

# MEET THE COMMITTEE



Members of the EMS Study Committee are from all areas of Hamilton County and have expertise necessary to evaluate our community's needs.

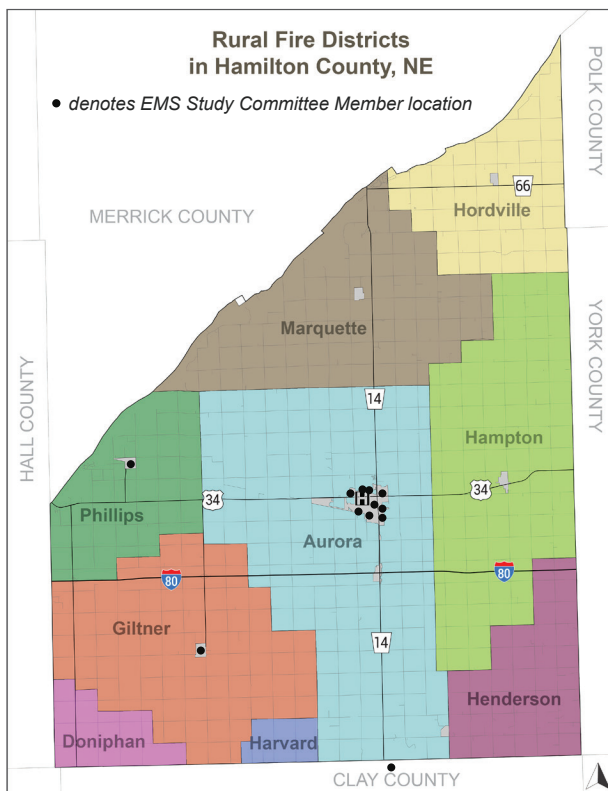
- County-wide EMS and hospital experts participated
- County-wide fire and rescue experts participated
- Law enforcement and city officials participated

The committee has made recommendations to the City of Aurora based on a super majority consensus of members.

- High-quality care and service is the ultimate priority for all Hamilton County citizens.

The health and safety of our neighbors is the first priority of committee members.

- A city-owned, fire-based service provides the best possible option for local control and public accountability.



*The EMS Study Committee's objective is for the City of Aurora, Hamilton County, and Memorial Community Health to work together to complete and provide a feasibility study for a fire-based EMS option intended to include an Advanced Life Support (ALS) service for all citizens in Hamilton County.*

## Members of the EMS Study Committee



**Bradley Consbruck**  
Giltner

- Chief, Giltner Fire Department
- Member of Giltner Fire Department for 10 years
- Giltner area farmer



**Jennie Kuehner**  
Aurora

- Attorney
- Memorial Community Health, Board Director



**Brent Dethlefs**  
Aurora

- HCAS Interim Director
- Paramedic
- Moved to Aurora in 2004
- Worked for Ravenna Volunteer Fire Department's BLS service



**Kirk Handrup**  
Aurora

- Hamilton County Sheriff
- 34-year county employee



**Dave Long**  
Aurora

- Mayor of Aurora
- Retired school teacher



**Lindy Mosel**  
Aurora

- Director of Nursing, Memorial Community Health
- Registered Nurse



**Diane Keller**  
Rural

- CEO, Memorial Community Health
- 46-year career at MCHI, passionately serving Hamilton County and surrounding area for entire adult life



**Nancy Lohrmeyer\***  
Aurora

- Native of Aurora
- Aurora City Council Member (Ward 2)
- Insurance service provider

*\*served as alternate for Dottie Anderson*



**Richard Phillips**  
Aurora

- Retired, U.S. Postal Service
- Aurora City Council Member (Ward 2)



**Paul Graham**  
Aurora

- Aurora graduate
- 22 years in the military, retired
- 24.5 years with Aurora Police Department, current Police Chief



**Dottie Anderson**  
Aurora

- Aurora City Council Member (Ward 3)



**Robert Marlatt**  
Aurora

- Aurora Rural Fire District President
- Former Juvenile Parole Officer
- Farmer



**Eric (Rick) Melcher**  
Aurora

- Aurora City Administrator
- 36 years in public service industry
- Nebraska One Call Board of Directors



