

**CENTRAL LANE AMBULANCE TRANSPORT SYSTEM
JOINT ELECTED OFFICIALS TASK FORCE**

Meeting Summary

November 9, 2009

**Eugene Emergency Services Training Center – 1705 W 2nd Avenue
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Elected Officials Present:

Lane County Commissioner Rob Handy

Springfield City Councilors Dave Ralston and Hillary Wylie

Lane Rural Fire/Rescue Board President Larry von Moos and Director Kevin King

Eugene Staff Present:

Randy Groves, Denise Giard, Glen Potter, Joann Eppli

IAFF Local 851 Representatives Present:

Scott Olmos

Springfield Staff Present:

Dennis Murphy, Bart Noll, Jana Sorenson

IAFF Local 1395 Representatives Present:

Kevin Gray

Lane Rural Staff Present:

Dale Borland, Bill Bass

LCOG Staff Present:

Paula Taylor

Rural Metro Ambulance Staff Present:

Melissa Gray

Bishop Communications (Working with Rural Metro Ambulance) Staff Present:

Sandra Bishop

Med-Trans Staff Present:

Paul Walter, Jason Wallace

1. Welcome

- Randy Groves convened the tenth meeting of the Ambulance Transport System (ATS) Joint Elected Officials (JEO) Task Force. He then completed a roll call of the elected officials.
- Randy reported that Commissioner Rob Handy will need to leave today's meeting early.

2. Future ATS JEO Task Force Meetings

- The next ATS JEO Task Force meeting is scheduled for:

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- Monday, November 23, 2009 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Fire Conference Room. Randy Groves noted that there will be one more meeting before the Task Force submits a report on their recommendations to the full JEO Group on November 25, 2009, in preparation for the presentation of their recommendations to the full JEO Group on December 7, 2009.

3. Future JEO Meetings

- The next JEO meeting is scheduled for:
 - Monday, December 7, 2009 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Eugene Public Library in the Bascom/Tykeson Room. (Note: the length of this meeting has been extended by one half-hour.) The ATS JEO Task Force recommendations will be presented, as well as an update on the Eugene/Springfield Merger Initiative.

4. Meeting Summary Approval

- The Task Force unanimously approved the October 26, 2009 Meeting Summary.

5. Items for Discussion

Eugene/Springfield Merger Initiative Update

- Randy Groves reported that staff are continuing work to prepare the draft report to the two City Councils on the Eugene/Springfield merger piece. The report will provide recommendations, as well as identify both savings and costs.

Springfield Chamber of Commerce Presentation Report

- Dennis Murphy reported that the presentation to the Springfield Chamber of Commerce was well received, but that they are more skeptical of the merger than Eugene. He said he personally believes that the Springfield Chamber is interested in the concept of the two departments coming together, but that they are skeptical about forming a special district. Additionally, the Springfield Chamber asked if they can help with the FireMed campaign. He added that the Springfield Chamber and Eugene Chamber have been holding joint discussion about the merger.
- Randy Groves reported that the Eugene Chamber has endorsed the concept of bringing the two organizations together, honing in on efficiencies and enhancing service effectiveness. He emphasized that a merger is about improving the service delivery system. He said that the Springfield Chamber is not as enthusiastic, however, they understand and are concerned with the ambulance service issues, and are interested to find out if some of the issues can be addressed through a merger. He added that there were good questions and a spirited discussion at the Springfield Chamber presentation.
- Councilor Hillary Wylie said that Springfield is sensitive about being taken over by Eugene. She stated that the Springfield community is proud of their independence, and want to make sure there will be equity. She emphasized that independence and identity are important to Springfield community members.
- Councilor Dave Ralston stated that he views the fire/life safety and police departments of Eugene and Springfield as completely different. He said there are two entirely different cultures in the police departments, whereas both cities fire departments protect people's lives and properties. In supporting a merger, he said it will be important to make the

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point that neither the Springfield Fire & Life Safety Department nor the Eugene Fire & EMS Department will lose their identity.

Finalize Task Force Recommendations and Document for Report Back to Full JEO Group

