

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's **Black & White** and **Read** all over

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 | 8 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 96



www.pencitycurrent.com

County balks at panel direction

AMBULANCE: Supervisors vote 3-2 to table ambulance service recommendation

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

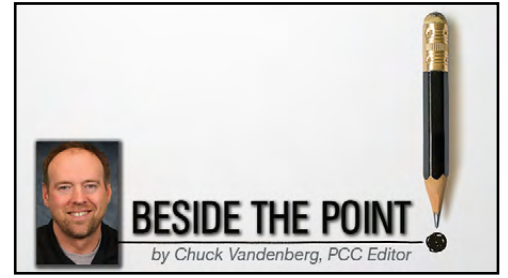
LEE COUNTY – Lee County Supervisors voted 3-2 in a special Saturday meeting to table a recommendation from a panel to hire a Dallas-based ambulance service.

With just over seven weeks left in the county's current contract with Lee County EMS, the special meeting was called by Supervisor Chairman Ron Fedler after a panel voted 6-2 with an abstention to use American Medical Response out of Dallas, Texas on Friday.

Lee County EMS Ambulance declined to sign a new contract with the county when funds began to dry up in February, after indicating in January the company would need \$500,000 in 2020-21. That figure at the time was \$70,000 more than the 2019-20 contract.

When Lee County EMS balked at another contract, the county informally went out for proposals. Lee County EMS then submitted a new proposal asking for \$950,000 in the next budget year beginning July 1, to continue the service.

See AMR, page 8



Ambulance debates leave many questions

If you haven't been paying attention to the recent scramble for the county to find an ambulance provider, you're missing out.

We're all suffering from cabin fever, and this is better than anything Netflix can offer. It's better than working up a new brownie recipe or redoing your bathroom.

And... it's an imperative, emotional issue that has the ability to impact every single life in Lee County.

So for those of you binge watching Ozark, or whatever, here it is in a nutshell. We'll try to be brief.

Lee County EMS is in financial trouble and they wanna double what they had last year in a subsidy from the county. The county says WHAAT?? we don't have that kind of money, let's see if Fort Madison and Keokuk can help.

The cities jump in and feverishly race around trying to see what a shared program looks like, in the meantime, some committee has evolved that offered up the service to anyone as long as they can get a proposal in by April 30.

In comes ambulance super-power American Medical Response undercutting Lee County EMS by about \$450,000. The cities come in and they want \$1.8 million combined and Fort Madison's gonna take out a loan for \$1 million to buy rigs and equipment.

The county says WHAAT??!! No way. The committee's gonna bring AMR in for some questions, they had the most professional proposal and the best price, said Dr. Phillip Caropreso. After the committee interview of AMR, the committee's split on AMR's intentions, but votes 6-2 'reluctantly' basically because there's no time left. Caropreso, who advocated first for Lee County EMS, then did an about-

See SERVICE, page 7



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Construction workers continue working the subsurface of Avenue H/Bus. 61 in Fort Madison Saturday morning. The site regularly draws locals and historians to the work being done with the Old Fort in the background.

PODCAST

2019 FMHS grad Hayes building YouTube audience

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Being tucked into homes during the pandemic has generated a little jewel over the Internet out of Montrose.

Sam Hayes, a 2019 graduate of Fort Madison High School, started the podcast 'The Samuel Hayes Show' on YouTube and is starting to make a name for himself – 30 minutes at a time.

Hayes has just started getting the podcast going with seven episodes, but has had some well-known locals and

others from around the state to talk about a variety of issues.

He said the idea was born out of making past YouTube videos and building a small audience. After working for a national political campaign, Hayes said the show seemed like the next logical step.

"It kind of goes a little further back to the political campaign. I started doing YouTube videos six or seven months ago, but I wanted to amp that up a bit. And podcasts are kinda in right now," Hayes said.