**Tom Cox**  
Aurora

- City of Aurora Fire Department Chief
- Local family business owner



**Jason Fry**  
Phillips

- Chief, Phillips Fire Department
- Works at Crescent Electric Supply in Grand Island



**Wayne Roblee**  
Aurora

- Aurora City Council Member (Ward 1)
- President & CEO of International Sensor Systems

Kurt Johnson, co-publisher of the *Aurora News-Register*, also attended the meetings, and provided news coverage of the EMS Committee meetings.

# STUDY PROCESS



City officials responded to citizen requests to examine a city owned, fire-based EMS option.

### City initiates study of fire-based EMS

■ Melcher, Long explain how committee will be formed in search of solution

By Travis Blase

After a decision was made by Hamilton County commissioners Jan. 2 to discontinue ownership and management of the county's emergency medical services as of Oct. 1, city leaders voted last week to pursue their own study of a fire-based ambulance service.

City Administrator Rick Melcher and Mayor Dave Long explained the initial intentions of the study, which will be focused on how Aurora might merge the ambulance service into the city's volunteer fire department.

"Our focus is fire-based and that's all we want to study," Long stated. "We're not saying it's the answer, but it's the one that we want to study. If another group wants to pursue another one, fine, but then we'll have a hard time looking at it with specific costs."

The city's fire-based study will begin with a committee now being established, but not one that the city plans on organizing itself. According to Melcher, they hope an initial combination of city, county and hospital officials can begin hand-picking individuals to fill out the committee. Both entities have been invited to participate, though their involvement had not been confirmed as of this writing.

"I think the thought of the city council right now is that the people who would be involved are those who would be more involved with not just emergency medical responders themselves," Melcher said. "People choosing these people are not going to be the city, but the group of individuals who

(See STUDY, A1)

January 18, 2018

### City begins study on fire-based EMS plan

■ Long says goal to be complete by Oct. 1

By Travis Blase

City leaders reported this week that a committee has been assembled to look into the possibility of combining the Aurora Volunteer Fire Department with the county ambulance service.

Knowing that the county's role as owner-manager of the local EMS service is set to end Oct. 1, Mayor Dave Long said discussions have begun with hopes and expectations that a new plan will be ready before October.

"We've had our first meeting in relation to emergency medical services," Long said. "We formed a committee that I'm going to refer to as the Emergency Medical Services Committee. This committee was formed by individual institutions that picked the members on it."

Long and other city officials went directly to groups they thought would be connected to the emergency services like Memorial Community Health, Hamilton County Sheriff, Aurora Police Department and representatives of villages within Hamilton County.

Those in attendance at the first meeting included Long, city administrator Rick Melcher, city council members Dick Phillips, Denise Anderson and Wayne Rubner, Aurora police chief Paul Graham, and Rob Martin representing the Emergency Medical Services

(See CITY, A1)

February 21, 2018

### City's EMS study focus shifts to jurisdiction, possible partnerships

■ Staffing levels, handling of transfers on Monday agenda

By Kurt Johnson

The Aurora EMS Study Committee discussed the need to define the service jurisdiction as a fire-based ambulance system might serve as well as potential partnerships needed to reach that goal during its hour-long meeting Thursday.

Facilities Services staff asked some baseline questions of the group, explaining that the options discussed will help build a report expected by the end of August.

"Each agenda will cover a major topic," said Wolf, a community engagement director with RJO Consulting. "What we're doing with the presenters is making information and questions, they will be answered at a future meeting and will be fully addressed in the study. So we're kind of writing this in real time here. It may seem like a recent meeting right now, but by the time we're done with these meetings you can step back and see a portrait there."

Thursday's agenda started with a conversation on whether the goal is to continue providing countywide EMS service.

"As you look at fire-based EMS service, the question becomes are you going to try to service the whole county or just Aurora and what kind of partnerships do you need if you are going to serve outside just the city area?" Wolf said.

