

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

March 19, 2013

6:00 p.m.

Chairman Greazzo called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Greazzo, O'Neil, Shea, Katsiantonis, Gamache

Messrs: M. Flanagan, J. Burkush, N. Campasano, T. Arnold

Chairman Greazzo addressed items 3 and 4 of the agenda:

3. Banner application submitted by Families in Transition for Elm and Kelley Streets for a two-week period from April 18, 2013 through May 2, 2013.
(Note: The insurance certificate and an illustration of last year's banner are attached.)
4. Request from NH Fisher Cats and Clear Channel Radio for a waiver of license and permit fees totaling \$500.00.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Katsiantonis, it was voted to discuss these items.

Alderman Shea stated this afternoon I spoke to Jeff Bolduc and we discussed the merits of this. He didn't make a decision but he did say that in our discussion that there are two fees. There is a licensing fee and there is a permit fee, and he indicated that because the Fisher Cats are not a non-profit nor is Clear Channel radio a non-profit, however, there is a non-profit involved, the Manchester Community Health Center, that is cooperating with the Fisher Cats. And also he

indicated because of this and because of the fact that the fireworks can be viewed by the general public without any expense, he said that it probably wouldn't break precedence or establish precedence if the licensing fee were waived but the permit fee were still in existence because of the noise permit that obviously we take in place because of that activity. I'm just presenting it to the members of the committee to see what their thoughts might be.

Alderman O'Neil stated just for clarification from Alderman Shea, the recommendation or the suggestion was to waive the permit fee but not the noise permit.

Alderman Shea responded there is a licensing fee, to waive that, but to keep in place the permit fee because the permit fee involves a noise type of situation.

Alderman O'Neil stated thank you.

Alderman Katsiantonis asked did we do the same thing last year? Have we ever done something similar to that?

Ms. Heather Freeman, Assistant City Clerk, replied I'm not sure if we've done it for this specific event, but I do believe it's been done in the past.

Alderman Katsiantonis stated okay, thank you.

Alderman O'Neil moved to waive the fair permit/license fee of \$300.00, but to not waive the noise permit/live outdoor entertainment fee of \$200.00. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion. The motion carried with Chairman Greazzo voting in opposition.

Chairman Greazzo addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. Communication from the Chamber of Commerce regarding a plaque given to the City by the Manchester, UK delegation.

Chairman Greazzo stated I don't really think this is an action item is it. Are we just accepting?

Ms. Freeman replied I believe in their letter they were asking that the plaque be taken out of the vault and placed in a prominent place in city hall or that they display it at the chamber. So I think they were looking for some type of motion.

Alderman O'Neil asked why don't we refer this to the city clerk for proper placement. Can I do a follow-up after that on this item, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Greazzo replied sure.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Gamache, it was voted to refer this to the City Clerk for proper placement of the plaque.

Alderman O'Neil stated I was actually going to bring it up under new business tonight, but while we are on this topic I had a chance to debrief with Robin Comstock and Chris King on the UK visit. I know many aldermen met them at different points during their visit, and maybe we could do it either before the full board or refer it to the Committee on Job Creation and Economic Development for a Chamber presentation. Apparently there are quite a few businesses in the city that do business in the UK and some that actually have a physical presence with

offices in the UK, including in Manchester, England. I can do it under new business if you think it's more appropriate.

Chairman Greazzo stated we can do it now since we're on it.

Alderman O'Neil stated I'll make that motion. I'm open to whether the presentation is to the full board or to that committee, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Greazzo asked who would be giving the presentation?

Alderman O'Neil replied the Chamber of Commerce.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Katsiantonis, it was voted to refer this item to the Committee on Job Creation and Economic Development with the Chamber of Commerce doing the presentation.

Chairman Greazzo addressed item 6 of the agenda:

6. Ordinance amendment submitted by the Police Department to ordinance section 70.40 Towing, by increasing the fees associated with vehicles towed without the consent or authorization of the owner/operator of the vehicle.

Chairman Greazzo asked didn't we do this at our last meeting or is this a separate item altogether?

Mr. Mike Flanagan, Manchester Police Department, replied yes, this was discussed at the previous meeting but this is the actual amended version of the ordinance itself so it was put forth before you. I thought it would be going to the full board for approval at this point.

Chairman Greazzo stated that was my undersatnding. I thought we passed this at our last meeting and it was going to the full board.

Mr. Flanagan stated but again, I don't think you had a revised version of the ordinance itself. That is before you now and I guess at this point, from our prospective, this would be the version we seek to have in place.

