



MINUTES
LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH WELFARE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
JUNE 25, 2019 - 4:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE - COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT- Committee Chairman Garret McDaniel; Council Committee Members Joe Wood and Jeff Carroll.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE – Council Chairman David Pitts.

COUNTY STAFF- Laurens County Administrator Jon Caime; Laurens County Clerk to Council Betty Walsh and Laurens County Attorney Sandy Cruickshanks.

ATTENDING DEPARTMENT HEADS – Matt Pennington, Director, Laurens County EMS.

PRESS –No Press

MEETING NOTIFICATION - The County Council Committee Members and media were informed of the meeting in a timely manner. Postings of the Agenda were posted in County facilities on their bulletin boards and also posted on the County Web Site

CALL TO ORDER – County Council Committee Chairman Garrett McDaniel called the June 25, 2019 meeting of the County Council Committee on Health, Welfare and Public Safety order at 4:00 P.M.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT – OUT OF COUNTY TRANSPORTS
Committee Chairman McDaniel stated that the purpose of the Committee Meeting was to discuss and recommend out-of-county transports for EMS.

OUT-OF-COUNTY TRANSPORT - Matt Pennington, Director, Laurens County Emergency Medical Services said, “At the last Council meeting, Council began discussing the situation with out-of-County transports. We feel that we are actually providing a service to your constituents, the tax payers in Laurens County. However it is putting a burden on our resources and crew members by providing services that are a true emergency necessity versus calls that can be handled locally. We do realize that patient choice is important but it is costing the County more money as well as high call volume with vehicle accidents and true life threatening conditions. We have somewhat remedied this situation on the Northern portion of Laurens County because of the closeness of the Hillcrest Hospital to the Gray Court / Fountain Inn area. This is an ongoing situation and I ask for Council to help us to come up with a program or policy to remedy the out of county transports. Another example is if we have someone right here on the Square, that has fallen from stumping their toe and wants to go to a Greenville Hospital, we have to take them to Greenville when fifty percent of our resources are out of County already. As a number factor, I did go back and pull reports from the data collected last year. From five reports from five different months, none of the reports generated costs of over five thousand dollars that showed reimbursement at all”.

Councilman Carroll asked why they were not being paid. Mr. Pennington replied that the only answer he could give without digging into the records is the billing company can not really go into a lot of details and that the insurance companies considering not necessary or it requires self pay.

Committee Chairman McDaniel asked if there were any other Counties in South Carolina that have this same problem? Mr. Pennington replied that Greenwood County always goes to Self Regional. The biggest problem we have here is that our Hospital does not provide all of the services that the larger Hospitals like Greenwood, Spartanburg and Greenville do. The majority of times, the people will ask to go to an out of Count Hospital because that is where their Doctors are. They will not actually see their primary care physician at that time, they will see the ER Physician. A lot of the calls we do get can be handled locally. Some patients say that they do not want to go to the local Hospital because of a bad experience they once had.

Committee Chairman McDaniel asked if the policy was changes, would there be a need to train the employees on how to respond. Mr. Pennington said that in most cases it would revert back to the Supervisor for a decision.

Councilman Wood stated, "It is known that EMS never pays for itself and will always need to be supplemented with tax dollars. There are a lot of people in this County that can not pay and a lot that won't pay. At the last meeting it was noted that in some cases the patient is paid by the insurance company and the patient is the one not paying their bills".

Councilman Carroll stated that that is currently being discussed within the Legislature. The EMS Association has tried to take this task for the last eight years. The patient is a client of the insurance company and EMS is not. The Insurance Company has the expectations that their client will pay. They do agree for a fee structure that a person with insurance is paid.

Mr. Pennington noted, "When we respond to an emergency situation and a determination is made that the local hospital can attend to the needs of the patient, we need Council support when they are called complaining of their transport requests being denied".

Attorney Cruickshanks inserted that the County needs to do a bit of educating the County citizens as to procedure.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FULL COUNCIL - COUNCILMAN CARROLL made the MOTION for the Council Committee to make recommendation to the full Council that staff is to develop guidelines for the EMS to work within as it relates to out-of-county transports. The patient, in essence of a medical necessity of a medical condition that actually requires a specific hospital, that they are taken to the closest medical hospital. COUNCILMAN WOOD SECONDING; VOTE 3-0. As a motion and a second, Committee Chairman McDaniel will present this to the full Council for approval at the next meeting of Council.

ADJOURNMENT – Committee Chairman McDaniel adjourned the meeting at 4:25 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted


Betty C. Walsh
Laurens County Clerk to Council