- Glen Potter distributed copies of the draft report on Task Force recommendations. He explained that it is almost an identical draft to what was distributed at the last meeting. Randy Groves stated that the goal with the report, as well as the presentation on December 7th, is to have a unified set of recommendations back to the full JEO Group.
- Commissioner Rob Handy reported that Jean Tate and Dave Frohnmayer have formed a new Public Safety Task Force – noting that ambulance and fire are important to Jean Tate – he asked ATS JEO Task Force members to consider collaborating with this Public Safety group on strategies.
- Randy Groves pointed out that ATS JEO Task Force meeting summaries are posted on the Eugene Fire & EMS Department's web site.
- Referring back to the draft report, Commissioner Rob Handy stated that he believes the long-term strategy of forming a special district should be referenced in this report. He said that he provided Glen Potter with his feedback on the report, and thought the draft being reviewed at today's meeting would include his comments. Glen Potter explained that Commissioner Handy was the only Task Force member who had provided feedback on the report. Randy Groves asked Commissioner Handy to go through his comments, and share them with the other elected officials so that they would know the content as well as the Commissioner's intent. Commissioner Handy said that he provided Glen with several comments on the merger piece, including moving it further down in the report and changing the emphasis. Additionally, he stated that he believes the option to form a new service district needs to be eliminated.
- Councilor Hillary Wylie said she would like to see the option to form a new service district reworded instead of being eliminated.
- Commissioner Rob Handy added that he would like to emphasize in the report that the ATS JEO Task Force is looking at this solution, but he believes it is premature to show it as option two on the list of recommendations.
- Randy Groves reported that public forum results clearly showed the option of forming a special district as rating highest on the public opinion scale.
- Councilor Dave Ralston said he believes forming a special district is the best option for success, and therefore, it has to be included in the report and rated highly. He strongly advocated for keeping this option on the list.
- District Board President Larry von Moos said he believes forming a special district is the only option.
- Commissioner Rob Handy then suggested adding the option of a five-year levy. He said as we move through the procession of implementing short-term, intermediate and long-term options, he envisions the special district option being at the end of the path.
- District Board Director Kevin King asked if the options were listed in the order of what will be tackled first. Glen Potter replied that the elected bodies will more than likely have to look at General Fund support in the present day, and that the other options are listed in priority order.

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- Councilor Dave Ralston stated that a levy option is not a bad thing to say, but noted that Springfield already has a levy that they are desperately trying to get rid of. He said that a taxing district is practically the same thing as a levy, and it should probably be listed as an option. He emphasized that a levy is a risky option, and something that will have to be renewed.
- Glen Potter noted that the levy option is on the list of options that were rejected.
- Randy Groves asked Task Force members to vote on whether or not to include the option of a levy. Councilor Hillary Wylie said she is not in support of this option. Councilor Dave Ralston agreed with Councilor Wylie, adding that a levy would be an option, but not a great option. District Board President Larry von Moos also agreed.
- Commissioner Rob Handy said that his colleagues at Lane County consider ambulance an essential and core service. However, he cautioned that if the Task Force is going to look at forming a special taxing district, there are other services that also want to form taxing districts. He also explained that Lane County Commissioners need to make sure that all needs of a district are looked at comprehensively.
- Again referring back to the draft report, Commissioner Handy said that forming a new service district is explained in more detail on page four. Commissioner Handy stated that the first full paragraph on page five is complex, but hints at the pros and cons of this option. He asked that the issues be explained in greater detail, and said that he would like the Task Force to have more discussion before the making recommendations. He said he believes the statement in the third paragraph on page five “we recommend a formation” is too strong. He then said that the section regarding FireMed on page six is outstanding. Regarding the section on forming a county-wide health district, Commissioner Handy said it points at the nuances, and would be a good option for the Task Force to discuss further.
- Councilor Dave Ralston pointed out that the Task Force needs to make a recommendation to the full JEO Group on December 7th. He said he wants to have something nailed down, and Task Force members have to figure out what the recommendations are going to be. Randy Groves added that the strongest message would be if there was consensus amongst the Task Force, or at least if the majority of the group were on the same page.
- District Board President Larry von Moos said that he supports what is going to be workable. He noted that the Task Force needs to identify and recommend options to bring forward to the full JEO Group, and how those options will be funded.
- District Board Director Kevin King stated that the Task Force agreed to study the options and come up with recommendations. He pointed out with urgency that if the Task Force does not start studying the options, and suggests that the issues with the ambulance service in Central Lane County just stay on the back burner, years will go by that we do not have.
- Dennis Murphy said that there is a disclaimer with expanding FireMed, and that is that staff will do their best to be successful, but there is no guarantee on how successful the campaign will be. Additionally, he stated that long-term General Fund support does not exist. He suggested that the Task Force recommend some form of tax support other than

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General Fund, because revenues are falling short. He cited the example that a levy is a tax option that is not General Fund.

