

\*\*\*\*\* DRAFT\*\*\*\*\*

Ambulance District Oversight Committee  
Minutes 3/17/11 meeting

Board Members Present: Chief Sam Lubin, Board Chair Dr. Bob Seebacher, Board Vice Chair Richard Wishnie, Ossining Mayor Bill Hanauer, Ossining Town Supervisor Catherine Borgia, Bill Hamilton

Board Members Absent: Town Supervisor Barbara Gerrard, Ron Dorneau

Also Present: OVAC Chief Sam Lubin, OVAC Captain Lorene Mettler, OVAC Treasurer Alex Beck, Ossining Village Manager Richard Leins, Ossining Village Trustee Sue Donnelly, Ossining Town Councilman Peter Tripodi, members of OVAC, members of the public

Dr Seebacher called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm

#### **Financial overview**

Dr. Seebacher called on Alex Beck, OVAC Treasurer, to present the financial documents requested at the last Oversight Committee meeting.

Mr Beck reviews the 2009 audited financial statements. He said the OVAC usually files its audited statements by November of the year following the year being audited.

Catherine Borgia reminded the group that the 2011 budget included funding for an independent audit conducted by O'Connor, Davies, the independent firm that prepares the Town and Village audits.

Mr Beck next reviewed the Tax District Budget Report for 2010, which showed the district was \$1700 over budget. He explained that OVAC made up the difference with their resources. Mr. Beck presented the transaction report, which detailed every transaction OVAC made as the tax district vendor, by category and amount.

Richard Wishnie praised the detail of the reports and asked Mr. Beck to provide the transaction reports for Jan-March 2011 prior to the next Oversight Committee. He asked that a P&L report be given prior to the next meeting.

Mr Wishnie asked for a description of the reasons for the increase in personnel costs from 2009 to 2010. Mr Beck said some of the increases were due to higher Workmen's Comp costs. Chief Lubin mentioned that some costs were due to costs associated with the need for additional paid staff. Sue Donnelly recommended that Chief Lubin do a regular review of expenses in comparison to the budget to make sure the district stays within its financial goals. She also praised the level of detail given by OVAC about how district

money was spent in 2010. Catherine Borgia stated that the financial information provided by Mr. Beck would be posted on the Town's website under the ambulance district tab.

### **Name Change of Ambulance District**

Dr Seebacher then moved to the next item on the agenda: the matter of changing the Ambulance District name to the Mid-Hudson Ambulance District. Dr. Seebacher explained that this name will more closely align with the area of service; be an inducement to other municipalities such as the Village of Croton and the Village of Briarcliff to join the district; and will promote closer ties to Phelps Hospital. Catherine Borgia said the Town Attorney would review the legal steps necessary to change the name. Richard Wishnie made the nomination to change the name of the Ambulance District to the Mid-Hudson Ambulance District. Bill Hanauer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Cars on Loan from Town of Ossining**

Chief Lubin and Captain Mettler gave a report about the former police vehicles which the Town has loaned to the Ambulance District on a temporary basis. The group discussed the fundraising plan outlined at the last meeting -- Dr. Nigro will work with Phelps to do the fundraising for the car that has approximately \$14,000 left on the lease. Once the fundraising is completed, that amount will be posted to the town-outside account, which is the fund from which the car was purchased. Ownership of the vehicles would then pass to the Ambulance District.

Chief Lubin detailed the repairs and modifications that had been made to the vehicles at OVAC's expense. He told the group that he was in contact with NYS about obtaining a license for the Ambulance District, so that the SUV can be made into a Dept of Health certified vehicle. This is necessary because the ownership of the vehicle will transfer to the District once the fundraising is complete. Copt. Mettler and some OVAC members mentioned some electrical problems in the SUV. Mettler said they were working with a local auto body shop. OVAC Lt. Dan Oliveri detailed the work that had been paid for by OVAC: \$1960 for a catalytic converter, \$70 for a plank to hold equipment in the back of the car, \$3000 for a radio, and \$500 for new tiers. The group agreed that the car would be a benefit to the tax district, since it would put off the need to purchase another more expensive vehicle for a few years. Catherine Borgia agreed to ask the Town attorney to work with Chief Lubin on the process for transferring the ownership of the vehicles as well as the insurance costs to the district once the fundraising is complete.

