

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

Meeting Summary

November 23, 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

Eugene City Councilors Mike Clark and Andrea Ortiz

Springfield City Councilors Dave Ralston and Hillary Wylie

Lane Rural Fire/Rescue Board President Larry von Moos

Eugene Staff Present:

Randy Groves, Denise Giard, Joe Zaludek, Larry Hill, Julie Lindsey, Glen Potter, Joann Eppli

Springfield Staff Present:

Dennis Murphy, Mark Walker, Brian Evanoff, Bart Noll, Jana Sorenson

IAFF Local 1395 Representatives Present:

Kevin Gray

Lane Rural Staff Present:

Dale Borland, Bill Bass, Chris Heppel

LCOG Staff Present:

Byron Vanderpool, Paula Taylor

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

Sandra Bishop, Tina Batori

Med-Trans Staff Present:

Paul Walter, Jason Wallace

1. Welcome

- Randy Groves convened the eleventh meeting of the Ambulance Transport System (ATS) Joint Elected Officials (JEO) Task Force. He then completed a roll call of the elected officials.

2. Future JEO Meetings

- The next two JEO meeting are 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.

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- Friday, February 26, 2010 from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Springfield City Hall. This will be a follow-up to the December 7th JEO meeting, where updates will be provided on the Eugene/Springfield Merger Initiative, as well as the Ambulance Transport System (ATS).

3. Meeting Summary Approval

- The Task Force unanimously approved the November 9, 2009 Meeting Summary.

4. Items for Discussion

Eugene/Springfield Merger Initiative Update

- Randy Groves stated that the report to elected officials on the merger is just about ready to go, and will be sent out to elected officials on Wednesday, November 25th in preparation for the December 7th JEO meeting. He said that the report will cover anticipated savings and costs, and noted the challenge of trying to put together a detailed budget without having a plan for what the merger will look like. He said he anticipates a good dialogue amongst the elected bodies on December 7th.
- Dennis Murphy added that this first report will not include a section on what the unions (IAFF, SEIU and AFSCME) say about the merger, because at this point, they have not received enough information to formulate an opinion. He said if the full JEO Group indicates approval of moving forward with the first steps of a merger on December 7th, then union representatives will be invited to site visits in California and the Portland metro area of successful working models in January and February 2010. He stated that after the site visits, the unions will be asked to weigh in.
- Councilor Andrea Ortiz confirmed that the report will be sent to elected officials this Wednesday. Randy Groves clarified that the Executive Summary will be sent out electronically on Wednesday, and the full report with more detail will be released through the normal process.

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

- Randy Groves said that the main purpose of today's meeting is to finalize the report back from the ATS JEO Task Force to the full JEO Group. He then asked Glen Potter to step up to the table. Glen then distributed the draft of the report, and walked Task Force members through the most recent changes.
- Councilor Andrea Ortiz stated that she believes the Task Force has gone as far as they can as a subcommittee of the full JEO Group, and that any further conversation needs to come from Eugene and Springfield Councils and the Board of Lane County Commissioners.
- Councilor Mike Clark agreed. Being more specific, he referred to the reconfiguration of ASA boundaries, and said he needs more information to understand what that option means. He also said he is in favor of exploring a district as it pertains to a merger of fire and emergency medical services, however, he is not in favor of forming an ambulance service only district. He added that the report does not explain as much detail on the merger as he would like.
- Glen Potter noted that the report speaks in favor of the merger, and that ambulance funding is the charge of this Task Force.