Alderman Shea moved to approve this item. Alderman O'Neil duly seconded the motion.

Alderman O'Neil stated I have a question for the lieutenant. Is this time sensitive where this item has to be referred to the full board tonight?

Mr. Flanagan replied time sensitive in the sense that the tow companies haven't had an increase since 2005. So I don't think there's an immediate need.

Alderman O'Neil asked so it could be referred to the next board meeting?

Mr. Flanagan replied I believe it could. I wouldn't wait much beyond that.

Chairman Greazzo called for a vote on the motion. There being no one opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Greazzo addressed item 7 of the agenda:

7. Communication from James Burkush, Fire Chief, requesting permission to issue the proposed RFP for ambulance service.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Katsiantonis, it was voted to discuss this item.

Mr. James Burkush, Fire Chief, stated good evening, committee members. With me is Deputy Nick Campasano and also a few members of the committee are here who put the RFP together. I guess we would like to discuss how we got to this point of requesting to issue this RFP. In October the Committee on Administration/Information Systems asked us about integrating EMS response and transport in the Manchester Fire Department. Looking at that project I felt that it was prudent to reconvene the ambulance committee that put together the current ambulance contract RFP and proposal, which we did. On that committee were two aldermen, Alderman O'Neil, Alderman James Roy; William Sanders, Finance Director; Tom Arnold, Deputy City Solicitor; Tom Dupre, Elliot Hospital medical director; and also our medical director; my staff; and members of Local 856. In looking at the project we felt that currently we are in the third year of the current ambulance contract with the current vendor. We felt that now would be the time to issue a new contract so that we could get a vendor and their expertise to recommend to us a model of integration of emergency medical services delivery into the city. We felt that we would work this RFP two ways to get us possibly another vendor with possibly more revenue for the City and have that vendor develop us a plan so that we could integrate EMS into the department if the City chose to do it and if it was financially feasible to do that. We looked at possibly a three or five or seven year plan into implementation. We know we had significant challenges financially and significant resources would be needed. So that is how we got to where we are today. Deputy Campasano can talk about all the specifics of the current RFP, the time we feel we should be out for it, and anything that the committee has to offer.

Mr. Nick Campasano, Deputy Fire Chief, stated thank you. You each have a packet and within the packet is a handout of some slides. If you turn to the last page, page four, that highlights the items that we were looking to accomplish in the new RFP. As Chief Burkush mentioned, the first item with the term is five and a half years. You'll see that all of the timeframes fall on the half year and that is to get the new contract in line with our fiscal year. One of the issues that we have currently is that our contract ends with our ambulance service in December. Our fiscal year ends obviously in June. So we're always trying to guess what that last year of reimbursement is, whereas if we can get the contract on the fiscal year, everything falls in line with our budget. So the term of the contract is five and a half years, and as with most contracts under the procurement code, there would be the option for two one-year extensions. Within the contract there is a clause that allows the City after two and a half years or 30 months to terminate without cause. This contract would be a performance based versus a dedicated number of ambulances type contract. Currently we require four ambulances 24 hours a day on duty. That is not the best way for a vendor to provide EMS service because we have seen, for instance, Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. we run out of ambulances because the demand exceeds those four ambulances, yet in the evening three ambulances would probably suffice. So what we did is we changed, and we didn't make this up, we've looked at existing contracts around the country, and we went to a performance based, which basically says that the vendor must respond to 90% of all EMS calls within eight minutes and that is a NFPA standard and acceptable standard for emergency response times. It doesn't matter if the vendor gives us 100 ambulances, one ambulance, or ten ambulances, and that allows flexibility for a vendor to be able to dynamically staff and place ambulances in service as needed. They could ramp up during the day, decrease at night, so it allows the vendor flexibility. We also put in additional safeguards to ensure contract compliance. We added about six pages in the new contract, which provides for fines when the contractor doesn't meet the response requirements. It

