

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

CITY OF VIRGINIA, MINNESOTA, AUGUST 4, 2005

Special joint meeting of the City Council and Hospital Commission of the City of Virginia, Minnesota, was called to order by Vice Mayor Peterson at 5:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers, City Hall.

City Council:

Present: Councillors Baranzelli, Lindberg, Politano, Vice Mayor Peterson - 4

Absent: Councillors Raplinger, Lind, Mayor Luoma Gentilini - 3

Hospital Commission:

Present: Shelly Lindberg, Tom Teasck, John Beste, Sandy Wallin, Wendell Smith - 5

Absent: Pat Grahek; Paul Brinkman - 2

Vice Mayor Peterson stated the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the ambulance service with the Hospital Commission, as well as a possible joint ambulance purchase.

Hospital Commission President Lindberg stated an impasse has been reached with the purchase of a new ambulance, which is estimated to cost \$100,000. The last official action taken by the Hospital Commission was to turn the ambulance service back to the City of Virginia, in order to run the ambulance service more efficiently. The Hospital Commission has reviewed the ambulance replacement program and it has been determined that one must be purchased immediately, with a second one purchased shortly thereafter. The Virginia Regional Medical Center is currently struggling financially and, if they can partner with the City of Virginia, more options can be explored to serve the needs of the community.

Keith Harvey, VRMC Administrator, stated the largest expense for the ambulance service is the reimbursement to the City. Mr. Harvey also reviewed the years and mileage on the current ambulances: 1) 2000 ambulance -150,000 miles; 2) 2002 ambulance – 100,000 miles; 3) Rental ambulance - \$1200/month. The plan is to replace the rental ambulance first and then replace the 2000 ambulance. The 2002 ambulance would be replaced in the year 2007.

Public Safety Director Waldron recommended purchasing two new ambulances at this time.

Councillor Lindberg stated the City should move forward and purchase one ambulance and the hospital should purchase a second ambulance, if we are going to provide these services.

Hospital Commissioner Beste stated the ambulance license should be transferred to the City and the Hospital could be compensated for providing the billing services. He also stated it is not fair for taxpayers in Virginia to pick up the debt for the ambulance service, when the ambulance services the entire region. Hospital Commissioner Beste also stated other towns should be asked to provide funding for the ambulance service, which was outlined in the original plan.

Hospital Commissioner Teasck stated the ambulance license should go to the City and the Hospital could be compensated for the billing and training services.

Councillor Politano stated the condition of the current ambulances is a danger to the drivers, as well as patients.

Moved by Politano and supported to recommend that the City purchase one ambulance and the Hospital purchase one ambulance, as a one time deal, contingent upon the Finance Directors determining the funding and timelines for ordering. Motion carried.

Councillor Baranzelli asked if the money used to rent the ambulance could be used towards the purchase of a new ambulance. Darrell Knapper, Fire Department employee, stated he did not think that deal was still available.

Hospital Commission President Lindberg stated two ambulances need to be purchased at this time and a decision can be made on the ambulance license at a later date.

Hospital Administrator Harvey stated the Hospital did budget for the purchase of one ambulance and a suggestion was made to allow the City to participate in the funding of a new ambulance.

Councillor Lindberg stated the contribution of funds would show a leadership role for the City of Virginia, which would help when asking other cities to participate in funding the ambulance service.

Councillor Politano volunteered to be a part of the committee to approach the other cities for funding and recommended starting as of September 1, 2005.

Hospital Commissioner Wallin stated it would be difficult to ask other cities to support the ambulance service, if the City of Virginia denies the request.

Moved by Wallin and supported to recommend that the City purchase one ambulance and the Hospital purchase one ambulance, as a one time deal, contingent upon the Finance Directors determining the funding and timelines for ordering. Motion carried.

Darrell Knapper stated the ambulance situation is critical and a siren is currently not working on one ambulance. He also asked if the Hospital would still purchase one ambulance, if the City Council does not approving purchasing one. Mr. Knapper also stated the young employees at the Fire Department may not want to remain, if the City doesn't show support for the ambulance service.

Kevin Poffs, Fire Department Union President, thanked the City Council and Hospital Commission for their positive comments regarding the ambulance service.

Councillor Baranzelli stated Minntac contributed funds in the past to purchase ambulances and suggested approaching them once again. It was suggested that the mining companies could be approached when the other cities are approached for funding.

Moved by Lindberg and supported to adjourn at 5:45 P.M. Motion carried.