- Commissioner Rob Handy said that recommending some form of tax support other than General Fund is what he has been suggesting and asking other elected officials to endorse. He stated that some Lane County Commissioners will not support calling for an elected board, a taxing authority or a taxing district.
- Dale Borland asked if the greatest fear at the county level is the loss of taxing ability. He also asked what the apprehension is with fire taking on a special district. Commissioner Rob Handy replied that Lane County has 82 taxing districts. He said there is not a problem specifically with fire, but with the idea of adding another taxing district. He stated that from the county perspective, Commissioners are looking to shrink the number of taxing districts. He added that Jean Tate's Public Safety Task Force may also be looking at taxing districts.
- District Board President Larry von Moos reported that Lane Rural currently has somewhere between a \$20,000 and \$30,000 per month deficit in the General Fund. He said that Lane Rural is also considering raising ambulance rates. He stated that both of these strategies are unsustainable, and emphasized that the issues with the ambulance service system need to be dealt with now. President von Moos stressed with urgency that the Task Force needs to identify a set of solutions to move forward, whether it be forming a special district or whatever, and once again highlighted that something needs to be done immediately.
- Councilor Dave Ralston reported on a very good Work Session where Springfield City Council thoroughly discussed all options on the table. He said that the public thinks that they pay for ambulance service through taxes, but they don't. He asked how thoroughly the other elected bodies have discussed the issues with funding ambulance service. Councilor Ralston urged the other two elected bodies (Lane County and Eugene City Council) to hold an in-depth roundtable discussion before the December 7th JEO meeting, because this is not something that we can keep putting off. He said it is time to have the hard conversations.
- Commissioner Rob Handy stated that Lane County Commissioners have held briefings and shared general philosophies at JEO meetings. He stated that he wants to look at all options that can be done in the short-term as work continues towards coming up with intermediate and long-term solutions.
- Councilor Hillary Wylie said that she is concerned with the approaching budget year, as the economy has not recovered very much from the recession. She stated that everyone is working hard to hold everything together, and her concern is that there is not going to be enough money all the way around. She emphasized that this next budget year is going to be tough, and other forms of funding will have to be looked at seriously.
- Councilor Dave Ralston said he has heard everyone agree that ambulance is and should be considered a core service. He restated that the public believes they already pay for ambulance service, but they don't. He noted that the General Fund money currently allocated for library services could cover fire and life safety. He said that people need to be given a choice, and noted that it is not going to be long before services have to be cut and the nice things will have to go away.

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- District Board Director Kevin King stated the he supports Dennis Murphy's suggestion of the Task Force recommending some form of tax support other than General Fund. He said it will be important to show that other solutions have been tried, and emphasize that what is currently in place will not sustain us for long, making the long-term not very long at all.
- Commissioner Rob Handy said it will be important to include the range of thoughtfulness in today's discussion, and said he will be looking to Glen Potter to continue writing to merge some of the ideas brought forward.
- Randy Groves confirmed that the Task Force will be coming in with a more general statement in preparation for the discussion with the full JEO Group on December 7th. He emphasized that elected officials need to pick a direction, whatever it is. He added that he believes Eugene can make it through the current fiscal year, and is confident that Eugene will not be able to make it through next fiscal year without help.
- Councilor Dave Ralston said he heard support from other elected officials at today's meeting for some form of tax support other than General Fund, and noted that it has to be clear that it is going to be a taxing solution. He then stated that he will support a levy if that is what it is going to take.
- Councilor Hillary Wylie acknowledged Glen Potter's work on the draft report. She then asked if the merger is mentioned, to which Glen replied the report indicates that the Task Force supports the merger. Councilor Wylie stated that she believes the merger is a piece of the solution, and it is logical to move towards a merger, and for councils to move towards a district to eventually achieve long-term stability. She said the Task Force wants to recommend long-term stable funding, but this is the best we have come up. Councilor Wylie stated that the whole point of the Task Force is to look at the nitty gritty and the complexity of issues, and acknowledged that each City Councilor is also an individual politician. She went on to say that this recommendation is better than the others, and added that there is not an easy solution. She said it is time to ask taxpayers for additional money, and exactly how we do that is what we have to decide.
- Dennis Murphy pointed out that page three of the report shows the steps that the Eugene Fire & EMS Department has taken. He said he would like to add on to the paragraph about Springfield that they are dealing with mobile health services and an expanded FireMed Program.
- Councilor Dave Ralston said that his biggest concern with Lane County on ballot measures is that they always try to be all-inclusive. He stated that he believes the issues with the ambulance transport system need to be kept entirely separate – it is far too important to let it fail.
- Commissioner Rob Handy agreed that there is a problem with the ambulance transport system, and he said he understands there needs to be a new source of revenue. However, he does not believe the only solution is to form a taxing district.
- District Board Director Kevin King stated that he liked Dennis Murphy's suggestion about providing an encapsulating statement first, then detailing all of the options available, and showing those options that the Task Force has looked.
- District Board President Larry von Moos asked if anyone had more information about Jean Tate's newly formed Public Safety Task Force, to which Councilor Ralston replied

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that he believes the Public Safety group wants to piggy-back onto the work of the ATS JEO Task Force. He personally thinks collaborating with the Public Safety group will set the ATS JEO Task Force up for failure. He said elected officials must prove to the public that they can spend money wisely, and to be successful, addressing fire/life safety issues must be kept separate.