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- Councilor Hillary Wylie stated that she believes a series of steps needs to take place, and she thinks looking into the merger and getting the corresponding Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) in place is part of the solution. She said it makes good common sense.
- Councilor Dave Ralston added that the merger itself is a “no brainer”. He believes it is the first step of due diligence in showing the community we have done everything we can do. He added that while it is separate from the Ambulance Transport System (ATS), the merger is working towards the same goal. He thinks that a merger is required before going anywhere else, in order to determine where the gaps are going to be.
- Glen Potter asked if the Task Force wanted to move the section on the merger up to page two of the report.
- Both Councilors Hillary Wylie and Dave Ralston agreed.
- Councilor Andrea Ortiz disagreed, stating that she believes if elected officials go to the voters asking for support of a merger, they would say yes. She cautioned that in Eugene, there are voting blocks of the population that would need to take something like this very slowly. At the same time, she said she would feel more comfortable going to the full JEO Group saying the Task Force is in support of a merger.
- Councilor Dave Ralston said it is his understanding that it is not up to the full JEO Group to decide on the merger.
- Randy Groves explained that forming a special district would require voter approval, but the IGAs (which are what will be required for the initial phase of the merger) will be between Eugene’s City Manager and Springfield’s City Manager. He cited the following examples of IGAs currently in place, such as with the contract districts, neighboring agencies to expand automatic aid agreements, and with Springfield to have a sequential response order for all 16 stations between the two departments. He said the hope for the December 7th JEO meeting is that elected officials will ask the two City Managers to work with the two Fire Chiefs to take the next steps towards a merger, and report back to the elected bodies, recognizing that it needs to be a phased process. Randy added that the decision to form a full district will come at a later date. He stated that two very successful Joint Powers of Authority (JPA) models currently exist in California and Washington, and noted that implementing a JPA can be accomplished with an ORS 190 agreement. He added that when Eugene and Springfield first started talking about the 3-Battalion system, there was a level of discomfort. Yet, most people now say that it was a good decision to implement the 3-Battalion system.
- Dennis Murphy said that there is an intersection between the merger and solving the ambulance problem. At the same time, he said it is important to recognize that we do not have to merge, but we do have to solve the ambulance problem. He went on to say that the merger will garner approximately \$850,000 in savings for FY10/FY11 by not filling vacant critical positions. He said that elected officials do not have to choose an IGA or a JPA, as with a JPA the \$850,000 savings will be realized in the second year. He also said that forming a fire district has the ability to solve the issues with the ambulance system. He then noted that only the formation of a health district will help Lane Rural Fire/Rescue.

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- Councilor Dave Ralston clarified that if we do not go forward with the merger, vacancies of critical positions (Springfield's Fire Chief, Eugene's Fire Marshal and Eugene's Training Chief) will need to be filled.
- Dennis Murphy added that on December 7th, the Fire Chiefs are looking for direction on whether or not to go forward, and noted that first steps are not irreversible.
- Randy Groves said he recognizes that this is a big decision, and that it is important to work closely with the elected bodies to determine whether or not to move forward with the next steps.
- Commissioner Rob Handy asked if departments are given the okay to move forward with the merger, will savings occur for both jurisdictions, and what will happens to those savings? Dennis Murphy replied that savings will be realized in FY11, starting on July 1, 2010 and beyond. Dennis said that the worst that can happen if departments are not given the okay to move forward is a delay in the hiring of vacant critical positions. Randy Groves added that the merger will bring two different staffs with different ways of doing business, to one way of doing business with one staff. He then provided the example of consolidation and deconsolidation of Eugene's Police and Fire Departments.
- Councilor Mike Clark said that he would like to recommend that the Task Force support initial steps towards a merger, then only after, potentially exploring a taxing district. He noted that the merger is a cost savings opportunity.
- Councilor Andrea Ortiz said that she is comfortable with sending support for the merger forward as a recommendation from the ATS JEO Task Force.
- Councilor Mike Clark then said that he disagrees with forming a special district, and to support it, he would really need to be convinced that it is a good idea. He stated that he thinks higher priority services should be funded with money we already have, and lower priority services should go to the voters for levy support.
- Councilor Hillary Wylie pointed out that the Task Force is not making the decision to merge. She said right now, the Task Force is tasked with making a recommendation using what they have learned. She stated that someone has to step forward and make recommendations, and that someone is the ATS JEO Task Force.
- Councilor Dave Ralston agreed with Councilor Wylie. He said that there are certain key functions that a government should support, and those are the same key functions that community members believe are the most important. He stated that library services are nice to have.
- Randy Groves polled Task Force members, and received consensus from the group to move forward with recommending the merger to the full JEO.
- Councilor Mike Clark said that he recommends taking initial steps towards the merger.
- Referring back to the report, Glen Potter confirmed that he is taking the mention of the merger on page eight, and moving it up in the report to make a new recommendation number two.
- Dennis Murphy clarified that for the purposes of the report, the definition of the word "explore" is to go forth and take the first steps. Randy Groves added that this means initially pulling together some functions of the two departments.

