

## WEXFORD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session Meeting \* Wednesday, April 27, 2016

Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Leslie Housler.

Roll call: Present – Commissioners Michael MacCready, Leslie Housler, Robert Hilty Julie Theobald, Gary Taylor, John Fuscone, and Bill Goodwill; Absent: Commissioners Mark Howie and Gideon Mitchell

Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

**MOTION by Comm Taylor, seconded by Comm Hilty to approve the agenda, as presented.**

**All in favor.**

### **Public Comments**

Sheriff Finstrom felt that out of the three options, the Board should consider only two of them: keeping dispatch as status quo or putting an authority in place. He did not agree with the \$3.00 surcharge and the community would not support it. It is important to clearly inform the community which option the Board decides to go with. The Board is making a decision that will have a great impact on the County.

Fred Osborn, 103 Barbara, Cadillac, as a Fire Fighter he deals with dispatch daily and is well aware of the capital improvements needed. He is not against the surcharge; however, believes the \$3.00 requested is too high. The Fire Chiefs are behind any capital improvement, but would rather see they ask for a surcharge of \$1.50 initially. When asked what he supported, he would like it to keep it local under the county's supervision.

Brice Tracy, Mackinaw County, expressed to the Board what a big undertaking the County working on. Lots of work needs to be done on this and more questions to be asked and answered. The Board should look at having a plan to go along with funding for 10 to 30 years down the road.

Sarah Benson, EMS Coordinator, raised some concerns about the study done by Plante Moran. She would like to see a department head for 9-1-1 and have dispatch be under the county. She felt that 9-1-1 is the core to vital services in the county. If the County could come up with a blended millage and a surcharge may be more to the voters' liking.

Kelly Whitehead, 12 Road, Manton, Fire Chief in Manton, believes \$3.00 surcharge is too much and will not be passed by the voters. If dispatch is sent to another county, Wexford County must still fix and maintain their equipment. He believes the surcharge should be \$1.50 to \$2.00.

Tim McKee, retired EMS/911 Director in Chippewa County, explained that back in 1998 their county was going through the very same thing Wexford County is now going through. He explained all the work that went in to get their County 9-1-1 operational in Chippewa. After a period of time, they are now self-sufficient and do not use any general fund money to run their facility. They operate under the county with a department head in place. Luce County now has their dispatching out of Chippewa County for a yearly fee.

### **Agenda Items**

#### 1. Discussion on 9-1-1 Options

After public comments, Board members asked several questions to citizens in the audience and came to a conscience of asking no more than \$2.25 surcharge. Board members also agreed that the county must have a secure funding source in place before any changes can be made with the dispatch services and let the public know what direction the Board is going. The surcharge will be placed on the August ballot.

**MOTION by Comm Taylor, seconded by Comm Theobald to approve Resolution 16-15 Submitting to a Vote of the Electorate Authorizing of Telephone Surcharge for Emergency Telephone Services, increasing the monthly surcharge to \$2.25, as presented.**

**Roll call: Motion approved unanimously.**

The Board Chair requested that the Administrator put together a committee to study the two options: Authority or County Department.

### **Public Comments**

Brice Tracy, 9-1-1 Director of EMS in Luce County contracted with Mackinaw County to dispatch emergency vehicles. He provided the Board with some background on dispatch services thought Mackinaw County who they first contracted with. In time, Luce County joined Chippewa and they pay a yearly fee. They have formed a Board of Directors as outlined in the Public Act.

Comm Goodwill felt the Board had some good discussion.

Comm MacCready thought the Board was going in the right direction.

Comm Theobald thought this Board accomplished a lot at the work session tonight.

### **Chairman's Comments**

Comm Housler thanked all for coming to the meeting tonight. He felt that by making dispatch financially feasible would be good for all.

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**Adjourn**

**MOTION by Comm Taylor, seconded by Comm Theobald to adjourn  
at 6:55 p.m.  
All in favor.**

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Leslie D. Housler, Chairperson

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Elaine L. Richardson, County Clerk