- Randy Groves provided the example of the Eugene Emergency Services Training Center facility at 2nd & Chambers. He said that when the Fire & EMS Department went out in collaboration with the library, the measure failed. It failed a second time when Fire & EMS went out with the Police. However, in 1995 when the Fire & EMS Department went out alone, the measure passed with 68 percent voter approval, which was a record at the time. Dennis Murphy reported that Springfield Fire & Life Safety also experienced success when they remained separate.
- Dale Borland confirmed that the last time Lane County went out for a public safety measure was last year. Dale then asked if fire was included in past public safety measures, to which Randy Groves replied that fire has never been included. Councilor Hillary Wylie explained that there has been a lot of anger surrounding the public safety measures, and it seems like a lot of information was misrepresented.
- Referring back to the draft report under the realignment of Ambulance Service Area (ASA) boundaries option, District Board President Larry von Moos and Dale Borland expressed concern that community members in Veneta are expecting a medic unit to be deployed there. Instead, they said a medic unit may be placed in closer vicinity should an ASA reconfiguration be adopted. Randy Groves provided assurance that Veneta will not be left out in the cold, and that this is listed as an option that will be further looked into. He also noted that this will not fix the financial issue because it will just redistribute the costs and revenue. Denise Giard suggested removing mention of the specific city, and Dale Borland agreed.
- Randy Groves reemphasized that the full JEO Group is looking to this Task Force for recommendations.
- Councilor Dave Ralston once again strongly encouraged that before the December 7th JEO meeting, the other two elected bodies hold an in-depth roundtable discussion about the issues with the ambulance transport system, similar to the one held by Springfield's City Council.
- Councilor Dave Ralston and District Board President Larry von Moos expressed interest in hearing feedback from the two Eugene City Councilors. Randy Groves said from previous Task Force meeting discussions, he understands Councilor Clark to be more in favor of General Fund support, and less in favor of a taxing district, whereas he believes that Councilor Ortiz is more in favor of a tax base that does not cut into the General Fund. He encouraged Task Force members to ask Councilors Clark and Ortiz about their individual positions and preferences. Randy also noted that he has discussed the issues with the ambulance transport system with all Eugene City Councilors at different points, as he frequently speaks with each of them on an individual basis.
- District Board Director Kevin King said he is in support of forming a special district, because fire and EMS service is the only thing a special district discusses. District Board President Larry von Moos stated that he has not really heard other viable options.

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- Councilor Dave Ralston stated that the bottom line is that we need more revenue.
- It was decided that Glen Potter will make revisions to the draft report, and send it back out to the Task Force by the end of today. Randy Groves asked that Task Force members respond back to Glen as soon as possible.

Task Force Op-Ed Piece

- Randy Groves proposed the idea of the next Task Force op-ed piece being issued around the same time as the December 7th JEO. He asked Task Force members if they felt it would be advantageous to issue another op-ed piece right before the JEO meeting, or if they would prefer to delay.
- Councilor Dave Ralston said he believes it is a good idea to get as much information out to the public as possible. He expressed concern that other elected bodies have not had the in-depth conversation that Springfield City Council has had on this topic.
- District Board President Larry von Moos agreed that the more exposure this topic gets, the better, which should help with people being more willing to work towards solutions.
- Councilor Hillary Wylie also agreed.
- Randy Groves stated that Glen Potter will draft an op-ed piece and send it to the Task Force for review and edits. Glen pointed out that the op-ed piece will need to be finalized at the November 23rd Task Force meeting.

6. Information Share

- Dennis Murphy reported that staff are continuing work to expand the FireMed Program. He said the program has increased its market share by 5 percent. He stated that the goal of an expanded FireMed Program is to raise money for the emergency services system. One strategy to expand the FireMed Program is to increase participation in the Job Care Program, which allows participating agency employees to take advantage of a discounted FireMed membership. The campaign will also aggressively seek participation by other membership-based organizations like credit unions, Costco and Bi-Mart to encourage their members to join. Dennis said two big changes being considered are: 1) increasing membership rates; and 2) changing the definition of what is medically necessary. Additionally, he said the expanded FireMed Program campaign will use Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to communicate the issues with the ambulance transport system.
- Councilor Dave Ralston said that he believes this is a genius way to go about marketing. He also noted that he has thought for years that we should raise FireMed rates.

7. Additional Issues

- No one brought forward any additional issues to discuss.

8. Meeting Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned.

(Recorded by Joann Eppli)