applies fines when the contractor's personnel do not leave appropriate documentation at the emergency room. All of the issues that we've looked at over the past two years we, again, copied from other contracts but we put them in this contract to give us more teeth in compliance. We also require each vendor to supply us with a transition plan and we ask them to provide three models. One model would be the Fire Department providing basic life support and transport with the vendor providing advanced life support, almost a fly car, paramedics, a rapid response vehicle. The second option was the Fire Department providing ALS service, paramedic engines, and the vendor providing VLS service and transport. And the third option was the Fire Department providing everything. So we're asking the vendor to provide us models on how we would accomplish that transition, have it over multiple years, three, five, and seven years, and have the models broken down into phases, standalone phases, with evaluation periods in between so that the City could look and say we now want to try implementing phase I, which may be just putting paramedics on our engines. There would be an evaluation period, and if the City decided that's all we want to do, there would be no obligation. The transition plans themselves are not an obligation to the City. The contract states that at any time, the City reserves the right to renegotiate with the vendor to implement a transition plan or any portion of a transition plan. But there is no obligation to do that. The transition plans in the RFP become property of the City. So if we had five vendors, each of the vendors would be providing us with their idea of models. The City would have all of those models and can choose from any of them, if they choose, or none of them, to implement the transitions in the future. And then we had also added emphasis on customer satisfaction and billing processes. We require a customer service office within the city, we require things like the billing address, the billing number, all of those local identifications on billing information. Currently we have bills that go out from AMR that have an eight hundred number for them to contact AMR, and if someone calls from the 603 area code, it goes to the local office here on Pine

Street. But if you call from a cell phone or if you call from your office out of state during lunch, you're still going to the Ohio office, you're not going to a local office. We increased from 60 days to 90 days the amount of time that an individual has before they are sent to collections because that seemed to be an overriding complaint, the rapid nature that customers were being sent to collections before the insurance had a chance to process. Those are the highlights of what we put into the new RFP. We have three sections that are not filled in. One is the reimbursement for dispatch, the second area is cost of oversight of the contract, and the third is the percentage over Medicare that the vendor would be allowed to charge, and those are the three items that typically are negotiated once one or two vendors are chosen. Typically if you want to increase your reimbursement, your rates typically go up to the residents. If you really want to concentrate on lowering the rates to the residents, your reimbursements typically go down. So that's the only part that is negotiable in the contract, and those you'll see in your copy are blank.

Alderman Shea stated the present contract that we have runs until when?

Mr. Campasano replied December of this year.

Alderman Shea stated so if an RFP were sent out, there would be no interruption of services from March until December. Beyond that date then what would transpire if, for instance, another company bid on the RFP and it was better? How long would that be?

Mr. Campasano replied whoever the new vendor was, whether it is the incumbent or a different company, they would be required to be in place by January 1st, so there would be no interruption in service.

Alderman Shea asked and the RFP is coming from where if it were to be accepted? Coming from the Fire Department, the City?

Mr. Campasano replied the departments typically release the RFP. It would be coming from the Fire Department.

Mr. Burkush added the Fire Department has oversight over the current ambulance contract.

Alderman Shea asked and who would evaluate the companies? Is there a committee that you mentioned that would do that or how is that going to be handled?

Mr. Campasano replied when we originally went out to draw up this present contract, the committee that the chief described earlier was put together and we reviewed the qualifications and then made a recommendation to the board. We would anticipate that would be the same process.

Mr. Burkush stated that would be the same thing. Any recommendation would come back to this committee and then to the full board before any award of the bid would happen.

Alderman Shea asked but the committee would make a judgment concerning the vendors' qualifications and so forth?

Mr. Burkush replied we would probably make a recommendation. That is correct.

Chairman Greazzo asked chief, have you approached AMR about any of these things that you're trying to do to work with them on the goals that you're trying to achieve? Or do you just want to go out for RFP and then hope that they bid on it as well and work with you at that point?

Mr. Burkush replied I think we are looking in our contract for better controls. It seemed that the present contract was lacking, although the controls that we felt that the board and the citizens wanted, basically the best control would be a City run operation, a total City run operation as we do with the plowing of our streets and picking up of our trash, this City has chosen that they want the direct control. To me that's what we have seen during this process and sometimes it is problematic to be in control of a private company in certain instances, and that's why what we're looking to do is tighten up the contract a little bit. Yes, they opened the local billing office, which was at the request of the City, they've provided a local phone number, but still we haven't been able to cure all the problems that we've seen.

Mr. Campasano stated one of the other issues that came up during the committee meetings, and this was at a time when there was some publicity about AMR in various locations throughout the state and in Massachusetts losing contracts, there were organizational changes, and I remember there was one meeting and we looked at the existing contract and we kind of scratched our heads and said what happens if tomorrow, for whatever reason, this company is not here, and not AMR but any company providing the ambulance service for the City. The City would be very hardpressed to provide ALS service to the residents for a short period of time and that's critical. So what we did in this new contract is put in safeguards such as if there is a major breach, the City reserves within 72 hours to be able to take over the buildings and ambulances in a lessee-lessor relationship. So we would just need to provide personnel on day two after something like that

happened and we could still continue to provide EMS services. So if all things were equal and AMR were to be the vendor that was awarded this contract, we would be the same as we are today but we would have much more control and safeguards for the City in the event that for whatever reason if that service ended on the vendor's part.

