



6-20-2023 Public Safety Committee
Meeting Attachment 1



6/20/2023

Franklin County Board Members,

As you are aware, my office has worked in conjunction with AMR over the past 90 days to conduct a trial period of adjusted minimum manning and utilization of ambulance services under our current emergency medical services and transportation agreement.

During the trial period, I observed an increase in instances where there were no ambulances available (Status 0), as well as instances where mutual aid was required to handle 911 calls. Additionally, unit utilization (the process that AMR uses to determine when they reserve an ambulance for 911 calls vs taking inter-facility transfers (IFTs)) was a subject of some debate between AMR and my office at times.

Mutual Aid / Status Zero Data from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office Communications Center:

March 21, 2023 – June 19, 2023

EMS Mutual Aid Requested: 13 times

Status Zero/No Ambulance Available: 108 times

After conducting several meetings and phone conversations, I clearly understand AMR's position and their request to formally amend their agreement with Franklin County. Increased expenses, corporate costs, management issues and staffing abilities have all played a role in bringing them to this decision point. The relationship between AMR and my office is solid, I feel we have a strong partnership, and I also feel that both sides have worked in good faith for months to try to reach amendment terms that we both could agree on.

Unfortunately, I cannot give a supporting recommendation for the terms proposed by AMR to become permanent for the remainder of the contract period. Although AMR has made a solid case for why they need the amendment; I feel the amendment will cause too great of an increase in risk of an ambulance not being available to the public in times of emergency.

The proposed amendment calls for fewer ambulances reserved for 911 responses than we have been afforded in all of our previous agreements over the past decade. Additionally, it also calls for the utilization of the 2nd 911 ambulance for local IFTs from Franklin Hospital. This equates to truly only having one ambulance reserved for nothing but 911 emergency response.

I clearly understand the need for all private ambulance services that do not receive a subsidy to do IFTs, because the revenue they receive for that work is needed to support the 911 responses that typically generate less revenue. However, the purpose of our agreement is to provide the citizens of Franklin County with 911 response service, not IFT services.



This issue is compounded by fact that we are forced to rely on a fragile mutual aid system to fill the gaps when the AMR ambulances are unavailable. We have two fire service based in-county mutual aid providers; however at times they are unavailable which forces us to then rely on out of county mutual aid. The response times for an out of county mutual aid ambulance is unacceptable for any major medical emergency. I acknowledge that the risk of needing out of county mutual aid cannot be completely eliminated regardless of who the county provider is. There are only a certain amount of ambulance resources in our region. Once those resources have been utilized, citizens are forced to wait for an ambulance to free up; or transport themselves to the hospital via personal vehicle.

I want to stress I feel that AMR has an excellent team of talented individuals who serve the people of Franklin County on a daily basis. In my opinions, we have some of the best EMTs and Paramedics in the industry working right here for AMR in Franklin County. The equipment they use is top notch and their quality of service is best in class. My lack of support for this permanent amendment has nothing to do their performance. The concern I am expressing lays solely in the minimum manning and utilization of the ambulances we would be provided if this is approved.

I am open to any additional discussions or options that AMR may present to the Board for consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ryan M. Buckingham'.

Ryan M. Buckingham
Director of Emergency Management