

# UNAPPROVED MARCH MEETING MINUTES

## FLOYD COUNTY EMS ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Date: March 28th, 2024

Time: 5:00 P.M.

Meeting called to order by: Patrick Lumley

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### IN ATTENDANCE

Voting Members: Patrick Lumley, Dawnett Willis, Dave Luett, Dawn Staudt

Non-Voting Members: Jim Jorgenson, Marty Parcher, Kendall Nolt and Brandy Molitor

Public: Mayor Dean Andrews, Bob Steenson (Charles City Press), and Gordon Boge

**Meeting Called to Order by:** Chair-Pat Lumley at 5:00 p.m.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Motion made** Dawnett W.

**Second by** Dave L.

**Action Taken:** Agenda approved by council.

### APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MINUTES

**Motion made** Dawnett W.

**Seconded by:** Dawn S.

**Action Taken:** February minutes approved by council.

**Public Comment-**No comments

### **Agenda Item #5 Outcome of the 05 March 2024 Floyd County Ambulance Commission Meeting**

Pat discussed the commission's decision moving forward is to establish a city or county owned and operated ambulance service. The start up cost for the venture is estimated to be just under \$1.26 million. The commission recommended that the advisory council consider the 15-year duration and \$0.75/\$1,000 property valuation be placed on the ballot for a special election in September or the general election in November. The .75 levy rate would generate roughly \$776,000 annually to be used to support a county wide EMS system.

Dawnett pointed out that it is vitally important to ensure a sustainable pathway to provide quality EMS county wide. She also questioned whether county supervisor, Mark Kuhn needed more clarification on the advisory councils' goals to gain a broader perspective on wanting a September special election.

Mayor Andrews commented that city services would likely need to be reduced or cut in some manner if the tax levy does not pass. Unsure at this time what services may need to be reduced or cut. The City of Charles City cannot afford to continue allocating money from the general fund to subsidize EMS and maintain and provide all other existing services to the community.

Pat also mentioned HF 718, which included the removal and or reduction of key city levies which further complicates future budgets and provided services.

### **Agenda Item #6 Outcome of the 25 March 2023 Floyd County Board of Supervisors Meeting regarding September or November Election**

Supervisor Jorgenson provided an overview of the Board of Supervisor's opinions on a special election vs the general election. Supervisor Kuhn made a clear stance of placing the ballot question in November to prevent voter suppression, additional cost to the taxpayer, incoming Board of Supervisor candidates, etc. Supervisor Keifer was not notably, committed one way or the other.

Pat addressed the forwarding of the email from Supervisor Kuhn as requested. Pat performed a by name call and verified all members of the advisory council were in receipt of the email and read the email prior to the meeting. All members received and read the email. Pat stated that all members of the council were adults and would be treated as such and there was no need to read the email verbatim.

Pat provided additional comments in regard to Supervisor Kuhn email, adamantly pointed out, at no time did voter suppression enter into the decision to hold a special election. Pat takes voters rights seriously and pointed out that the decision to hold a special election was to increase voter focus on a single voting item, allowing the EMS Tax levy to not get lost in the general election ballot that will include Presidential, County Auditor, County Sheriff, 2 County Supervisors and other highlighted election items. By placing the EMS Tax Levy vote via a September Special Election, we have a firm understanding from the voter with regards to supporting or not support EMS on its own merits.

We wanted the focus to be on this one, very important tax levy vote, therefore we want the informed voters to come out and vote on this specific levy, without it getting lost in the general election ballot and simply being voted down as just "another tax increase", it's much more than just a tax levy.

Pat additionally pointed that the EMS Advisory Council had discussed at length of the cost of a special election and referred to the extra cost to the taxpayers where previous Special Elections were held for the Floyd County Law Enforcement Center, and the creation of the three supervisor districts as annotated in Supervisor Kuhn's email.

Pat also understands two new Supervisors will be elected and be seated in January 2025 and hopes the candidates or those looking at running for Supervisor had already attended the 2024 budget sessions, Carbon Pipeline, ISICS, Wind Energy, and other high profile county projects with large costs in discussion and or acted upon or being acted upon prior to the end of 2024.

Pat mentioned that once the Supervisor candidates are known, he would extend an invitation to each to be briefed on EMS Tax Levy.

Dawnett mentioned that she kind of took Supervisor Kuhn's email as offensive and wanted to go on record why she thinks such an important question such as EMS Tax Levy should be done via a special election.

Pat asked each member of the advisory council upon further discussion regarding a September or November election if there was a change by any member to support a recommendation of a November election. Each member remained solid on the recommendation of a September special election to allow the EMS Tax Levy to be voted upon its own merits.

Pat asked Supervisor Jorgenson to communicate the outcome to the Board of Supervisors to be placed on the next Board of Supervisors agenda to make a final determination of a September or November general election.

#### **Agenda Item # 7 Discuss recommendation of EMS Tax Levy Periodicity**

Advisory council members have discussed this topic several times, between the last initiative and the current one. The council members agree that 5 years is not a long enough time, since one of the ways for the service to recoup money from state provided insurance plans is the GEMT state ran ground ambulance reimbursement program. This program was set up to allow non-profit, municipality ran ambulance services to request additional reimbursement of lost funding from state insurance companies. The service must be operational for a minimum of 18 months before they qualify to participate in the program.

Also discussed several times how difficult it is to pass any form of tax increase, regardless of EMS at the county and state level to include passed legislation regarding such. The 15-year periodicity aligns to the four counties that recently passed the EMS Tax Levy in 2024 and the detail discussion with them back in November 2023.

