

Morgan County Commission & Ambulance Authority Meeting
April 7, 2016
7 pm in the Morgan County Commission Meeting Room

Members Present: Commissioner Bob Ford & Commissioner Joel Tuttle

Member Absent: President Brad Close

Also Present: Jody McClintock, County Administrator & Ginger Johnson, Commission Secretary

Morgan County Special Medical Services Board members Laura Breeden, Karen Cichocki, George Didawick, Carl Cowgill, Betty Mason and Ron Davis were also present to answer any questions from the public.

The Morgan County Commission held a public hearing to hear public comments regarding the proposed changes to the Morgan County Special Emergency Ambulance Service Fee Ordinance.

Commissioner Ford stated that he has been asked why the board isn't charging businesses an ambulance fee?

Karen Cichocki, Board Vice Chairman, explained that the board has been looking into ways to charge businesses. Ms. Cichocki explained that it isn't an easy process but the board is working on it but, unfortunately, it will not bring in the revenue needed to cover the expenses.

Some of the citizens that spoke and voiced their concerns are as follows:

Jerry Ortel- For classification purposes- what is the money being used for? Is Company 7 Ambulance Company a private business or are they contracted?

Commissioner Ford -Company 7 is a private non- profit 501 c3 organization.

Commissioner Tuttle stated that Yes, Company 7 is a private non -profit organization that is contracted by Morgan County.

Lori Kiley- I have questions about the construction of a new building? What happens if Company 7 builds a new building but the in the future, doesn't get the contract?

Commissioner Tuttle - if Company 7 builds a new building, its their building to pay for, the County doesn't own it and will have no part of it.

Lori Kiley- Why aren't you charging people who own just land and come here on weekends to camp? Why don't they have to pay?

Brenda Hutchinson- I have come in and reviewed the bids, all 366 pages in the bids. I have some questions regarding the bids,

1. The current building in Paw Paw has been paid for with the ambulance fee money.
2. I noticed a letter in the RFP from CNB committing funds to Company 7 to build a new building. We have a good building in Paw Paw, we have volunteers which have saved money. Why do we need a new building and why is CNB bank already committing funds?

George Didawick, Chairman of the Board explained that the board requested letters of credit for the RFP's proving that the organizations could build a new facility.

Brenda Hutchinson- When was the last audit done?

George Didawick- Company 7 had their own audit done, We did not see it.

Commissioner Ford responded and stated that starting July 1, 2016, Company 7 will have to show the board their audit per the contract.

Brenda Hutchinson- stated that she has went to the Assessor's office and has a list of businesses in the county, it wouldn't be that hard to charge the businesses a fee. Ms. Hutchinson explained that she is concerned once the fee is set at \$150, there is no going back and she is concerned about the senior citizens that can't afford it. Ms. Hutchinson further explained that Jefferson County charges a flat fee to businesses and also gives a 50% discount to their senior citizens depending on the Homestead Exemptions. Ms. Hutchinson requested the Board explore these possibilities before doubling the fee.

Ellen Lakwitz- Requests the Board look at Homestead Exemptions for future considerations.

Dennis Nord- I live in Beaver Dam Woods, I would like to know who owns the equipment and who is responsible for the maintenance of the equipment?

Commissioner Ford- Company 7 owns the equipment and is responsible for maintenance.

Angie Gray- I want to thank the board members for their hard work and I thank Paw Paw for helping and taking care of us. I have been hearing a lot about the 17 minute response time. I ask that you look at the areas with the most population and try to get service there, look at the community population and not just the area if you are planning to build a new center. I also hear we have a deficit of the \$75 fee not being paid. I didn't realize we had a choice not to pay.

Commissioner Ford- we are improving on getting our fees collected. We are at a 95% collection now.

Jim Kell- Mr. Kell presented a handout of information regarding the average social security benefit increase, national pay increases and average bank saving account interests. Mr. Kell explained that the average social security benefit increase is .73%, the average national pay increase is estimated to be 2.9%. Mr. Kell suggested the Board and County Commission raise the fee to \$100 with an annual increase of 3% per year.