### **Performance Review**

Dr Seebacher asked Chief Lubin if he was able to discern any pattern when doing a scatter graph of the calls that exceeded the 8-min response time. Lubin responded that no apparent pattern was present. Seebacher reminded the committee that we were obligated to assess whether there was a geographic influencer to calls that had greater than 8 minutes response time. Lubin said that did not appear to be the case. He said that most of the calls that required greater than 8 minutes response time were due to volume at the time of the call: the ambulances were already dispatched at the time of the call, which

prolonged the response time to the later call. Chief Lubin reminded the group that the contract with OVAC requires less than 9-minute response 90% of the time, and that the actual statistics for the district was 97.75% of calls have response times shorter than 9 minutes. The committee agreed that the quality of response was very high.

### **Update on Possible Partnerships with Neighboring Municipalities**

The topic of response time and quality assurance lead to the final agenda item: continued discussion with Croton and Briarcliff regarding the possible expansion of the district. Richard Wishnie updated the group on the conversations with Croton, who is considering joining the Ambulance District because they are having difficulty getting their ambulances out for BLS calls. Chief Lubin made the case to the group that all areas in the Phelps service catchments would benefit from joining a single ambulance tax district. This would allow for more effective allocation of resources and reduce costs for all municipalities. Lubin also mentioned that call volume has gone up 17% from 2008, which he partially attributes to the aging population and the presence of new assisted living facilities in the service area. Due to this demographic trend, it behooves all municipalities to look for ways to provide BLS and ALS on a regional basis, Lubin advised. Wishnie concurred, stating that one of the goals of creating the district, and for the current plan to expand the geography of the district, was to make sure that needed services could be provided on a cost effective basis, while preserving and taking full advantage of the existing volunteer organizations. Wishnie said that we are in the perfect position in our region, since we already have the successful model of the ALS flycar agreement in place for 15 years. Wishnie updated the group on some of the questions Croton had about joining the district and said talks were continuing between himself, the Croton Village Manager and Mayor, and Jerry Faiella, who will consult for the ambulance district since he has retiring from his position of New Castle Town Manager. Lubin said that having OVAC personnel available to help Croton collect insurance claims would create an additional financial benefit to the community beyond the benefit accrued by sharing services. Wishnie described the arrangement as a win-win. He suggested that once discussions were concluded with Croton, that an IMA be drafted by the town attorney.

### **New Business**

Dr Seebacher recognized a member of the audience, John Flynn, an Ossining resident and professional fire chief in Yonkers. Mr. Flynn recommended that the Oversight committee help Croton officials by working with them to create public education and awareness of why this was a benefit to the Croton residents. He commented that Croton residents might feel they are losing a service rather than gaining a benefit, and the municipalities should work to educate the public on the benefits of the regional district.

Mr Flynn also commented that the contract with OVAC should be reviewed on a periodic basis and that the Oversight Committee should put out a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) for ambulances services, particularly once the district has expanded geographically. Trustee Donnelly agreed and stated that the municipalities understand the agreement with OVAC to be a business arrangement with a vendor; similar to any other vendor contract. If the vendor, OVAC, cannot provide the services at the best rate

and most effective manner, the contract will not be renewed. All Oversight committee members agreed.

Next, Dr. Seebacher entertained a question from Town Board member Peter Tripodi who requested information about how the paramedics whose salaries are paid by Ambulance District funds receive their health benefits. Chief Lubin explained that the 4 paramedics and 3 EMTs were employed full time by the district, even though they had part-time jobs elsewhere. Dr. Seebacher described why it was beneficial to have full time paramedics and EMTs, since the District can compel full-time employees to work in time of emergency. This will ensure the service area has sufficient coverage if there is a regional or county-wide emergency situation.

### **Next Meeting**

The committee agreed that the next meeting would take place on **Thursday, June 16, at 6 pm** in the first floor conference room at 16 Croton Avenue.

Richard Wishnie moved that the meeting be adjourned; Bill Hanauer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Informal conversation with audience members followed the adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Borgia  
Secretary, Ambulance Oversight Committee