

**City Of Woodland
City Council Meeting Agenda Summary Sheet**

Agenda Item: Letter of Support re: City of Vancouver and Clark County EMS District #2	Agenda Item #: <u> (L) Action </u>
	For Agenda of: <u> 03/13/2013 </u>
	Department: <u> Mayor </u>
	Date Submitted: <u> 03/18/2013 </u>

Cost of Item: _____
Amount Budgeted: _____
Unexpended Balance: _____

BARS #: Description:

Department Supervisor Approval: Grover B. Laseke, Mayor / s /
Committee Recommendation: Review by Public Safety immediately prior to council meeting

<p>Agenda Item Supporting Narrative (list attachments, supporting documents): Staff Report from Chief Mason Letter to City of Vancouver</p>
<p>Summary Statement/Department Recommendation: Fire Chief Dennis Mason and I met recently to discuss our participation in the Clark County EMS District. I learned at that meeting that the City of Vancouver was considering pulling out of the District which would potentially impact the entire EMS program for Clark County. This could impact the quality of the EMS service we could provide to the citizens of Woodland once we are admitted to the District.</p> <p>Chief Mason prepared the attached staff report and letter asking the City of Vancouver to spend more time reviewing these potential impacts. He is asking for support from the cities that are within the Clark County Fire and Rescue service area. The attached letter has space for signatures from all the council members and the mayor. I would recommend a motion of support for this letter be considered by the city council and all council members sign the letter.</p> <p>This request has a time urgency to it so it has been added to the agenda for the council meeting without previous recommendation from the Public Safety Committee. The Public Safety Committee will be considering support for the letter at their regular meeting which immediately precedes the council meeting.</p>

STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayors, Councilors, Fire Commissioners
FROM: Chief Mason
DATE: March 11, 2013
SUBJECT: EMS District #2

For the past 18-24 months staff for EMS District #2 has been working with community experts on EMS System Design Decisions as we move toward the issuance of an RFP for ambulance service for the new 6-plus year contract for the EMS District and participating cities. The current contract with AMR expires September 2014. In order to select an ambulance provider and provide adequate startup time for a possible new vendor (6 months) and obtain approval from 4 participating cities, the RFP was to be finalized within the next 60 days.

Following a workshop with its fire department on March 4th the Vancouver City Council gave direction to the fire department to move forward with the development of a separate RFP process for ambulance service within the City of Vancouver. This action is fraught with a number of problems for the ambulance system. These potential problems include:

- Probable higher ambulance costs to the citizens of both the City of Vancouver and EMS District 2.
- Duplication of ambulance oversight.
- Duplication of RFP efforts.
- Lowered ability for COV or the District to attract qualified bidders.
- Fragments the current system.

The attached letter is a request for the Vancouver City Council to remain a participant in a coordinated EMS system and to schedule a public hearing on the issue to take input directly from stakeholders.

I am requesting as many elected officials as practical sign the attached letter.

March 12, 2013

Vancouver City Council
415 W. 6th Street
P.O. Box 1995
Vancouver, WA 98668-1995

Dear Councilors:

We are disappointed to learn that you are in the process of severing your involvement with EMS District #2 to pursue your own independent ambulance contract. The undersigned elected officials and fire chiefs respectfully request as a courtesy a short pause of your process to allow for consideration of the impacts on our citizens, and on your citizens. We have been collaborative partners in EMS for the past twenty-one years, and we desire to continue this relationship for the mutual benefit of our citizens and patients.

Although you seem to have the impression that our system is broken, it is our belief that since our communities first came together in 1992 to form a high performance EMS system, a number of key hallmarks of a Quality EMS system have not only been realized, but exceeded, which include:

- The most Stringent Response Time Standards in the nation and a performance by the contractor at 90% Compliance for all zones;
- High Cardiac Arrest Survival Rates (2011 @ 13% compared to 2% national average); and
- 2011 ALS Ambulance Rates 19.7% below the average of seven surrounding counties and we are accomplishing this without any local government tax subsidy.

