



Holland Charter Township

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Memorandum

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: Steve Bulhuis
DATE: April 12, 2024
SUBJECT: Changes to fire/primary medical response services

The Township for many years has enjoyed the services provided by the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) for the delivery of primary medical response. This service, commonly referred to as "Emergency Unit" or "E-Unit," is the first response to a call for medical assistance. Sheriff's deputies, who were certified paramedics, would respond to these medical calls with back up support provided by the Township's fire department personnel.

The Township was notified that the OCSD would be dissolving the E-Unit program and staff began the process of determining how primary medical response would be provided. In most communities, primary medical response is provided by the fire department. Staff, in consultation with the Fire Committee, began researching different models for delivering primary medical response through the fire department. A model was recommended, and endorsed by the Fire Committee, which makes changes to the fire department including:

- 1.) Staffing Fire Station #2 (James St.) 24 hrs. a day/7 days a week/365 days a year
- 2.) Hiring ten full-time employees (including six paramedics) who will be cross trained for both medical and fire-fighting responsibilities. These new hires will join two existing full-time employees.

With the inclusion of paramedics, the proposed changes will allow the Township to continue to provide the same level of primary medical response as provided today by the OCSD. Additionally, the fire department will retain its superb part-paid firefighters who will continue to play a vital role in meeting emergency needs.

Staff estimates the cost to implement the proposed changes to be between \$1.2M-1.3M. This would bring the fire department's annual budget to \$2.4M-2.5M. We are very fortunate that Chief Kohsel anticipated the changes being proposed and therefore most capital requirements needed to make this transition (sleeping accommodations at FS #2, vehicles, equipment, etc.) are already in place.

Staff is seeking your approval to proceed with the recommended service model, and related staffing requirements, as outlined above. A budget amendment to accommodate these changes will be brought in at a future date.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.