Rick Melcher, Aurora city administrator, said he believes the goal is to keep the service similar to what it is currently, with incidents throughout the county knowing they have access to advanced life support services when they dial 911.

"That's the best-case scenario," added Aurora City Councilman Dick Phillips.

"That depends on what the county is going to do. If the county doesn't participate and donate money, then that leaves us to look at different opportunities."

"Right now our emergency medical system covers the entire county, so they are set up to do that very well," Mayor Dave Long continued. "We have relationships with the smaller communities where they help each other and we need to keep that type of set-up. That's very important. The relationship with the rural fire ambulance people, we have to have that."

Aurora Fire Chief Tom Cox noted that the existing ambulance service responds to every call in the county, regardless of what fire district the call comes from. County commissioners voted earlier this year to end ownership and management of that service effective Oct. 1, which is what prompted the city to initiate the study of a fire-based service.

(See EMS STUDY, A1)

April 18, 2018

Images courtesy of Aurora News-Register

Independent experts gave presentations, and committee members conducted site visits to peer cities.

## Topic Area

- SAFER Grant
- EMS Billing Services
- Staffing and Scheduling
- Facilities and Equipment

## Peer Cities/Peer Services

- York, NE
- Nebraska City, NE
- Crete, NE
- Howard County, NE

EMS Study Committee members completed an exhaustive review process of all aspects of operating an EMS service.

- Revenue generating opportunities to reduce taxpayer subsidy
- Proper staffing levels and keeping our local dedicated staff on board
- Maximizing use of equipment and facilities to maintain top-quality and responsive EMS service

## EMS Study Committee Meetings

	Date	Topic
1	02-05-18	Committee Objectives and Priorities
2	02-19-18	York Fire and Rescue, Current HCAS Operations
3	03-07-18	Licensing Requirements , Grant Funding Opportunities
4	03-26-18	Distribution and Types of EMS Calls
5	4-12-18	Service Area and Partnerships
6	4-23-18	On-Duty Calls and Transfers
7	05-08-18	Equipment and Facilities
8	05-24-18	Staffing
9	06-06-18	Billing Services
10	06-19-18	Budget and Operational costs

## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations are based on the supermajority consensus of committee members.

The committee found a way to more effectively operate an EMS service that brings in more private dollars to underwrite a top-quality service.

Committee members did not want to compromise the health and safety of Hamilton County residents in any way.