He said that's just one reason for the endeavor, but he

See HAYES, page 2

INDEX

Business Directory.....Ps.5-6
CLASSIFIEDS.....Ps.5-6
Fort Colony Family Restaurant.....P.2
Fort Madison Community Hospital.....P.7
Fort Madison Family YMCA.....P.2
FROM THE FRONT.....Ps.2,7-8
Fullenkamp Insurance.....P.7
Great River Regional Waste Authority.....P.3

LCK Roofing.....P.2
Lee County Health Department.....P.4
LEE COUNTY NEWS.....P.8
LOCAL NEWS.....P.2
Nancy Amos for Iowa Senate.....P.2
OBITUARIES.....P.3
• Frances E. Holmes, 93
• Robert A. Schneider, 86

OPINION.....P.7
Pen City Current.....Ps.3,6
Pilot Grove Savings Bank.....P.8
Public Notices.....Ps.5-6
Rashid Pharmacy & Wellness.....P.2
Ron Davoo.....P.8
Tony Keefe for District 1
Board of Supervisors.....P.7

WEATHER

TUE 12 May.....Broken Clouds, 56.9° F/ 45.3° F
WED 13 May.....Heavy Rain, 59.5° F/ 49.7° F
THU 14 May.....Moderate Intensity Rain, 69.3° F/ 60.9° F

IOWA LOTTERY

PICK 3 05/10 MIDDAY.....933
PICK 3 05/10 EVENING.....319
PICK 4 05/10 MIDDAY.....3393
PICK 4 05/10 EVENING.....3311

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From the Front

Hayes uses pandemic shutdown to build program

HAYES - Continued from Page 1

said the bigger reason is that he's very outgoing and the impact of the pandemic, and it's social distancing, has been hard on him

"I'm an extrovert and like being around people. I'm always out trying to learn things, and the coronavirus has made that tough," he said.

"But this is me, and my questions, and I genuinely wanna always be learning and growing and this is a good way to

keep doing that," he said.

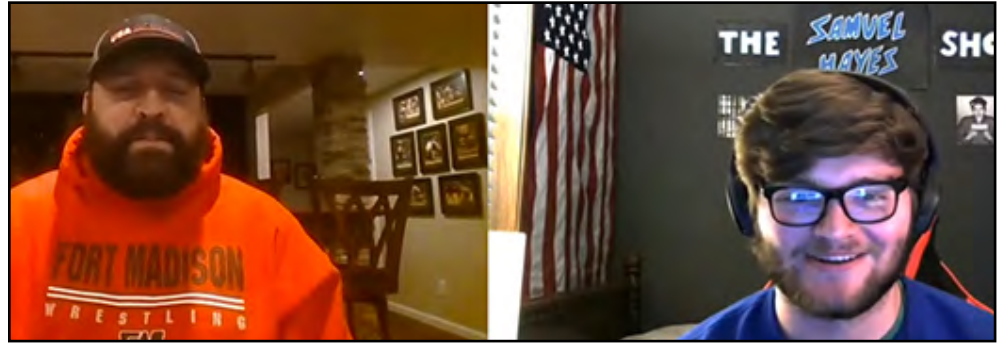
Hayes has built a subscription base of about 500 on his YouTube Channel which can be found at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBD1npgWQ1vKX2x-RqUflclg>

The subscription is a free subscription and provides access to all the episodes of the podcast and some additional YouTube work he's done.

Hayes has had several current and former local

FMHS coaches as well as others including an Iowa dentist, and family members. The conversations are raw and informative and Hayes has a comfort in front of the camera.

But he doesn't want to box himself in with coaches and sports-themed shows. Hayes was a state top-ten wrestler for several years, but was hampered by back and shoulder injuries. He was a favorite at the 2019 tournament, but a shoulder separation in his second match ended his senior year run, despite a heroic effort to get back on the mat and wrestle through it. Hayes



also played football for the Hounds.

Although sports is in his wheelhouse, Hayes wants local experts in all fields.

"Literally, anyone who is an expert in their field I want on the show. I find learning to be fascinating and I want as many people as I can talking about all kinds of topics."

He said podcasts are more of a generation-

al thing and he's been around tech most of his life. There wasn't much of an investment other than time and some hardware, Hayes said would have had to purchase for college anyway. He's studying to become a teacher and coach.

"It's super simple to do. Nowadays you just pop up a program and you're good to go," he said. "I had to buy some editing software but there wasn't too much money involved, I think about \$40 and then a computer I would have needed for school anyway."

He said he's had great support from guests he's wanted on the show and said he was a little surprised by that.

"For the most part, believe it or not, most people, if you reach out and ask, are willing to do it. I've got about five or six lined up already for additional shows."

