

**WESTERN PAYNE COUNTY AMBULANCE TRUST AUTHORITY BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**Stillwater Medical Center Honska Conference Center  
1323 W. Sixth Street  
Stillwater, Oklahoma**

**September 21, 2010  
4:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Gary Clark, Rex Horning, Bill Sasser and Jerry Moeller

**Others:** Tina Wells, Kelly McCauley (LifeNet), David Baumgardner (LifeNet)  
– via teleconference), Silas Allen (NewsPress), Pete Seikel  
(Perkins City Manager), and Susan Taylor

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**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Jerry Moeller, Chairman of the Western Payne County Ambulance Trust Authority (WPCATA) Board, called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 25, 2010 REGULAR MEETING**

Copies of the minutes of the August 25, 2010 regular meeting of the WPCATA Board were distributed and reviewed. Horning moved the Board approve the minutes as presented. Sasser seconded the motion, and Horning, Sasser and Moeller voted in favor of the motion. Clark was not present for the vote.

A signed set of minutes was given to Mr. Horning for Stillwater National Bank's file. Stillwater National has granted WPCATA a line of credit.

**DISCUSSION AND DECISION ON THE FORMULATION OF THE MEMBERSHIP PLAN – Tina Wells, Consultant**

At this time, David Baumgardner of Life Net was teleconferenced into the meeting. Ms. Tina Wells, who was previously the Vice President of Marketing and Policy Development for EMSA (through March 2010), attended tonight's meeting as a consultant to assist with the formulation of the membership plan. Wells said that one of her biggest responsibilities in 2007 was the development of the EMSA/City of Tulsa utility bill program. Although Tulsa was the first place EMSA had used this methodology, it has been used in other cities throughout the state. Wells discussed recommendations regarding Stillwater's ambulance program and answered questions of Board members.

Moeller told Board members that some groundwork has been done with the people who would be asked to do the billing for this endeavor, and most of them are on board. Moeller said that once the membership plan is developed and the

rules are decided upon, Wells will meet with all billing coordinators, along with their IT groups, to make sure that the billing can be accomplished. Moeller went on to say that Wells would also work on publicizing the membership plan to the western Payne County area. CREC has voiced some concern about being able to add this assessment to their utility bills. Our back-up plan would be to put the assessment on the water bills.

Wells said that one thing that she feels is “key” to this process is consistency. Because we are dealing with multiple mechanisms for spreading these benefits to the customers, and really one media market, it will be of great benefit if we can make this look the same – as much as possible – with each provider. If it is a line item on the utility bill, it should look the same on every bill. Wells said that we also need to consider where people will turn to get answers to their questions.

The first step, Wells said, is to determine the capabilities of the various utility departments. We will need to know how many utility accounts are served by the various entities, and are they all willing and able to participate? Do these utility departments currently have their customers broken into certain classifications? Tulsa and Oklahoma City, for example, Wells said, both did their assessments via their water/storm water/trash combined bill. Both cities had their customers broken into single family residential, multi-family residential, commercial and building & development (not yet occupied). The decision was made in both of those cities that only places where people lived would be billed.

Moeller asked Pete Seikel, Perkins City Manager, how their utility bills were broken down. Seikel replied that multi and single family residences were not distinguished, but residential and commercial accounts were. The City of Perkins does their own billing.

Board members questioned why commercial entities would not be covered by the membership plan. Wells reminded the group that the benefits are not tied to where you are picked up by an ambulance – the benefits are tied to where you live. Your benefits apply to wherever you go in the service area. Wells said that there are cities that apply a flat fee to every single utility bill – commercial and residential. This does make the process much easier administratively. It also keeps costs lower, because you have more people participating. Cities that have seen success with this process have convinced businesses that there is an advantage – and that is the availability of the high caliber services of the ambulance service. Board members were in agreement that a flat fee for everyone would be the most simple and best way to go. Wells said that the down side is that some people will feel that it is not fair that they are being assessed the same fee as someone else, such as a multi-family residence.

Wells stressed to the WPCATA Board members that we should not cover people from outside the coverage area who, while in Stillwater, have a need for ambulance service. Unless these people purchase a membership, they should

be responsible for payment of the ambulance fee. This will help the viability of LifeNet. Wells said that another suggestion is that, while implementing the monthly fee, also increase the rate for an ambulance run to incentivize purchasing a membership. This also makes the numbers work so that if the opt out percentage is high, LifeNet will still be able to operate, based on the revenues they get from fee for service. We will also need to consider how college dormitories will be handled. In Tulsa, dormitories are considered commercial, and students or their parents purchase a membership if they so desire.

