

Town of Upton  
All-County EMS Workshop  
October 12, 2023

**THE ALL-COUNTY EMS WORKSHOP** called for by the Town Council of Upton, Wyoming was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 12, 2023 at the Upton City Hall located at 725 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Upton, Wyoming.

Present: Upton Mayor Nicholas Trandahl, Upton Council Members Justin Norman and Rick Rothleutner, Newcastle Council Member Tyrel Owens, Weston County Commissioners Don Taylor and Garrett Borton. Staff present included Clerk/Treasurer Kelley Millar, Police Chief Susan Bridge, Fire Chief Les Riehemann, Assistant Fire Chief Tiffany Riehemann and Superintendent Mark Lindstrom. Others present included Campbell County Health Services (CCHS) Director of Urgent & Emergent Services Chris Beltz, CCHS EMS Manager Shane Kirsch, Melaynee Trandahl with Crook County Medical Services District (CCMSD), Britt Trandahl with the *Weston County Gazette* and Ruth Taylor.

Mayor Trandahl opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions and explained that the purpose of this workshop was to open a dialogue with the City of Newcastle, Weston County and the Town of Upton regarding Emergency Medical Services in Weston County and to discuss possible solutions to the shortage of EMS currently faced in the area. He also noted that this was just the first of what he envisioned as regular, possibly quarterly, all-county government meetings to discuss any issues or other items of interest for the three governing bodies as he has found this is a common practice in other areas of the state.

The first option discussed was the formation of an EMS District funded by up to 4 mills in property tax. This option would require a resolution by the Weston County Commissioners and then would be put on the ballot for the public to ultimately decide to move forward. Councilman Owens asked in an EMS district would be staffed by Weston County or CCHS. Mr. Beltz answered that either was an option. Councilman Owens asked if the employees could have state benefits. Mr. Beltz explained that EMS is not deemed an essential service in Wyoming so there is no retirement program established for paid EMS staff. He also explained that CCHS has a benefit program for their EMS staff. Commissioner Taylor expressed his opposition to an EMS district and concerns about the struggles of the Weston County Hospital District.

Councilman Owens asked about transporting patients and the possibility of volunteers to be drivers. Mr. Beltz shared that CCHS had recently added a truck to serve the area, excluding Sheridan, as a gap measure that seems to be working well, though it is not a permanent fix to issues of coverage. Mr. Kirsch explained that CCHS does not have the ability to use volunteer drivers, and that they can staff with part time and as needed employees if those employees are certified and licensed as per CCHS's policies. Melaynee Trandahl added that CCMSD often does transfers from Weston County to other facilities when CCHS is not available to make the trip. She also noted that CCMSD staffs an ambulance with an RN and a paramedic 24/7 with a back up rig on standby since taking over the ambulance services in Crook County. She inquired as to why CCMSD is never called to help when Upton Ambulance is unable to have an EMT available. Chief Riehemann explained the protocol put in place a few years ago that states when Upton Ambulance is paged, so is an ambulance from Newcastle (NEMS, now known as CCHS) and if the additional rig is not needed, they are turned around as soon as possible to not leave Newcastle without coverage. Similarly, when a CCHS rig is not available, the flight teams are called to assist. It was discussed that new protocol would include dispatching to CCMSD as well. Chief Bridge will include that item in Dispatch Joint Powers Board discussions.

Options for staffing EMS within the Dispatch JPB were discussed along with salary ranges for Basic EMTs up to Paramedics. Commissioner Taylor suggested that the monies the county and city put towards EMS now could be expanded to include 2-4 employees if that would be helpful.

The workshop adjourned at 8:45 p.m.