



MINUTES
AD HOC EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) STUDY COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
March 5, 2026 – 6:00 PM
Chippewa County Courthouse, Room 302

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pam Guthman called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

2. ROLL CALL

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

Others Present: Traci Bremness, James Small, Marcy Trubshaw, Leah Simington, Garret Zastoupil, Jason Moses, Tamee Thom

3. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WISHING TO BE HEARD

(Comments from the public will be limited to five minutes per speaker.)

4. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the Agenda
2. Approve the Minutes of the – January 29, 2026
3. Schedule Next Regular Meeting Date – April 2, 2026, 5:30 PM

Motion (Dave Staber/Justus Busse) to approve. Motion carried 12-0.

5. REPORTS

1. Discuss Regular Meeting Date & Time
 - a. Scheduled for 1st Thursday of the month at 5:00 pm

The committee decided to adjust the meeting time from 6:00 PM to 5:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held April 2, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

2. Group Norms Review

- a. Garret Zastoupil reviewed the group norms from the previous meeting.
 - i. One Voice
 - ii. Tough on Systems
 - iii. Put People First
 - iv. Hard Truths
 - v. No Scared Cows
 - vi. Solutions Oriented
 - vii. Thick Skin (Soft Hearts)

3. James Small Introduction and Remarks

- a. James Small, Rural Outreach Program Manager provided an overview of his work with EMS systems.
- b. Works with seven EMS systems statewide
- c. No single solution works everywhere; systems must be tailored to local community needs
- d. Many EMS systems operate with annual budgets of around \$1 million when staffing and facilities are included
- e. Challenges are system issues rather than individual failures
- f. Workforce Retention
 - i. Common concerns across EMS systems include:
 - 1. Loss of approximately half of staff within five years
 - 2. Forced overtime and staffing shortages
 - 3. Need for living wages
 - 4. Burnout and time away from home
 - 5. Leadership style and department culture impacting retention
- g. Financial Pressures
 - i. Competition with Twin Cities wages
 - ii. Funding challenges across rural systems
 - iii. Simply increasing funding does not solve the issue without strategic planning
- h. Local Examples
 - i. Peter Gehring discussed examples of successful local models:
 - ii. Colfax EMS
 - 1. Two full-time staff Monday–Friday
 - 2. Flexible schedules
 - 3. Dormitory and lounge space for staff
 - iii. Bloomer EMS
 - 1. Exploring referendum to increase wages
 - 2. Recruitment through EMS/firefighting training programs
 - iv. Other strategies mentioned:
 - 1. On-call pay
 - 2. Updated equipment
 - 3. Community outreach programs
 - 4. Positive public relations efforts
- i. Legislative Considerations
 - i. Discussion included state legislation related to EMS funding:
 - 1. Consolidation of taxing authority currently not permitted under state law
 - 2. District agreements can be used for cost-sharing between municipalities
 - 3. Counties may fund equipment, but typically do not employ EMS personnel
 - 4. Cities, towns, and villages generally require referendums for EMS funding

4. Synthesis and Review of Supplemental EMS Research Materials
 - a. Garret Zastoupil outlined a process for reviewing EMS data and identifying key themes.
 - b. Key Areas Identified for Analysis
 - i. Staffing levels
 - ii. Leadership and management
 - iii. Dispatch data and call patterns
 - iv. Billing data and reimbursement rates
 - v. Funding models
 - vi. Inactive EMTs
 - vii. Response times
 - viii. Turnaround time at hospitals
 - ix. Provider wellness and burnout
 - x. Community expectations versus actual service data
 - c. Data Accuracy Concerns
 - i. Members noted challenges with existing data:
 - ii. Mutual aid responses often cross county lines
 - iii. Current data may not accurately reflect service patterns
 - iv. Accurate dispatch data will be important for analysis
 - d. EMS Call Volume
 - i. Approximately 7,300 EMS calls occurred in 2024.
 - e. Data Priorities
 - i. The committee identified several data needs:
 1. Mapping of EMS call locations
 2. Dispatch response patterns
 3. Billing demographics
 4. Medicare/Medicaid impact
 5. Population density and demographic mapping
 6. Accurate mutual aid response records
 - f. Recruitment Challenges
 - i. Discussion included workforce trends:
 1. Volunteerism has declined among younger generations
 2. Recruitment efforts may need to begin in schools
 3. Some communities host EMS recruitment events or service days
 4. Training programs such as CVTC Fire Medic Services and youth EMS camps may support recruitment
 - g. Statewide licensing data shows:
 - i. Many individuals are trained as EMTs
 - ii. However, a significant number leave the profession within five years

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Motions Regarding Directives for Supplemental Information
 - a. Motion (Justus Busse/Dale Isaacs) to obtain EMS call data from dispatch for 2025 and bring that to the next meeting. Motion carried 12-0.
 - b. Motion (Justus Busse/Dale Isaacs) to amend to use 2024 EMS call data instead including address, service responder, mutual aid provided and mutual aid received. Motion carried 12-0 as amended.

- c. Motion (Eric Weiland/Peter Gehring) to obtain 2025 information (without personal names) from each volunteer EMS service including participation levels, number of calls per employee, on-call hours, and instances when staffing slots could not be filled. Chief Patten will coordinate with the EMS Association to gather the information. Motion carried 12-0.

7. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

None

8. ADJOURN

Motion (Dale Isaacs/Justus Busse) to adjourn. Motion carried 12-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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