We are concerned that by withdrawing from EMS District #2, the City of Vancouver will fracture and damage an EMS system that is one of the best high-performance systems in the country. This is completely counter-intuitive when compared to the national trend of neighboring systems consolidating to enhance service and reduce costs. We ask that you seriously reconsider the direction we believe you chose as a result of the March 4th workshop.

All of the EMS System Design Decisions for EMS District #2 have been researched and vetted during the last two years by more than 30 community experts representing EMS, hospitals, finance, business, public health and community services, including your fire chief, Joe Molina and other city staff. Most of these participants are residents, own businesses and/or work in the City of Vancouver. In addition, we consulted with national and international leaders in EMS to develop a system that is innovative, sustainable and flexible. We believe that these results should be considered so that you can make a fully-informed decision, and to counter your apparent perception that our system is broken.

Having two ambulance contracts in the same service area is fraught with a number of operational and financial problems whether you have one contractor serving Vancouver and the remainder of the District, or two ambulance contractors. Answers to the following questions are needed to ensure that the citizens of Vancouver will not, in the end, actually incur increased costs, and ambulance bills, as a result of having the potential inefficiencies created by a split in the service area:

- Have you and your staff considered the likely impact that increases in the ambulance fees will have on your citizens and their ability to pay?
- Are you aware that that the payer mix in the COV historically involves a higher percentage of Medicaid and uninsured patients than the outlying areas, thereby reducing the average revenue per call and increasing the cost shifting to other citizens within the COV?

Other problems caused by dividing the current ambulance service area could include:

- Seriously lowering both the COV's as well and the District's ability to attract qualified bidders (again contributing to higher costs for all of our citizens).
- Duplicating ambulance contract oversight resulting in an increase in governmental administrative costs. In this era of tight budgets and pressure on governments to be efficient, this seems counter-intuitive.

We cannot support a model where the COV would be the contract administrator for the entire service area of EMS District #2 (District); or one where Vancouver would issue an RFP and ambulance contract for just the City. For EMS, changes that you make impact your neighbors, and for us to give absolute power or majority vote to the COV would be problematic. Clearly, your primary focus would be to continue to do what is best solely for the COV. That is why the system redesign group recommended six months ago a balanced model so that no one partner could unilaterally make decisions that negatively affect the remainder of the system. As far as we understand, you have not heard about or considered this approach.

Again, we ask that you reconsider the position you have chosen and consider an option that allows the system to remain a single coordinated system. We understand governance is an issue, but we believe a model that encourages joint and balanced governance of a single system is the most viable and efficient for all of our citizens.

We strongly urge that you allow a public hearing on this topic as soon as possible so you can hear directly from stakeholders and make a fully-informed decision on the impact of any system change on the residents of our communities. We believe that we can develop a win-win-win solution for you, us and our collective citizens.

Sincerely,

Commissioner, Clark County Fire & Rescue

Commissioner, Clark County Fire District 6

Commissioner, Clark County Fire District 6

Commissioner, Clark County Fire District 6

Commissioner, Clark County Fire District 3

Commissioner, Clark County Fire District 3

Commissioner, Clark County Fire District 3

Commissioner, Clark County Fire District 2

Commissioner, Clark County Fire District 2

Commissioner, Clark County Fire District 2

Mayor, City of Battle Ground

Councilor, City of Battle Ground

Mayor, City of Ridgefield

Councilor, City of Ridgefield

Mayor, City of La Center

Councilor, City of La Center

Mayor, City of Woodland

CITY OF WOODLAND

Grover B. Laseke
Mayor, City of Woodland

John Burke
Council Member, City of Woodland

Al Swindell
Council Member, City of Woodland

Marilee McCall
Council Member, City of Woodland

Marshall Allen
Council Member, City of Woodland

Susan Humbyrd
Council Member, City of Woodland

Benjamin Fredricks
Council Member, City of Woodland

Scott Perry
Council Member, City of Woodland