Some of those include a dietician, a chiropractor, and former FMHS teacher Andrew Troxel, who's now living in Wisconsin and coaching at his alma mater.

Hayes is doing shows about every two to three days and has six already on his YouTube page that are archived where listeners can listen to one after another.

You can also find the videos and see more on Hayes efforts at his Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/sam.hayes.94043>

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PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

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Founded in 2016
 P.O. Box 366 | Fort Madison, IA

Obituaries/Local News

OBITUARIES

ROBERT A. SCHNEIDER

Robert Andrew Schneider, 86, of rural Fort Madison, Iowa, passed away at 7:27 a.m. Tuesday, May 5, 2020, at his home.

The son of George William and Marie Theresa (Kirchner) Schneider. On June 29, 1968, he married Marilyn Jo Hamilton at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in West Point, Iowa.



SCHNEIDER

Survivors include his wife: Marilyn; six children: Rose (Brad) Hills of Fort Madison, Iowa, Roger (Sonja) Schneider of West Point, Iowa, Anita (James) Hatfield of Fort Madison, Iowa, Andy (Amanda) Schneider of Monmouth, Illinois, Steve (Heather) Schneider of Unionville, Missouri and Shelly Schneider (Mac) of Donnellson, Iowa; ten grandchildren: Kayla Hills, Reann, Breann & Tristin Schneider, Stephanie (David) Corns, Dominic Destiny, Daelynn Schneider, Cody Schneider & Clayton Geerdes; one great grandchild: Aneira Corns and one brother: James J. (Suki) Schneider of Burlington, Iowa.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one brother: George H. Schneider and two sisters: Beulah M. Kovac and Marietta M. Pranger.

Bob was a graduate of St. Mary's High School in West Point. He served as a SP3 in the United States Army, where he was stationed in the Yokohama Barracks in Japan, he also served in the United States National Guard. He was a member of St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic, Prairie Farms, FFA, 4-H and was a DHIA board member.

A private family service will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2020, at Schmitz Funeral Home in West Point with Father Dennis Hoffman officiating.

Burial will be at Calvary Cemetery in West Point.

A memorial has been established in his memory for St. Mary's Catholic Church, Lee County Hospice or West Point Fire & Rescue and can be mailed to the family at: Schmitz Funeral Home, P.O. Box 22, West Point, Iowa 52656.

Schmitz Funeral Home of West Point is assisting the family with the arrangements. Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com.



OBITUARIES

FRANCES E. HOLMES

Francis E. Holmes, age 93 also known as Grandpa #79, of Montrose, passed away on Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 10:44 AM at the Madison.

He was born on January 9, 1927 to Hazel Holmes. On January 2, 1946 he married Georgetta Kempker. She passed away on March 18, 1980. He then married Marcella Menke Kempker on June 12, 1981 in Mesa, AZ. She passed away on January 4, 2011. Francis was in sales and owned a used furniture store. He served in the US Navy during WWII on the Gayety ship. He enjoyed fishing, tinkering, going to auctions and he could strike up a conversation with anyone with his gift to gab.



HOLMES

Survivors include seven children, Dave (Luci) Holmes of Mesa, AZ, Debbie (Chuck) Thompson of Montrose, Shawn Holmes of West Point, Jim (Brenda) Kempker of Ft. Madison, Mike (Pam) Kempker of West Point, Patrick (Margaret) Kempker of Sand Diego, CA, Patricia (Frank) Eid of Ft. Madison and Peggy (Mark) Hirte of Wever; eighty six grandchildren, numerous great and great great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; both wives; four sons and three daughters.

The family will meet with friends on Monday, May 11, 2020 from 9-11 AM at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A graveside service with follow at 11 AM in Soldiers' Circle, Oakland Cemetery with Reverend Larry Wallingford officiating. Military rites will be conducted by the Ft. Madison Veteran's Honor Guard.

A memorial has been established in his memory and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.



Pen City Current obituary policy

The Current runs obituaries one time at no charge to funeral homes and they run the day they are submitted in most cases. They are also run as submitted by the funeral homes.

OSA resets 2020 plans

FORT MADISON – The COVID-19 virus has brought a lot of concern for the older generation, children playing on park equipment, and large group social distancing possibilities in general.

With these in mind, the Old Settlers Association officers met May 3 and decided to re-schedule their 20th year celebration of free music concerts until June, July, and August of 2021.

