DOVER TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
Work Session Minutes
June 28, 2010

The Dover Township Board of Supervisors held a work session on Monday, June 28, 2010, which began at 6:00 PM in the Meeting Room of the Dover Township Municipal Building. Dover Township Supervisors present were Chairman Curtis Kann, Madelyn Shermeyer, Michael Husson, Duane Hull, and Monica Love. Laurel Wilson, Township Manager; and Dawn Slegel, Recording Secretary were also present. Peggy Durnin of the Dover Area Ambulance and several representatives from the York Hospital were in attendance at this work session.

The purpose of the work session was to discuss potential emergency ambulance service coverage in Dover from the Dover Area Ambulance with the assistance of Paramedics from York Hospital.

Manager Wilson reported that currently Medic 98 housed at the Dover Township Volunteer Fire Department consists of a Paramedic from York Hospital and a Paramedic from Memorial Hospital. York Hospital is proposing to terminate that lease and partner with the Dover Area Ambulance to provide basic life support services (BLS) as well as advance life support services (ALS). The main issue is that to make this option economically feasible, the Dover Ambulance needs to be first on the call boxes for all of the Dover area in order to pay for the Paramedic services from York Hospital. Currently, the Fire Chief is in charge of the call boxes and has determined that Medic 98, which would become Medic 102 without the York Hospital’s involvement would be the closest to the most populated area and should be the first due to an emergency call in that area of the Township.

Tony DeFelice, Administrative Director for Emergency Services from York Hospital, addressed the changes of emergency services in York County. He introduced the representatives present with him who were: Dr. Steven Schirk, who is the Attending Physician at York Hospital in the Emergency Department for nineteen years and he is also the Medical Director for the Advanced Life Support Entity Medic 97; Christina Ebert is the Emergency Services Manager and manages the entire Medic 97 operation including the EMS Academy. There were also two interns present, Phil and Kate.

He discussed the vision for their future of emergency services in the County and the benefits to the community as determined through their research. The current system being used in Dover Township is a double-tier system in which the BLS unit provided by the ambulance service has a chase model supplying ALS care through a partnering with the BLS transporting units. The single-tier system is believed to be more efficient. It is being used in several counties surrounding York. York Hospital will bring their experience, system, and resources to the ambulance companies in order to reach the quality of care people expect.
Ms. Ebert noted that many experts support this single-tier system of care. She explained that there is a failure point in the current system in which the 911 center has to determine whether to dispatch an ALS or a BLS unit to the emergency call, therefore a dispatcher is making a medical decision on what the patient needs. This point is where a potential for error may occur. The dispatcher does not have the medical training of a paramedic. The second failure element may occur when the BLS unit is dispatched and assesses the situation at which they may determine that an ALS Unit is actually needed. Then, a whole other response time is needed for the ALS Unit. These types of errors jeopardize patient care and may require the dispatch of a second unit to work a life-threatening call, tying up two units instead of one. Findings are that there is no substantive economic justification to not upgrade to an all ALS system such as the single-tier system proposed by York Hospital.

Mr. DeFelice stated that they will start working with the following ambulance companies: Grantley on July 1 and Jacobus on July 5. A proposal has also been made to the West York Ambulance Company. They are proposing that the Dover Ambulance becomes a licensed ALS provider. York Hospital would provide the Paramedic and many of the accompanying systems, such as medical direction which includes the performance improvement program, a quality assurance program, and the EMS Academy, and fifty hours of continuous training per year per provider and a 24/7 rotation of forty Paramedics. The Paramedics become part of the Dover Area Ambulance crew. Legally, the York Hospital must charge a fair market value for their incurred program services. It costs $208,000 per year for the 24/7 coverage of one Paramedic. In order for this program to get underway, Medic 98 would need to be dissolved. That crew from the York Hospital would service the Dover Area Ambulance. They recommended that Medic 102 (created by Memorial Hospital after dissolving Medic 98) would then take second due in this territory. Mutual aid would still be available from surrounding areas if necessary.