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- Councilor Mike Clark asked that the local levy option be stricken. He again stated that he supports recommending initial steps towards a merger, then studying and exploring a special district for fire and ambulance services.
- Dennis Murphy noted that some of the options will require changes to the Metro Plan.
- Councilor Dave Ralston explained to Eugene Councilors Clark and Ortiz that the Task Force decided to place the local levy option on the list at the last meeting because we are still going to fall short, and need to show other options for bringing in additional income besides creating another district. He said he prefers not to do a levy.
- Councilor Andrea Ortiz said she would like to add a statement to the report on exploring other funding options.
- Councilor Mike Clark stated that reducing services is not an option for him, and suggested reprioritizing services supported through the General Fund.
- Councilor Dave Ralston said that Springfield has already prioritized services, and noted that the library is a hot topic.
- Councilor Mike Clark reported that in Eugene, the history of levies has not been good for public safety, yet has been good for the library and parks. He said he would rather see planning for a quality of life levy, rather than a levy for basic services.
- Randy Groves pointed out that Councilor Clark made a strong recommendation to add exploring the merger to the list of options. He then polled the Task Force members on this motion, and received full consensus from the group.
- Referring to an earlier comment on what is a core service and what the public supports, Commissioner Rob Handy said that the last sentence implies this is the only alternative. He suggested taking it out, or moving it elsewhere in the report.
- Glen Potter continued review of the Task Force's suggested changes to the report.
- Larry Hill explained that forming a service district, health district or fire district would require a vote and board approval before enacting. He further explained that: 1) a county service district is governed by a county board; 2) a health district could be annexed to an existing district (e.g., Western Lane); and 3) a fire district may provide both ambulance and fire service. Upon Commissioner Handy's request, Larry Hill then reviewed the changes he made to the report.
- Councilor Mike Clark inquired if reconfiguring the ASA boundaries for Zone #3 is going to help Lane Rural, and asked if it is possible to hire a private contractor to provide service to this area instead. Randy Groves replied that yes, sub-contracting the service is possible, however, the simplest solution is to give it to Lane Rural. Councilor Clark confirmed that the Board of Lane County Commissioners needs to approve ASA boundary changes. Randy Groves added that the residents present at the public forum in Veneta, clearly wanted a public provider, not a private provider serving this area. He also said that if we were to sub-contract the service, residents could petition the Board of County Commissioners if they were displeased with this decision. He added that the constituency in Zone #3 should be considered in any decision to sub-contract the service if that were the direction given.
- District Board President Larry von Moos said he has a bit of an issue discussing this option with the numbers not being prepared, and restated that Lane Rural currently has

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somewhere between a \$20,000 and \$30,000 per month deficit in the General Fund. Chris Heppel added that if Lane Rural takes on this service, it is not going to be profitable – it will be more of a zero balance. Councilor Mike Clark asked that this information be reflected in the report.

- District Board President Larry von Moos then said that Lane Rural strongly supports the merger of the two cities fire service, but emphasized that the merger will not resolve Lane Rural's issues. He stated that he wants to make it clear that Lane Rural has to do something immediately.
- Regarding the option to reconfigure the ASA boundaries, Councilor Mike Clark clarified that Eugene would see an approximate decrease of \$500,000. Randy Groves added that Eugene would lose the revenue without really being able to eliminate any cost of the service. Councilor Andrea Ortiz inquired on how much it costs to get this revenue, to which Randy Groves replied that the numbers are hard to isolate. Councilor Clark suggested using language instead of numbers. Randy Groves went on to explain that if the ASA reconfiguration option is implemented, it has to be a phased-in process – we cannot just flip the switch. Glen Potter explained the formula used to estimate the decrease of \$500,000 to Eugene. Randy Groves added that Zone #3 does not produce enough revenue to support an additional unit.
- Joe Zaludek pointed out that as of January 1, 2010 Medicare will reduce reimbursements by 20 percent, which will hit the rural areas hardest.
- Commissioner Rob Handy stated that it is important for the public to have numbers, and suggested showing the savings.
- Dennis Murphy noted that elected officials have voiced that fire and ambulance are core services, and that they do not want these services reduced.
- Councilor Andrea Ortiz asked for a matrix showing what it costs to provide the service, and for the information to be teased out a little bit. Denise Giard stated that the costs to provide the service will not go down, which needs to be reflected in a way that is understandable to the public. Randy Groves noted that if the ASA boundaries for Zone #3 are reconfigured so that Lane Rural picks up providing ambulance service to this area, Eugene will still respond to calls in this area as well. He added that multiple units frequently respond to motor vehicle accidents in the area, and that calls that originate in Zone #3 tie up units for a prolonged period of time due to the travel distances. Councilor Mike Clark said that the report needs to include these details. Councilor Andrea Ortiz asked that the language in the report also reflects that the departments provide joint coverage.
- Glen Potter said he will draft a paragraph, and then continue further review of the Task Force's suggested changes to the report.
- Regarding the FireMed option, Councilor Dave Ralston suggested that the word "group rate" be added.
- Councilor Mike Clark said he likes the idea of using pre-existing networks and organizations (e.g., Costco, Bi-Mart) to expand the FireMed Program. Dennis Murphy stated that this is a way of showing we are going after everything we can get by doing it better.