Mr. Burkush stated and there were some things you asked about...

Chairman Greazzo interrupted I just wanted to know if the things that you're looking for this RFP, have you discussed them with AMR and your're going out for RFP because you didn't get the satisfactory answers from them whether or not they're willing to work with you on these things or are you're just going out for an RFP because it's something that you chose to do?

Mr. Burkush replied we're looking to do more control than what we currently have.

Mr. Campasano added and we can't change the current contract.

Alderman Roy stated thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to speak. Chief and deputies and even Alderman Gamache probably remember back in the 1980s when we had the ambulance and we go rid of it. I was one of the individuals that didn't think it should leave then. I was the minority but I still believe today that the right place for the ambulance is in the fire service. But Deputy Campasano hit on a great point about the huge impediment that we have in the fire service and that is the dynamic staffing issues about how we can do that because we're not set up for that. That is an important thing to look at. During these meetings Dr. Dupre had pointed out that we want to assure everybody that the care in the field is second-to-none. AMR is delivering excellent care in the

field, that isn't the problem, and one of his comments was all we're going to do is change who controls the medics in the field, why are we doing this, and the issue that I brought up was that we had problems with the billing. As we went through this process, and I was behind this 100%, I know we had problems with the billing but what I heard last week and I haven't seen anything in writing or anything, was that there's been an agreement reached between AMR and an insurance company that didn't have an agreement before that led to most of the billing problems. If that's the case, and, again, I haven't seen anything in writing, I still believe that if we can work it out financially, that EMS should be in the fire service, but I think that's a huge important piece the committee didn't get a chance to look at, that that problem has been taken care of because there are other options out there. And I'm not saying we're going to do any of these things, but it's something that I think that that group unfortunately didn't have a chance to look at. There's another option for a one-year extension with AMR. Am I correct.

Mr. Campasano replied yes.

Alderman Roy stated but it has to be a one-year extension, it can't be six months to line us up with the fiscal year, it can't be 18 months, it has to be one year.

Mr. Campasano replied correct. There are two one-year options.

Alderman Roy stated and the other thing to be said about this whole thing is if this RFP goes out, it doesn't mean we're going to take it under the fire service because if it doesn't work out monetarily and it's going to cost \$1.5 million, I know I'm not voting for it.

Mr. Campasano stated correct. This RFP is only to pick a vendor, they provide options, but none of those options could be implemented unless the board approved going back to negotiate with the vendor after a contract was signed. The contract is just for the provision of EMS services as of today.

Alderman Roy stated this may sound silly coming from me, but I'm wondering if it isn't the appropriate thing, and you can alleviate my fears here or not if you're not at liberty to do it, but if in fact that agreement has been reached between AMR and that insurance company, should we send this back to that group to look at it with fresh eyes with that new information, have the discussion with everybody there, what we should do, and then bring it back here again? And I leave that question to you.

Mr. Campasano responded I understand the question and there was a lot of emphasis put on a negotiation and getting a contract with Anthem, but when you look at the entire picture, Anthem reimbursement only makes up 4.5% of the billed patients and 5%. We have 34% self-pays, people who are paying out of their pocket, 14% Medicare, and 37% Medicaid. So I know there was a lot of emphasis placed on getting a contract with Anthem, and I'm sure part of it was because our employees are covered under Anthem, but that's a fraction of the total picture of providing EMS to the city. And as I said earlier, if everything was equal, if Anthem walked in and tomorrow signed this contract, we would still have them in the city, but we would have much more control and much more teeth, we would be a year into whatever transition plans the City wanted to implement. So waiting a year does nothing more than wait a year. We could go out to RFP now and still end up with AMR in the city as the vendor but we would have a much stronger contract and we could potentially have 18 transition plans, three from each vendor if we had. It's estimated we'd have five to six vendors coming into the city.

Alderman Roy stated thanks, and I agree with the fact that we're going to have more control. From what I understood, maybe I'm wrong, most of the billing problems were with that issue between AMR and that insurance company. And I get the percentages and I get the percentages of our make-up of individuals in the city with their ability to pay and all that kind of stuff, and I just thought that was kind of a key piece and to me, it would have been something that I certainly would have liked to have known. It is nobody's fault, the timing was bad, and I'm just wondering if the other people in that group wouldn't feel the same. Maybe I'm the only guy that feels that way.