Commissioner Ford explained if we don't raise the fees, we are looking at having 2 ambulances for the entire county come July 1, 2016. Commissioner Ford stated that we have a lack of Economic Development in this county and we are working with a deficit budget.

Vivian Graham- I remember years ago, the citizens got letters in the mail asking for donations. Why don't you do that anymore? People have drug their feet for years.

Jamie Cottle- My wife and I have a rental business, the wrong people are getting charged. There are people out there that are not paying this fee, how can you make it fair and bill everyone?

Commissioner Ford- stated that renters can get charged if the land lord includes the fee in their rent.

Alice Lance- Why aren't we billing the people that refuse services once called out? How many pieces of real estate is in Morgan County? Why don't you send every property owner a bill like the fire fee bills are distributed?

Russell Mokhiber- One way to get the needed revenue is to apply a \$100 fee to every real estate parcel. Right now you're applying the fee to residential structures only.

Why not apply the fees to every parcel? Did the board look at charging property parcels? Can't the county put a condition in the contract stipulating where to place the new facility?

Commissioner Tuttle answered that the plan is to try to get a central location where emergency services can get to 90% of the homes within an average of 17 min.

Trish Shunney- I would like to propose that rescue squad volunteers that have served more than five years with the rescue squad be exempt from the increase. You can call it a "volunteer exemption".

Commissioner Tuttle- I have had proposals given to me from fire fighters regarding fire fees too but its hard to do logistically. We appreciate all of our volunteers tremendously.

Kathleen Erickson- Can you try a pilot program and put volunteers in and try it out with new people.

George Didawick, Chairman of the Board- Just to be a volunteer EMT, you need at least 250 hours of training.

Franklin Strader- If the taxpayers money is going to be used to build a new building, then why wouldn't the taxpayers own the building. If the county keeps 6.5% of the fee, where is the money being spent and what on?

Laura Breeden, Board Administrator- the county uses the 6.5 % for billing, services, administration, etc.

Marvin Keener- You say the county doesn't have money, the people in this county won't allow economic growth, years ago, they stopped a Walmart from coming, then Dollar General wanted to come, people had a fit about that, now Tractor Supply wants to come, lets see how this goes. You want more money, bring jobs here so people don't have to drive 100 miles. I'm on a fixed income, you want to raise fees, put a cap on it.

The question was asked about how Hampshire County operates on a levy and asked why Morgan County doesn't do a levy?

Commissioner Ford answered we can't do a levy, Morgan County has a fee.

Commissioner Tuttle closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending the public hearing at 10:00 pm.

MORGAN COUNTY COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING ON INCREASING FEE

Meeting Date: 4-7-2016

NAME	Wish to speak Y/N below
Ellen Lachewitz	N
RICK WATSON	N
Betty M. Mason	MC Rescue Board
Renoa Stansbury	No
Merrin Keener	?
Rosalie Keener	No
Rodney Danni	?
Don Duck	
BOB DIGNAN	
Lricia Strader	
Frank Strader	
RON DAVIS	No
JERRY ORTEL	Yes ✓
LORI KILEY	YES ✓
THOMAS KILEY	No
Shirley Robinson	Yes ✓
Angelina Beltrami	No
GEORGE DICKAWICK	
Brenda Hutchinson	Yes ✓
Steven Hutchinson	No
Angela Gray	Yes ✓
Jim Kell	Yes ✓
Vivian Graham	Yes ✓
Dawn Beal	?
Josefa Van Mely	No
Jani Cobb	Maybe ✓
KARA COTTLE	No
Alice Smith	Maybe ✓
ANGELA PETRY	No
RUSSELL MOKHTAR	Yes ✓
Robert W. Keener	Maybe
Not Leg	No
Kate Shunney	No

