



MINUTES
Ad Hoc Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Study Committee
Regular Meeting
January 29, 2026
Chippewa County Courthouse, Room 302
6:00 PM

1. Call to Order

Chair Guthman called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call / Introductions

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Pam Guthman (Chair)	County Board Supervisor	Present	
Peter Gehring (Vice-Chair)	County Board Supervisor	Absent	
Adam Dewitt	Anson Fire & EMS Director	Absent	
Justus Busse	Chippewa Falls Fire & EMS Battalion Chief	Present	
Dan Dixon	Chippewa Falls District 5 Alderman	Present	
Sandi Frion	Bloomer City Administrator	Present	
Dale Isaacs	Boyd Village Board	Present	
Corey LaNou	Town of Arthur Chair	Present	
Ron Patten	EMS Association Chair	Present	
Deb Semanko	Cornell City Council	Present	
Pauline Spiegel	Town of Eagle Point Supervisor	Present	
Dave Staber	Lafayette Town Chair & Fire District Board	Present	
Eric Weiland	Cadott Village Board & EMS	Present	

Others Present: Andy Albarado, Traci Bremness, Marcy Trubshaw, Garret Zastoupil, Jason Moses, James Small, Tamee Thom, and Joseph Back (Stanley Newspaper)

3. Members of the Public Wishing to Be Heard

4. Review of Ad Hoc Committee Formation and Purpose – Andy Albarado

Albarado explained why this committee was created. The goal was to make sure that all areas of the county and municipalities are represented. The task is to bring forward some recommendations to the County Board. It is not the intent of the County to be in charge of EMS in the County. Garret will be the facilitator for this process. We also have the ability to set up additional workgroups if needed.

5. Facilitated Discussion – Garret Zastoupil

a. Panel Discussion: EMS from Wisconsin to Chippewa County

Ron Patten, Tamee Thom, Jason Moses, and James Small gave an overview of the current state of EMS in Wisconsin and Chippewa County.

Small explained this is not a responsibility of Counties, other than they can levy outside of the levy limits. EMS is distressed across the state. There is no one way to handle the

issue that will work for every organization as there are a number of nuisances that are different from area to area. An average cost for an EMS call is about \$1500-\$2000.

There is a real struggle with recruiting and retaining EMS workers. There are struggles with the well-being of EMS workers; after about three years it starts to go down and between 5-10 years their well-being drops significantly. Individuals struggle with the stress, work-life balance, managing emotions, etc.

An ambulance service is required to have reliable ambulance coverage. The goal is to staff the first ambulance so it is available 24/7 without having to call mutual aid. When trying to determine the appropriate staffing level they look at how many people it takes to cover the 24/7 coverage. The ideal situation is to have 80% coverage so the workload is balanced amongst the workers.

Small recommended that we to take this slow and deliberate. Whatever recommendation we come up with we should expect to take four more months and four times as much money. The priority is to do it the right way so it is sustainable long term.

Patten discussed the issues he's seen over the years. He thinks one of the solutions will be having a couple paid people at each department or at least paying them more to volunteer.

Thom explained some of the biggest challenges in dispatch include the increase in volume of calls and the decrease in responders. The constant incoming calls and not having time between calls to deal with the trauma from the last call before taking another call is very stressful and emotionally exhausting.

Moses explained the difference between EMS and Emergency Management.

c. Identification of Group Norms

Zastoupil facilitated an exercise to help identify how the Ad Hoc Committee members want to engage with each other over the next few months. Some of the ground rules that were established include:

1. ONE VOICE
 - Constructive criticism
 - Keep politics outside this
 - Residents first
2. TOUGH ON SYSTEMS
 - Services as whole
 - Service A&B "anonymity"
 - Not calling out people
3. PUT PEOPLE FIRST
 - Residents and responders
4. HARD TRUTHS
 - One person speaks
 - Putting aside pessimism and naysaying
 - No hearsay or gossip
 - Encourage others to share even if they are uncomfortable; their opinion matters and it is valued

5. NO SACRED COWS

- Discuss different services strengths and weaknesses
- Nothing should be held back from discussion
- Everything is open for investigation

6. SOLUTIONS ORIENTED

- Evidence based data decision making
- Critical thinking – show the research and data
- Don't just complain – look at facts

7. THICK SKIN (soft hearts)

- Challenge ideas not people
- Don't take comments personally
- Respect each other and the process
- Inclusivity – say “we” not “you”
- Speak to ideas not to persons
- Acknowledge ideas and emotions
- Take a time out and count to 10, regroup as needed then get back to work

Homework for the next meeting on 03/05/2026:

The committee was asked to complete the one-page worksheet to help us better understand what we currently know about EMS in Wisconsin and in Chippewa County.

d. Identification of Group Decision Making Values

6. Agenda Items for Future Consideration

- a. Review Secondary Data and Reports
- b. Establish workplan goals and timelines
- c. Appoint EMS Provider Workgroup

A member suggested that Mark Schwartz, CVTC Instructor, be included in the discussion so we can understand what they see for issues.

Moses announced there will be a NIMS training on May 7, 2026 from 8:00-12:00 at the courthouse for members that want to attend.

7. Next Meeting:

- a. Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 6:00 pm

8. Adjourn – 8:00

The **mission** of this committee is to:

- A. Assess the strengths and challenges of Chippewa County EMS services.
- B. Review other county and municipal EMS models.
- C. Develop recommendations to ensure sustainable and effective EMS operations over the next decade.
- D. Establish an action plan for the implementation of these recommendations

Adopted by the Chippewa County Board per Resolution 39-25

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Members of the Chippewa County Board of Supervisors who are not members of this committee are entitled to attend this meeting. It is possible that the attendance of one or more such nonmember Supervisors may create a quorum of some other county board committee, board or commission. Such a quorum is unintended and the nonmember Supervisors are not meeting for the purpose of exercising the responsibility, authority, power, or duties of any other committee, board or commission.

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