### Recommendations of the EMS Study Committee

1. Pursue a license from the State of Nebraska to operate a fire-based EMS.
2. Apply for eligible grants for equipment, personnel, and other operational costs of running an EMS.
3. Create an EMS operation that can handle up to 950 calls per year.
4. Actively pursue more transfers than is currently being handled by Hamilton County.
5. Have a staff of one full-time director, eight paramedics, and target a part-time staff of 10 that are qualified at minimum as EMTs.
6. Initially continue using EMS Billing Services as the billing service provider, but continuously evaluate other competitive options.
7. Consider creating a temporary living quarters for full- and part-time staff while on shift at the existing EMS building or at a nearby location to decrease response times and maximize the recruitment and retention of full time employees.
8. Consider billing for standby services at public events, not sponsored by the City of Aurora.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR CITY-OWNED, FIRE-BASED EMS 2018-2019		
ACCOUNT#	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED
10-110-5000	SALARIES	\$650,000.00
10-110-5001	PAYROLL TAX EXP (S.S.)	\$52,000.00
10-110-5003	WORKMANS COMPENSATION	\$25,090.00
10-110-5004	HEALTH/VISION/LIFE/DENTAL	\$154,700.00
10-110-5005	PENSION	\$52,000.00
10-110-5006	UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION	\$202.00
10-110-5500	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$4,000.00
10-110-5501	COMPUTER SOFTWARE	\$2,000.00
10-110-5502	AMBULANCE SUPPLIES	\$19,000.00
10-110-5503	BOOKS & MAGAZINES	\$200.00
10-110-5504	FUEL	\$18,000.00
10-110-5505	Oil & GREASE	\$500.00
10-110-5506	TIRES/TIRE REPAIR	\$5,000.00
10-110-5600	MAINT. & REPAIRS-PARTS	\$500.00
10-110-5620	BUILDING & GROUNDS-MATERIALS	\$5,000.00
10-110-5700	UNIFORMS/SAFETY CLOTHING	\$5,200.00
10-110-6015	CONTRACT LABOR-MEDICAL BILLING SERVICES	\$50,000.00
10-110-6030	INSURANCE	\$8,000.00
10-110-6032	EMPLOYEE BONDS	\$100.00
10-110-6100	TELEPHONE	\$6,300.00
10-110-6101	ELECTRICITY-OFFICES	\$2,000.00
10-110-6110	NATURAL GAS	\$1,500.00
10-110-6200	POSTAGE	\$500.00
10-110-6210	ADVERTISING	\$500.00
10-110-6211	PRINTING	\$400.00
10-110-6300	VEHICLE/EQUIP REPAIRS	\$6,000.00
10-110-6310	BLDG REPAIRS & MAINT	\$3,000.00
10-110-6315	OTHER REPAIRS & MAINT.	\$3,000.00
10-110-6316	RADIO MAINTENANCE	\$2,000.00
10-110-6319	COMMUNITY PUBLICITY	\$1,000.00
10-110-6400	EDUCATION/CONVENTIONS	\$6,000.00
10-110-6401	TRAVEL	\$1,000.00
10-110-6410	DUES/LICENSES	\$1,000.00
10-110-6900	MISCELLANEOUS	\$1,000.00
	OPERATING EXPENSES TOTAL	\$1,086,692.00
10-110-7010	BUILDINGS & GROUNDS	\$25,000.00
10-110-7100	OTHER IMPROVEMENTS	
	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TOTAL	\$25,000.00
10-110-7200	VEHICLES	\$50,000.00
10-110-7300	EQUIPMENT	\$6,000.00
10-110-7400	OFFICE EQUIPMENT/COMPUTER	\$5,000.00
	OTHER CAPITAL OUTLAY TOTAL	\$ 61,000.00
10-110-9500	TRANSFER TO OTHER FUNDS	
	OTHER TOTAL	
	<b>PUBLIC SAFETY POLICE\FIRE TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,172,692.00</b>
	TOTAL PROPOSED REVENUES	\$570,000.00
	TOTAL PROPOSED EXPENSES	\$1,172,692.00
	BALANCE FORWARD	(\$602,692.00)

# CONCERNS WITH PRIVATE SERVICE OPTIONS



## EMS CITIZEN STUDY GROUP FINAL REPORT

The 2017 EMS Citizen Study Group Final Report does not provide certainty on the quality or level of EMS service Hamilton County residents will receive.

The 2017 EMS Citizen Study Group Final Report did not adequately compare itself with peer cities.

- Why did peer cities studied by Aurora's EMS committee drop their private sector EMS providers and go back to public provided EMS service?

The report does not make clear what happens to our publicly funded ambulances.

- Are Hamilton County residents being asked to provide corporate welfare to a private service by giving away our ambulances?

**All of the peer cities reviewed by the Aurora EMS Study Committee have abandoned the use of private ambulance service providers and reverted back to a public EMS service model.**

## RESCUE 28, INC. PROPOSAL

Rescue 28, Inc. has only been incorporated for one month and has no track record.

- Rescue 28, Inc. has no principal address on file with the Nebraska Secretary of State.
- Rescue 28, Inc. has no known clients, no known staff, no known EMS equipment, and no known experience in operating an ambulance service.

Rescue 28, Inc. proposes to cut current EMS staffing by more than half and reduce overall response service.

- Proposal reduces EMS staff from 9 to 4 professionals.
- Proposal reduces average annual call responses from 750 to 575 per year.
- Proposal eliminates stand-by services for school and community events.
- Proposal underfunds future equipment needs.

Rescue 28, Inc. seeks a taxpayer subsidy to operate in order to guarantee a profit for its investors.

- The proposal demands that its contract be renegotiated every year.