



Lawrence County
EMERGENCY SERVICES

Date: September 2, 2025 | **Time:** 5:00-6:07 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners: Shane Eaton, Will Burnett, Delano Benefield, Steve Hagan, Phillip Heatherly, Barry Luffman, and Dave Ray. **County Attorney** Charlie Holt, **EMS Assistant Director** Kane Watkins, **County Fire & Rescue Coordinator** Tyler McDow, **Lawrenceburg Fire Chief** Jay Moore, and Anthony Washburn.

Commissioner Eaton called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL: Vice-chair Shane Eaton, Will Burnett, Steven Hagan, and Barry Luffman.

ABSENT: Chairman David Morgan.

PRAYER: Commissioner Ray.

- **Watkins** gave an EMS update (*packet available in the committee folder*). He discussed **EMS I MC**, the new ambulance billing company. Two policies to consider:
- **Small Balance Policy** – Do not invoice patients for a balance less than \$5? Use “Small Balance Adjustment”.
- **Refund Policy** – Do not issue refunds for \$19.99 or less to patients and commercial insurance, unless specifically requested?
- The committee discussed what numbers to set it at for both policies – setting them to similar numbers.

Approve Not to Invoice Patients for a Balance less than \$10 for the Small Balance Policy and to Make No Action on the Refund Policy.

Motion: Hagan. **Second:** Burnett.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously, 4/0.

- **Watkins** discussed the Medical Examiner/Morgue. He noted that the county does not currently have a facility to house decedents and has been using a room at STRHS Hospital. This arrangement has created legal issues, as corporate leadership has expressed concerns. In addition, state donor law takes effect once a decedent is brought into the hospital, which places additional responsibilities on hospital staff.

- **Watkins** reported that excess funds from the SAMHSA grant were used to purchase a morgue cooler, but a secure facility is still needed to house it and to provide a suitable space for family visitation. He added that Loretto Memorial Chapel has a cooler, which the county has been allowed to use in the past, and they have agreed to continue allowing its use, though space there is limited.
- **Commissioner Hagan** spoke to Loretto Memorial and they normally charge \$50 per corpse per day, would need to go to budget if we go this route.
- The committee discussed a feasible facility to house the morgue cooler but agreed that there are a few potential one but nothing currently so they may need to temporarily use Loretto Memorial Chapel's.

Recommend to Temporarily use Loretto Memorial Chapel's Morgue Space at a Rate of \$50 per Decedent per day, until a Suitable County Facility becomes Available to the Budget Committee.

Motion: Burnett. **Second:** Luffman.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously, 4/0.

- **Watkins** discussed the need to establish an Events Standby Policy for event standby coverage. Currently, if an ambulance is assigned to an event and receives a call, it must leave the event, resulting in no medical coverage on site. It was noted that many counties address this by charging for a dedicated ambulance and establishing a special event pay rate, which is higher than the employees' typical pay.
- **Watkins** reported that two agencies he consulted both charge \$100 per hour for a staffed ambulance, with paramedics earning \$40 per hour. This is something for the committee to consider moving forward. He also noted that most counties do not charge the school system for coverage at football games. At present, Lawrence County has only five ambulances available, which creates challenges in balancing event coverage with emergency response. *(A draft policy is available in the committee folder).*
- **Commissioner Eaton** suggested adopting policy as is and adjust it to \$150 an hour keeping the discretion with EMS Director.

Adopt the Lawrence County Ambulance Service to Provide Dedicated Ambulance Standby for Events and to Charge a Fee Not to Exceed One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00) Per Hour; and to Establish Policies and Procedures Including Discretionary Reductions or Waivers for Qualifying Nonprofit Applicants.

Motion: Hagan. **Second:** Burnett.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously, 4/0.

- **McDow** gave a brief update on County Fire & Rescue.
- **Commissioner Heatherly** brought up the land in Henryville for an EMS Sub Station to consider.

Recommend Accepting the Donation for Land for Replacement EMS Site to the Facilities Committee.

Motion: Hagan. **Second:** Luffman.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously, 4/0.

- **McDow** explained after reviewing with CTAS, it's clear our fire service is currently a nonprofit essentially applying for grants as 13 separate contracts, while most counties operate under one county-wide agreement. New state rules now reward counties that are unified, which means we can only apply as a single entity going forward.
- By moving to a county-wide structure, we'll not only streamline operations but also gain greater access to grants and programs. Nearly all of our stations are supportive of this shift, and it will position us for more opportunities and higher priority in funding.
- **Commissioner Eaton** added that adopting a county fire department would impact our maintenance of effort. He suggested waiting until a clear plan is developed before discussing what it would require.
- The committee agreed to have a CTAS representative come to the next Emergency Services Committee meeting in regards to adopting a county fire department.

Adjournment.

Motion: Burnett. **Second:** Luffman.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously 4/0.

Minutes Submitted By: Christian Tyree