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- Randy Groves pointed out that there is a short turnaround time, and re-stated that the report will be submitted to elected officials electronically on November 25th. He then said that Glen Potter will update the report to reflect the changes discussed at today's meeting, and will send the updated report back out to the Task Force members for final review. It was decided that if Glen has not heard back from any of the Task Force members by 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, it means that it is okay to send the report to the full JEO Group.
- Commissioner Rob Handy clarified that the first sentence for recommendation number two will remain, and that rest of the paragraph will be deleted. Glen Potter added that the first sentence will be preceded by information about the merger.
- Councilor Dave Ralston confirmed that these two items will be shown as two separate issues, and the Task Force members agreed.
- Randy Groves said that the elected officials will receive the ATS JEO Task Force's recommendations report on November 25th, in preparation for the presentation at the December 7th JEO meeting. He asked if the Fire Chiefs should introduce the subject item at the December 7th meeting, to which Councilor Dave Ralston replied yes, and said that the elected officials will then take over and move to discussion. Randy Groves said that the Fire Chiefs plan to keep the presentation streamlined; first talking about the ambulance funding piece, and then transitioning into a discussion on the merger proposal. He added that the Fire Chiefs' goal is to afford as much time as possible for the elected officials to deliberate and ask questions.

Finalize Task Force Op-Ed Piece

- Randy Groves polled Task Force members on the best way to draft an op-ed piece. He offered them the following options: 1) staff draft an op-ed piece to be signed by the elected officials on the Task Force and send the draft to the Task Force for review and edits; 2) the three Fire Chiefs draft an op-ed piece to be signed by the Fire Chiefs and send the draft to the Task Force for review and edits; or 3) a couple of Task Force members co-author an op-ed piece as a representation of the ATS JEO Task Force.
- Councilor Hillary Wylie said she prefers the three Fire Chiefs draft an op-ed piece and send it to the Task Force for review and edits.
- Councilor Mike Clark stated that the elected officials on the ATS JEO Task Force have to sell the ideas to the rest of their colleagues, and believes the piece should be centered around the Task Force's recommendations. He thinks that Glen Potter should write an op-ed piece as a distilled version of the memo.
- Councilor Dave Ralston said that the other elected officials will hear from Task Force members when we get together.
- Councilor Mike Clark stated that he does not want to put the Fire Chiefs in a political position, and emphasized that this is the elected officials' responsibility.
- Commissioner Rob Handy said based on what the Task Force is approving, he asked as elected officials, if Task Force members can agree to publish an op-ed piece.
- Councilor Andrea Ortiz suggested Glen Potter draft an op-ed piece, and give Task Force members a deadline to respond. She said that if irreconcilable differences surface, the

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draft will then be forwarded to the Fire Chiefs for handling. There was consensus from the Task Force to proceed with Councilor Ortiz's suggestion.

- Randy Groves reported that Ed Russo with the Register Guard interviewed him and Dennis Murphy. He said that Ed will publish an article on the merger sometime in the near future. Councilor Dave Ralston noted that Ed Russo talked with him as well.

5. Information Share

- Dennis Murphy again mentioned the site visits to California and the Portland metro area to look at successful working models. He suggested scheduling this for sometime in January and February 2010. He also stated that Task Force members will be invited, and that information will be provided in the presentation to the full JEO Group. He said he highly recommends all elected officials participate in the site visits, and believes it is critical for Task Force members to see successful working models, building on their knowledge gained as being part of this Task Force. Councilor Hillary Wylie confirmed that elected officials will receive information on the site visits at the December 7th JEO meeting.
- Randy Groves shared his appreciation of the time and work of the ATS JEO Task Force.
- Councilor Dave Ralston inquired on the next ATS JEO Task Force meeting. Randy Groves replied that after the report has been submitted and the op-ed piece has been published, the ATS JEO Task Force will sunset unless the full JEO Group commissions more work. Councilor Ralston commented that it will depend on what happens at the December 7th JEO meeting. Councilor Hillary Wylie said that she would prefer not meeting in December. Dennis Murphy said that he anticipates news cameras in the room at the December 7th JEO meeting.
- Councilor Andrea Ortiz thanked everybody for their time, and added that she appreciates all the time and effort of Task Force members and staff.
- Randy Groves recognized Glen Potter and Jo Eppli's work in support of the ATS JEO Task Force.

6. Additional Issues

- No one brought forward any additional issues to discuss.

7. Meeting Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned.

(Recorded by Joann Eppli)