Ms. Ebert discussed the benefits of the single-tier system noting that Dover would be receiving a universally higher level of care for all patients from the time of the dispatched EMS unit with a BLS and ALS on each transport unit. This higher quality of care can be achieved at a relatively minimal upfront cost because the Dover Area Ambulance has the transport vehicles already in operation and York Hospital has the personnel to assist with the emergency calls. Also, there is the elimination of the failure points for a triage by 911 or the BLS unit. Overall, studies resulted in 11.7% of patients whose care was determined as non-emergency by dispatchers were upgraded or actually needed ALS care after the initial evaluation. Having a Paramedic on board of an ambulance for every single call provides a better service to the community. Also, having the EMT basics (BLS provider) working together with the Paramedics (ALS provider) establishes a built-in career advancement system. This service benefits the community in that they are receiving the highest level of care on every call and they will only receive one bill for services instead of two bills. This step will help in becoming a more efficient county-wide system.

A question/answer session was conducted with the Board.

Chair Kann asked the total number of Paramedics being proposed.
Mr. DeFelice replied that there will be a provider on duty 24/7. Dover Area Ambulance must decide the number of shifts to run during the day. York Hospital will offer anywhere from 8 to 24 hour shifts.

Supervisor Shermeyer inquired about the job loss of EMTs from the ambulance because of the addition of Paramedics.

Ms. Durnin responded that they have already cut back to six EMT’s on staff and are currently at the proper level of employees.

Supervisor Husson added that the part-time employees would receive less hours of which most of them already have full-time jobs.

Supervisor Shermeyer questioned the future direction if this whole operation would not work.

Mr. DeFelice replied that they will be involved in various aspects of the operation and will see what’s coming. Financial drawbacks will be seen months in advance and handled in some way. There are other ALS providers who can provide the same service. York County will be changing their emergency services in the future to be structured in a more collaborative way.

Supervisor Shermeyer commented that she is concerned primarily about the emergency care of the Township residents. She does not care whether the Township uses the services of York Hospital or Memorial Hospital ALS units to respond.

Mr. DeFelice stated that looking in the future, the borders will be removed. 911 will move the ambulances to where they need to go.

Supervisor Hull questioned the venture into a financial endeavor with the hospitals.

Mr. DeFelice responded that they are locked into charges from the financial aspect because of entering into a contract with a specific entity. Legally, they cannot charge less than it costs them. The Dover Area Ambulance will be able to bill insurance companies for an ALS billing.

Supervisor Husson explained that the ALS bill will be absorbed in the ambulance subscription instead of receiving a second bill for the ALS unit dispatched.

Supervisor Hull inquired as to what transpired between York Hospital and Memorial Hospital.

Mr. DeFelice replied that York Hospital is supporting the single-tier system. They are not the only provider of ALS services. There are others soliciting proposals.

Supervisor Hull asked about the building of the new Memorial Hospital and its bearing on the proximity of emergency services.
Mr. DeFelice answered that the EMS Act stipulates that it is patient preference first, then clinical need. York Hospital is a Level 1 trauma center. If it is a trauma, it has to go to York Hospital. It does not have any bearing on the pre-hospital care. They will go to the closest hospital facility.

Ms. Durnin commented that Medic 102 (Memorial Hospital) has never proposed an offer to the Dover Area Ambulance.

Manager Wilson reported that she has received a letter from Memorial Hospital stating that they will remain located at the Dover Township Volunteer Fire Department.

Supervisor Love questioned whether an either/or decision has to be made on the call boxes.

Ms. Durnin responded affirmatively.

Supervisor Husson commented that the Dover Area Ambulance is centrally located. They respond to an emergency call within two to three minutes. They have received numerous complaints about the double bills. He believes that it is not financially feasible to have two Paramedics from two hospitals responding to one call. He also asked whether the Board has the authority to direct the Fire Chief on the call box assignments.

Manager Wilson stated that the Township Supervisors have the authority under the Second Class Township Code to designate fire and emergency services within the Township which may include the call boxes. They may accept the recommendation from the Fire Chief on the call box assignments.

Supervisor Shermeyer acknowledged that the Board of Supervisors has never assigned call boxes in her tenure on the Board nor does she feel qualified to take that responsibility on setting up the call boxes.

Chair Kann thanked the visitors for their attendance.

Chair Kann closed the work session at 7:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted by: ________________________________

Dawn D. Slegel, Secretary