Kendall Nolt suggested possibly requesting only a 10yr periodicity. Dawnett suggested 15yrs based on having to go back out to the voters at the end of the chosen periodicity to get another yes vote to continue the tax levy, questioned was posed, "do we really want to do this again in 10 years?". Brandy had no comment. Marty was agreeable to the 15yrs and agreed with Dawnett's reasoning. Dawn and

Dave also agreed it should be 15yrs. A final decision on all our recommendations needs to be made in our May meeting and finalized by June if a September special election is considered based on the unanimous affirmation of the advisory council.

### **Agenda Items # 8 & # 9 Discuss recommendation of EMS Tax Levy Rate and Amount**

Again, this item same the periodicity has been discussed at several meetings. The Ambulance Commission recommended a .75 levy rate that would generate up to \$776,000 yearly. The levy rate and the numbers that supported the ambulance commission recommendation align to other county start-up costs and outyear operational cost. Even if \$776,000 is generated the amount would not cover the initial startup costs of 1.258 million. Additionally, this rate is based on successfully passed levies in other counties throughout the state, to where a lower levy rate was passed, did not account for changes in pricing of major ticket items in their operational budget and the 10-12 months that elapse prior to collecting any revenue. Many of them asked for the max levy of \$0.75/\$1,000 property valuation and those counties that didn't ask for the max are now wishing they would have. This was a consensus of counties contacted and met with via ZOOM or phone.

The advisory council also discussed that the maximum requested amount is not necessarily the amount that will need to be collected after the first few years. The funds needed to provide the service is what is collected, example given- if the amount needed is less than the \$0.75 in year 5 and the operational expenses are only \$0.60, then that's what will be collected that year, but the amount can never exceed \$0.75 per \$1,000 taxable property valuation with this tax levy.

### **Agenda Items #10 Discuss recommendation of EMS Tax Levy via Property Tax, Local Option Income Surtax, or a combination of both.**

There was a brief discussion on the income surtax, which was part of the previous tax levy ballot in 2022. Pat discussed what the tax includes and the confusion for the taxpayers that feel they are being double taxed. The council members discussed the pros and cons to include the tax to the ballot, with the majority of the council members feel the income tax should be left out of the request based on feedback from previous 9 of the 11 townhalls and the double taxation stigmatism. The remaining confusion regardless well depicted the offset of total cost, the angst of taxpayers verbally against the double taxation aspect outweighs the benefit the income surtax would generate. Pat is going to do more research on the surtax and provide the council with his findings at the next meeting.

### **Agenda Items #11 & # 12 Updates to the EMS Tax Levy PowerPoint & Flyer**

Pat provided updates to the slides since the last meeting to include calls for service in Floyd County derived from dispatch. The numbers provided by the Floyd County Dispatch Center show a definite increase every year in the number of ambulance calls requested in the county over the past 5 years. Last year there were close to 1,500 calls for service in the county. This number includes but is not limited to, 911 and Transfers involving medical calls-heart attacks, other-chest pain, difficulty breathing, generalized sickness, diabetics, lift assists and behavioral or altered mental status. Trauma calls-falls, vehicle accidents, machinery accidents, industrial accidents, sports injuries, hunting accidents and assaults. Medical standbys at fires, sports events, large community gatherings and law enforcement requests.

Pat will continue to work on the PPT slides. Pat will also continue to make changes to the flyer and the verbiage used to obtain a consensus from the advisory council on content and layout yet limited by software available. Dawnett stated that they have the necessary software to work on the flyer layout and make the changes Pat is envisioning for the flyer and will work with Dawnett and her marketing team once the content firms up.

### **Agenda Items #13 Strategic Communications Discussion**

Dawnett has talked with the hospitals media company about doing a commercial, she was a little shocked at the expense but felt there was still potential to reduce the cost and possibly still have this as an option to inform the public about the tax levy need.

Dave -Has discussed the benefits of a 501C3 organization to accept donations for education purposes on the tax levy initiative, to educate the public on what EMS is and why it's so vitally important that we have EMS as an essential service for Floyd County. He also discussed the benefit of having a Tax Levy Election Committee that can actively go out into the community and campaign for a "Yes" vote on the EMS Tax Levy. This will be discussed more, and the steps needed to create this group.

Brandy -Discussed the website used by the county and how the layout to have a section for the EMS Tax Levy initiative would look and the different sub-categories for the community that would be available for them to research or find information about the council and the proposed levy. Their goal is to make it simple and user-friendly.

Pat- Discussed a potential generic public survey to obtain feedback and perception of EMS county wide and. Pat had spoken to City Administrator, Steve Diers regarding assistance via survey monkey. Additional discussion at the next meeting.

Dawn- Briefly discussed an Ambulance Open House event scheduled for Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Charles City Fire Station. Details are still being finalized, and the event will include ambulances on display, food and drinks, kid's games or activities, door prizes, and giveaways. More information will be provided at the April meeting.

Pat-Discussed working on outlining our timeline and scheduling community engagements with a targeted September special election but will also work out a timeline for a November general election, as a fall back if the BOS does not accept the recommendation made by the EMS Advisory Council to hold a special election in September.

### **Agenda Item #15 April Agenda Items (tentative)**

PPT Review with updates

Finalize content of Flyer

FCCM resources are available for communicating with and education of the county taxpayer.

Election Committee-Dave Luett and Pat Lumley

Survey Questions

Finalize the EMS Tax Levy Recommendations.

Updates on open house and other community engagements.

Next council meeting scheduled for 5PM, on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, at the EOC.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by-Dawnett Willis

Second by Dawn Staudt

Action Taken: Meeting Adjourned 6:28PM