

The Richlands Town Council held a Public Hearing on the EMS Billing in the Richlands Council Chambers on June 10, 2014 at 7:00 pm with the following present:

Mayor: Jannis White  
Town Manager: Tim Taylor  
Town Clerk: Susan Whitt  
Town Attorney: Brad Ratliff  
Council Members: Joe McCracken, Rod Cury,  
Doug Ratliff, Mary Ann Strong, Larry Johnson  
Absent: Frances Meadows

Mayor White called the meeting to order and deferred to Brad Ratliff, Town Attorney.

Brad Ratliff said the purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive public comments to consider billing rates for emergency medical services delivery. As each of you are aware, our Town provides EMS Services. The new Ordinance has introduced specific rates for delivery of these services. This is so that we have some sense of what these rates actually are. Historically, we have not had a standardized rate, and this particular Ordinance establishes uniform billing standards for all EMS services delivered by the Town, for the town residents as well as residents outside town limits.

He advised that the rates that are being proposed are for basic life support (BLS) \$495.00; for advance life support, level 1 (ALS1) \$825; for advanced life support, level 2 (ALS2) \$925.00; and Ground Transport Mileage (GTM) \$16.00 per mile.

Mayor White asks if there are any public comments. Hearing none, she asked Council if they had any questions.

Rod Cury asked about Section E, Page 2, Number 1-having to do with a person being found to be indigent and Section E, page 2, Number 3, persons who demonstrate financial hardship in accordance with administrative policies established by the Town Manager.

Tim Taylor spoke to those questions and said the policies were established to ease the issues caused to the staff to have to decide things like that. If Council would like to establish a policy on those services, we would seek advice from people who deal with demographics of those type of people that can't pay their bills as established by either the Federal or State Government and let them help us develop those and then get Council to adopt them. That way the Town Manager is not acting in that type of authority nor does staff have to make decisions on their own. That gives a better feel for balance and we can use more expert people to help us establish those policies based on the way things are in that industry. Once those are established, they can go ahead and adopt them and we will enforce them. He said he would rather he or his staff did not adopt or establish any policies. You don't want people coming into these meetings and airing those things out in public that are sometimes very private.

Brad Ratliff added the goal for that element was to provide Council with some checks and balances. There has been discussion about how things are handled with indigent population, with folks who can't pay. Councilman McCracken in particular raised that issue several times in concern about whether a person can or cannot pay and so that would allow us flexibility to determine what category of the population of people are going to fall into that category and finding some alternative means to do that, we can edit the Ordinance to adopt indigence guidelines to go by. The Dept. of Social Services guidelines would be a good example. Mr. Taylor said for fuel and cooling assistance, we have those policies faxed to us before we begin participating in those programs. There are employment guidelines, how much people can make and family size, etc. If you could modify that, it would help us to establish those.

Larry Johnson asked if there was already something on file for the electrical. Mr. Taylor said that electrical is a little different because it's more of a policy that council had adopted; it has been established for a long time. It is not based on income. We don't ever forgive those rates, we really can't. This is different, these are fees. It would be easier to establish those. If you base it on a demographic variable then you don't have to go back and do it every year. If you don't like them then you can change them. But once they are adopted, whoever does it, it gives us a better policy. You need to remove as much grey area as you can, unless it is a special situation.

Rod said he didn't want to put the Town Manager, the Mayor or the Council in a place of determining who is indigent and who isn't. I know that I am not qualified to do that.

Tim Taylor asked Brad if the rates were the same as the ones we had previously. Brad said these rates were developed in conjunction with Mr. Russ and are just slightly modified.

Mayor White asked for any further comments. Hearing none, Mayor White asked for a Motion to Adjourn the Hearing. Rod Cury made the Motion, seconded by Doug Ratliff. All in favor, 5/0. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.

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Jannis White, Mayor

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Susan Whitt, Clerk