Wells and WPCATA Board members discussed the opt-in participation rate of various Oklahoma Cities. Tulsa has a 90% opt-in on single-family households. On multi-family households, they have about 40% participation. The reason for that, Wells said, is because it is usually an apartment management company that gets the bill, and for them to recoup the money, they have to raise the price of rent. Cities that attach the assessment to the commercial as well do not allow an opt-out. Out of the 14 cities that do these programs, Wells said it is about 50/50 as to whether they have an opt-out or not. Smaller cities have differing plans. Changes in membership would be something that LifeNet would have to track.

Notification to consumers was discussed. An insert will be used for bills that are stuffed in envelopes; for companies that use a post card bill, a direct mailing will be done to let consumers know about the service and the assessment. Marketing will also be done through other media.

Nursing homes will need to be considered. If the assessment is not attached to all bills, we will need to address this issue. Memberships, which would be on an annual basis, can be sold to individuals to cover these needs. A packet to the nursing home administrator, with a letter explaining the program and the benefits, and a few brochures with membership applications has seemed to work very well, in Wells' experience. Wells said that these memberships are not difficult to sell; you just make it available on the internet, send out brochures, etc.

Wells said that another thing to consider is partial payments from the consumer to utility providers. We need to know how the money will be applied. At what point would the ambulance service not be covered? The City of Tulsa's ordinance allows for a hefty fine for non-compliance. Wells said that we need to look at either applying the flat fee to everyone, or having an opt-out option. The opt-out has benefits, but it certainly does complicate matters, Wells told Board members. Board members discussed these matters at length.

Wells said that if there is going to be an opt-out, in her experience, the best method to manage that is that the utility department takes the phone call and manages the opt-out just as they would for establishing/cutting off service. We would have to know if the utility providers were willing and able to do this. Board member Clark asked if we wouldn't just have an annual opt-out, to which Wells

replied that she would highly recommend that. The administrative fee that will be provided to utility departments who do the billing for the ambulance service will help cover the man hours and cost of fielding phone calls from customers. Wells suggested that we build that administrative fee into the monthly assessment charge.

As far as a timeline, Wells said that the soonest we could begin implementation is to have inserts and mailouts distributed in November, have an opt-out period in December and then start the fees in January. Wells said that a list of frequently asked questions and scripts need to be provided to utility billers who will receive questions from consumers. This way, they can be problem solvers and advocates for the program.

Consideration should be given to building in extra postage costs.

How will we verify that people really live at the address that they claim? Just provide proof of residency (a bill in your name at the address you claim).

Board members asked about a cities that did not offer an opt out. Wells responded that Jenks, Bixby and Warr Acres offered no opt out. Moeller questioned whether or not the ambulance service could function with a lot of opt outs.

#### **DISCUSSION AND DECISION REGARDING LINE OF CREDIT**

Because Mr. Clark had to leave the meeting early, this topic was moved up in the agenda. Sasser moved the Board authorize Moeller to sign any and all documents related to the line of credit at Stillwater National Bank. Clark seconded the motion, and Sasser, Moeller and Clark voted in favor of the motion. Horning abstained from the vote.

Mr. Clark left the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Returning to the earlier conversation, Board members discussed whether or not there would be a grace period on opting out during the initial year. What about people who call after getting their first bill? What will be our position for those calls? Will there be leniency? Tulsa granted leniency for the first year. Oklahoma City granted leniency for the first month.

Wells suggested that our next step might be to have a meeting with Moeller, Wells, and representatives of the utility providers. Moeller said that his office would arrange such a meeting as soon as possible, and then the WPCATA Board would meet after that to again discuss the timeline. A special meeting may have to be scheduled.

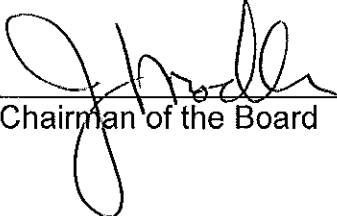
Moeller asked LifeNet personnel about pushing the timeline back a month. Baumgardner said LifeNet is waiting to see what is going to transpire with the

billing assessment. They have been interviewing potential employees, and have worked out a lot internal matters and are trying to get a D.O.O. hired; they are trying to do all they can without having to go back on their word to some people. Horning said that we will be answering some technical questions at our next meeting, and we believe that we have the assessment dollar range figured out; we do not have to go back to the City Council. WPCATA can enact a program that has an opt out, and no further City Council approval is required. City Council approval would only be needed to place an assessment on the City of Stillwater utility bills. Horning said that, of course, we would plan to make a presentation to the City Council to keep them informed of our plan of action.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Sasser moved the meeting be adjourned. Horning seconded the motion, and Moeller, Sasser and Horning voted in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

  
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Secretary/Treasurer of the Board

  
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Chairman of the Board