It was a very difficult decision, but safety of our patrons is most important. All of the musical groups ("Switchback" from Woodstock, Illinois, "Richie Lee and the Fabulous 50's" from Des Moines, and "River City 6" from the Quad Cities) are all being re-scheduled for next summer.

This has been a difficult year to be an on-the-road musician. All stated they are excited to celebrate our 20th year – even if it takes another year to do so.

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE
Lee County Board of Supervisors Meeting
Tue, May 12, 2020
MEETING
CONVENING TIME:
9:00 A.M.
LOCATION:
Conservation Center
2652 Hwy 61,
Montrose, IA

AGENDA

NOTICE: The Board will be meeting in person at the Conservation Center. We will be following social distancing and limiting the number of people to ten in the building. You will still have access by Go To Meeting. Information to connect is below.

Lee County Board of Supervisors meeting
Tue, May 12, 2020 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/800165405>

You can also dial in using your phone.

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- Pledge of Allegiance
- Approve Agenda
- Public Input
- Approve Tuesday, May 5, 2020 Board Minutes
- Consider Approval of Claims
- Discussion and Possible Action on Continuing Closure of County Buildings
- Discussion on Funding Ambulance Service
- Consider Approval of Health Insurance Renewal with Wellmark
- Consider Approval of Renewal for Wellness Program Contract with Health Solutions
- Consider Approval of Health Insurance Premiums
- Consider Approval of Renewal with Eye Med for Vision Insurance Coverage
- Consider Approval of 28E Agreement between Jefferson, Van Buren, & Lee County Regarding Bundling of Projects for the Competitive Highway Bridge Program

Consider Approval of Federal-Aid Agreement for Bridge Replacement Project BROSCHBP-C056(107)--NC-56 on 190th St over Mud Creek

Consider Approval of Updated Pandemic Policy

Consider Approval of Resolution Abating Taxes on Lincoln Ridge Property

Consider Approval of First Reading of Amended ATV Ordinance

Personnel Actions:

- A. Step Increase-Health Department Reports:
- A. Auditors Report of Fees Collected
- Commission or Committee Reports
- Adjourn

Workshop to Follow

PUBLIC MEETING
CITIZENS WELCOME

Vision and hearing assistance available upon request

Contact Title VI Administrator
 319-372-3705
 County Website:
www.leecounty.org

PUBLIC NOTICE
Lee County

Conservation Board Agenda
May 12, 2020
Convening Time:
4:00 p.m.
Conservation Board Meeting
Tue, May 12, 2020
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM (CDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/916629621>

You can also dial in using your phone.
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1. Call to order
 2. Approval of minutes from April 14, 2020
 3. Public Input
- This is the time of the meeting that a citizen may address the Board on any matters pertaining to the Lee County Conservation

Board. The Board cannot take formal action at the meeting on matters not included on the regular agenda, but may ask the staff to research the matter or have the matter placed on a subsequent agenda.

4. Approval of Bills
5. Approval of Financial Report
6. Discuss and Take Possible Action on Department's Operations in Response to COVID-19
7. Discuss and Take Possible Action on Cabins and Campground Operations in Response to COVID-19
8. Review and Consider Approval of Amending Denning Conservation Area Farm Lease
9. Staff Reports
10. Board Member Comments
11. Adjournment

Workshop to Follow Regular Meeting

Next regular meeting will be June 9, 2020

Hearing and vision assistance available upon request.

Citizens are welcome to

all LCCB meetings.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Board Meeting Agenda
Great Prairie Area Education Agency
May 12, 2020
5:30 PM - Regular Board Meeting Zoom

Meeting access is posted at <https://www.gpaea.org/about-us/board-of-directors/>. If you have a comment or question for the Great Prairie AEA Board please email jennifer.woodley@gpaea.org prior to the start of the meeting.

Iowa Code 21.8 - Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and current directives from the state and federal government restricting the size of public gatherings, the regular meeting of the Great Prairie AEA Board will be held electronically. Great Prairie AEA facilities have been closed starting March 17-May 31 to mitigate the spread of the virus.

