

**Ambulance Financial Meeting:** Those people listed on the attached sign-in sheet were present for this portion of the meeting, and others participated online and/or by phone. Joe Brummell, Director of Emergency Management, was present to administer the public /online link to the meeting via GoToMeeting.

Alan Rohrback, Madison Valley Medical Center CEO, reviewed the meeting from two weeks ago, saying the meeting ended with three questions to be answered. Since then, conversations took place with attorneys from MACo, the hospitals, and the County, in order to determine the best avenues for possible ambulance funding according to applicable statutes.

- **Question #1: Can we create an ambulance district that would mostly be a funding mechanism, while carving out areas of the County where residents would receive no benefit (such as Big Sky, and an area near Cardwell)?** Alan said one reason this was important to both hospitals was that having a special ambulance district board interact with trustees from both hospitals, employees working in various departments, as well as administrative staff, would be complex and challenging. He said one benefit of an ambulance service working from a hospital is having EMT's and paramedics also work in other areas of the hospital or in the community. Jim spoke with attorneys within the County and with MACo, who agreed that a county without a charter form of government has no authority to create an ambulance district.
- **Question #2: Could we create a county-wide mill levy specifically for ambulance services, while carving out areas of the County where residents would receive no benefit?** Alan said this is currently being done in Powell County without any carve-out, and he thinks this would be possible here. The structure of a county-wide levy would be beneficial, since the nature of EMS services is to support one another and cooperation will be needed between Ruby and Madison Valley ambulance services. Jim said the attorneys thought this option was the best one of the three, and they discussed how this could work.
- **Question #3: Could we increase the current mills that are in each hospital district, but restrict the use of those funds to an ambulance service?** Alan noted that the mechanism of hospital mill funding already exists, but you can't generate a mill and then restrict its use. This idea might be a possibility, but attorneys found no authority for a hospital district to create an ambulance service, so it could be challenged.

Of the three, #2 appears to be the most workable option. Jim brought up the question of how funding will be tracked, and noted there should be oversight without making the process too convoluted. Alan discussed statutes, saying there doesn't necessarily need to be a separate board - the authority could lie with the local government entity, in this case the County Commissioners. Discussion ensued about what other counties are doing, the amount of funding needed, how much could be generated through mills, the effect on taxpayers of excluding Big Sky from mill levies, letting residents decide by ballot, possible subsidization from other sources, involving Public Health in the process, election process timing, planning and educating the community for the long term, fee-based services similar to Solid Waste, finding a fair and equitable way to pay for services, and finding the best option for County residents.

Next steps were discussed, including how to determine structure options, involving the Department of Revenue, holding community forums, understanding the different situations with Ruby Valley and Madison Valley ambulance services, preparing for November and/or May elections, exploring subsidization or matching funds, determining sustainable costs and planning for increases. Alan and Jim outlined items for the next discussion on this topic, including determining specific steps needed to get on the May ballot, developing a marketing plan to educate the community, detailed information about mills versus a fee-based system and how to set up either one, and asking the Deputy County Attorney and MACo for their suggestions. The next Ambulance Financial Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, August 4, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

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Dan W. Allhands, Chairman  
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: July 31, 2020

Minutes prepared by:

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Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County