AGENDA

- I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY BOARD PRESIDENT
- II. OPEN FORUM

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PUBLIC NOTICES

III. BOARD APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IV. BOARD APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

V. BOARD APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT AND INVOICES PAYABLE

VI. EDUCATION REPORT: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA

VII. BOARD ACTION ON NEW EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS

a. Brenda Egger, Occupational Therapist, 194 days, MA+30, Step 9, \$60,577

b. Jami Miller, Special Education Consultant, 194 days, MA, Step 13, \$62,307

c. Renee Moravec, Speech and Language Pathologist, MA+15, Step 21, \$74,422

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I recommend approval of the new employee contracts as presented.

VIII. BOARD ACTION ON EMPLOYEE RESIGNATIONS

a. Nancy Cristoforo, School Social Worker

b. Kari Matthias, Speech and Language Pathologist

c. Abby McGuire, School Social Worker

d. Bobbi Skinner, School Psychologist

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I recommend approval of the employee resignations as presented.

IX. BOARD ACTION ON CONTRACT TERMINATIONS

a. Joan Garrett, Early

Childhood Behavior Intervention Project Coordinator

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I recommend that the continuing contract of Joan Garrett, Early Childhood Behavior Intervention Project Coordinator, be terminated effective the end of the current contract year for the following reason:

Her position is funded by the Mahaska-Wapello Early Childhood Iowa grant (formerly known as community empowerment). At this time Great Prairie AEA has not been guaranteed that sufficient funding will be provided in the following fiscal year to fund her position. Therefore, Great Prairie

AEA must eliminate her position due to the potential lack of funding and as such just cause exists for the non-renewal of her contract for the coming year.

The "Notice and Recommendation to Terminate Contract" was mailed to Joan Garrett on April 14, 2020 (USPS certified mail; return receipt). Ms. Garrett had five (5) days from the date the Notice was served on her to request a hearing from the Board.

Recommended Motion: I move that the contract of Joan Garrett be terminated effective at the end of the current contract year based on the recommendation of Dr. Yelick, as the reason stated in the

Notice constitutes a "just cause" termination. I further move that, should sufficient grant funding be received, that the contract for Ms. Garrett be reinstated with the 2020-2021 negotiated salary and benefits.

Roll Call Vote
X. BOARD ACTION ON SHARED SOCIAL WORKER AGREEMENTS

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I recommend approval of the shared social worker agreements as presented.

XI. BOARD ACTION ON TECHNOLOGY REPLACEMENT

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

Each year staff computers are reviewed to determine replacement needs based on a 4-5 year maintenance/replacement cycle.

XII. BOARD ACTION ON THE DATE, TIME & LOCATION OF THE JULY/AUGUST BOARD RETREAT & MEETING

XIII. REPORTS TO THE BOARD

XIV. BOARD WILL GO INTO EXEMPT SESSION PER IOWA CODE 21.9: TO DISCUSS STRATEGY IN MATTERS RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYEES NOT COVERED BY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LAW

XV. BOARD ACTION ON NON-MASTER CONTRACT STAFF AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF SALARY AND BENEFITS PACKAGE FOR 2020-2021

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

HELP WANTED

FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER

Lee County Health Department is seeking a full-time Family Support Worker to provide in-home parent education and support services to families enrolled in our Healthy Families America home visiting program model. Bachelor's degree is required with knowledge/experience in early childhood development; skills in promoting positive parent-child interactions, and ability to use a family-centered approach with culturally diverse population. Extensive data collection and documentation is required. Please send or email resume to Missy Park, Program Manager at LCHD Box 1426, Ft. Madison, IA 52627 or to mmagee@lee-countyhd.org by May 15, 2020. LCHD is an EOE.



Lee County Health Department

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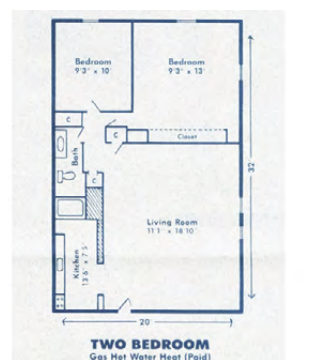
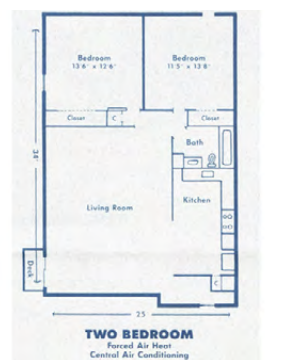
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backyard with picnic tables & glider swing in very nice, quiet neighborhood. Rents range from \$585-\$635. Lease required. 850 sq. ft. units. All electric. Water, sewer, trash furnished. 650 sq. ft. units. Water, heat, sewer, gas, trash furnished. Laundry rooms have new coin-operated washers & dryers (located in all buildings). On-site manager. Call 319-372-9409 or 319-750-3115 for appointment to view. Owned by Alliance Realty Co.




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From the Front

Supervisors face tough choices with little time

SERVICE - Continued from Page 1

face to support AMR based on its proposal, said WHAAAAT???! About-face.

Lee County Board chair Ron Fedler calls a special meeting on Saturday and more than 50 people get on the call. The conversation was lively but scattered with everyone getting on the call, there were kids running in the background, people were baking, talking working, typing. It... was...awesome.

There never has been a better time to see how the sausage is made. But it is being made.

Several questions popped up about AMR's contract status with Wellmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield which is the county's health insurance provider, and one of the most recognizable in the state. A Lee County EMS employee said the Dallas-based AMR doesn't have a contract with Wellmark, so tremendously high private billing would ensue. That question has yet to be put directly to AMR. WHAAAAT?

Matt Pflug said "WHAAAAT?" why didn't we ask that question. Why wasn't Pflug on the committee call. Quorum was out as it was posted as an open meeting. Anyone could have been on that call. Supervisor Rich Harlow also wanted clarification on the insurance contract and also didn't appear to be on the calls. In Zoom meetings some of those dialing in only list as a Caller No. so it's difficult to see who was really listening in.

During the committee vote Friday afternoon, it was all Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber could do to not go all Yosemite Sam on the committee when he said. "On July 1, somebody better be running an ambulance."

His department is the front line in the county. He needs to know. Seven weeks.

As a stark reality...that's less time than we've been dealing with this pandemic. Several counties and cities in Iowa have separated from AMR after alleged price hikes and contract demands.

A document received from Charles City dated May 2019 illustrates some of the changes AMR demanded of that city, including eliminating payments made by AMR to the city and Floyd County for ambulance driver staffing, use of dispatch services, and fire station rental. AMR rebuilt the proposed contract to have the city donate those services and facilities "in-kind". The contract rewrite also required a \$50,000 annual payment to AMR from Charles City.

That information was included in an agenda summary, which indicated the city was short \$54,225 in AMR requests, so the company would only agree to a one-year deal.

A copy of that contract shows, for example, a Basic Level Support-non emergency charge of \$1,101.04, which was the same rate they charged in the 2018 contract. An employee of Lee County EMS provided Pen City Current with a rate sheet that showed their charge as \$372 base rate charge plus \$13/loaded mile. AMR charged \$28.11 per mile.

However, a rate sheet released by the county shows BLS Non-emergency charges under AMR's proposal for Lee County at \$700 with a \$22/mile charge.

AMR, which is listed under the Better Business Bureau as Rural Metro, Mission Care of IL, AMR, Amb O Cab, Ambulance Service Co. Medevac Mid-America Inc, and Reed Ambulance, is not accredited by the BBB. A statement on the BBB website reads: "BBB files indicate that this business has a pattern of complaints concerning billing or collection issues, and customer service issues."

However, the committee did get a recommendation on AMR from the Macomb Fire Chief for the service it provides in McDonough County, which Folluo referenced on Saturday.

Not all great news for AMR. Add in that they don't think they can get up and running by July 1, and the county's in a real pickle.

But we have to ask. Where the heck is Lee County EMS? The staff is passionate and vocal in support of their employer, but no one from the Young family has commented publicly during the process.

Pen City Current has reached out on multiple occasions, and through multiple channels, to discuss the issue with leadership there, but no response. Joey Herren represents the cities on these calls, and AMR has addressed committee concerns publicly.

The Lee County EMS staffers beg the committee to consider their moves carefully, and our Letters to the Editor plead for the county to consider loyalty to those here locally who provide this service.

It's a point very well taken, but where's the company leadership? If \$950,000 gets it done, why is there no advocacy going on in the public?

The best answer here, if Lee County EMS wants out, is to extend the service up to a year in an agreement with the county for a reasonable charge. Then either consider a referendum vote of the county to charge for a service, give the cities a chance to explain their proposal, and/or allow legislators to further consider ambulance service as essential under the law, which would trigger assessments to pay for it.

If Lee County EMS wants to stay in - come out, come out wherever you are.

In all seriousness, these are serious people trying to protect the people of Lee County and it's been a siege for all of them. And although we have to smile and laugh especially in these trying times, it is time to get serious.


We have very smart, dedicated and passionate people taking care of us here in Lee County. Lee County EMS was wonderful in taking care of our daughter prior to her death in February. Local police and deputies did welfare checks in a matter of minutes on her when we were out of town.

These people are the VERY BEST we have and they need to make this priority No. 1. We can solve it, but people have to be in the room and it has to happen now. And that just cannot be.... Beside the Point.

Chuck Vandenberg is editor and co-founder of Pen City Current and can be reached by email at editor@pencitycurrent.com.

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Supervisors want to put all players in the room...soon

AMR - Continued from Page 1

The county got three other proposals including two from Fort Madison and Keokuk Fire Departments, which would function jointly, and a proposal from AMR for \$450,000 for the next fiscal year.

The panel interviewed AMR reps on Friday morning about their service and how they could offer such a low rate.

On Saturday, with at one time 50 people on the call, Supervisor Matt Pflug moved to table the issue after an employee of Lee County EMS said AMR didn't have contracts with Wellmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield, which is the county's health insurance company.

The move doesn't have a timetable, but discussion will continue as part of Tuesday's regular Board of Supervisor's meeting, which will tentatively be held at the County Conservation Center with a 10-person limit. It will also be teleconferenced, however that login information was not available as of Sunday morning.

Fedler asked that County Auditor Denise Fraise reach out to all three entities submitting proposals to have a joint meeting to answer pending questions. That meeting could be held at the Montrose Fire Station at a date to be determined.

Nick Dooley, a paramedic with Lee County EMS, told the Supervisors during the public comment section that he didn't believe that AMR had a contract with Wellmark.

Pflug asked Supervisors' Gary Folluo and Rick Larkin if that question had been posed to AMR during the interview Friday morning.

Dr. Phillip Caropreso said he would follow up with Floyd County officials, where he believes AMR doesn't accept Wellmark coverage.

"This is a very important piece we need to know. Even as a taxpayer myself I'd like to know that. That has the potential to be a huge bill. And I think that's why possibly their price is so low at \$450,000. If that question really wasn't answered it needs to be answered."

Folluo said he never heard AMR reps say they wouldn't accept Wellmark.

"They did not say they don't accept it. They said sometimes insurance companies negotiate rates and there's are higher than the national rates," Folluo said.

Rick Larkin said the county is running out of time and the committee made a

recommendation.

"I think those on the committee would rather go with a local type company, but we just can't go with a \$500,000 increase on the ambulance service and we have to make that decision. The committee did approve it and that's why were having the meeting today and were under a timeline," Larkin said.

Fort Madison Fire Chief Joey Herren pleaded with the board to get the financial reps from the county, Fort Madison and Keokuk in a room to look at options and explain the city's proposal better.

The joint proposal from the fire departments was for \$960,000 per year, per city. Fort Madison's proposal also indicated a \$1 million loan would be taken out internally to help offset start up costs. He said that amount would just be to purchase three ambulance rigs and the supplies and equipment that go with them..

"Our numbers were high, but neither of us was in the ambulance business and had no equipment. Get the financial people from the three parties together and look at this and what it takes to get this off the ground," Herren said.

"I know that number scared everyone, but over the long-term that number goes down, It's just the upfront cost and that cost is always scary and eventually it balances out. We never got to present it to anyone, we just turned it in."

Larkin said the saving would have to be immediate because the county doesn't have that kind of money.

"That's why we sit down, our financial person has some ideas. If you let us present our case, there's somethings public providers can do that private can't. We need to be able to present this case to you," Herren said.

Fedler then called for a vote to table the issue with Pflug and Harlow voting no, wanting more information on the Wellmark issue. Folluo and Larkin, who both sit on the recommending committee voted against tabling the move, and Fedler broke the tie voting to table.

Several Lee County EMS staffers were on the call, but no comments were made by the ownership of the company. Nor were any comments made by reps from AMR.

Lee County EMS ownership reps were on some of the committee meeting calls, but no comments were filed.

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