Mr. Campasano stated we've also provided you a copy of the complaint log from February to today. All of the names and identifying information has been redacted from that, but you can get an idea of some of the issues. The first report in February for a month is roughly half of the second report which we received a couple of days ago. Now that we're about 30 out from the first report, we will start following up with individuals to see if their complaints have been alleviated, if they are satisfied with the resolution of what their issues were.

Alderman O'Neil stated thank you. With all due respect to my colleague, my wife and I have Anthem as our provider. My wife had a hand injury that required ambulance transport and we received three different bills, I think, within a month. In my opinion, it had nothing to do with the fact that AMR did not have an agreement with Anthem. AMR had billing issues, they continue to still have billing issues, and to me that doesn't change my mind on this at all. I guess it is okay that there is a tentative agreement, but it doesn't change, I don't believe it would have changed the fact that my wife and I got three different bills, and if we jumped on the first one, we would have paid a significant amount more money than we actually should have paid, and I don't think that was an Anthem issue. I

think there was some serious, and speaking to the internal auditor as late as a couple of weeks ago, there continues to be billing issues with AMR after what I am aware both personally and in talking to other families that have been through this on this billing issue. It caused a lot of heartache for a lot of people, and we'll never know unless we get the attorney general involved how much money was actually over billed and paid by our consumers. We don't have the staff to go through it, but to me it was a serious issue, AMR dropped the ball, it is not the City's fault, AMR caused these problems, and they failed to take care of them when they were first made aware of them. I think AMR has lost the citizens' trust, so I for one will not vote for an extension with AMR.

Alderman Roy stated thank you for that explanation. I've got to say that the two individuals who pulled me aside at the supermarket were talking about that other issue I was talking about, they didn't talk about other billing issues, so that's what I knew of. But the point is that there was something important that that group didn't get. Maybe the group says let's move ahead parallel, give ourselves some more time, we extend for one year and we put out this RFP at the same time but it starts at the end of that one year extension and we have a little more time. We're pushing to get this RFP out quickly because we're running up against it. If we're going to get the RFP out, we'll need to get it so that whoever comes forward is ready to go January 1st, so it may give us some more time. That's where I was coming from. Thank you.

Alderman O'Neil stated we still have nine months in the existing contract that AMR is going to be expected to still provide quality service, and I think it's enough time to get somebody on board. The plan allows for the flexibility for in the future the City transitioned to part of this. There are approximately 15,000 EMS calls in the city. What is the percentage that we send a fire truck to?

Mr. Campasano replied we respond to approximately 8,000, roughly half.

Alderman O'Neil stated so a little more than 50% we send a fire truck and personnel to and we recover zero.

Chairman Greazzo stated that's understood and this is the reason that I wanted to have it looked at as far as feasibility and implementation and that's not what I see. I see an RFP. I understand the reasoning for wanting to go for an RFP. I don't want to go for an RFP, I want to see the feasibility of the Manchester Fire Department doing, it and if they're not able to do it, then we consider keeping it as a hired service. My question would be to the city solicitor in the meantime. Since I haven't heard any of these billing issues that were supposed to be resolved with Anthem or not, that's news to me. If we were to give an extension, does that allow us any contract negotiation with our current vendor?

Mr. Thomas Arnold, Deputy City Solicitor, replied if it's a contract extension, under the procurement code you have to extend the contract with the same price and on the same terms and conditions. So absent some special language in the contract, no, you typically would not have an opportunity to negotiate with the vendor.

Chairman Greazzo asked does the current contract allow for that, that you're aware of? Or no?

Mr. Campasano replied I don't believe so. It just provides for two one-year extensions.

Attorney Arnold stated that is my recollection.

Chairman Greazzo stated that's fine. Is there any sort of structure or plan or anything that you guys had worked on as far as feasibility of bringing it to the Manchester Fire Department, and if so, why didn't we get any of that?

Mr. Campasano replied we did a number of things. The first thing we did was we tried to identify the model and we quickly found out that if you've seen one fire EMS based model, you've seen one fire EMS based model because they vary around the country. So the first thing we did was to do an apples to apples comparison. What would it cost the City to replicate what AMR is providing us today? Based on those comparisons, we basically broke even, about a \$200,000 profit for the year. But when you take into account the loss for the dispatch services, it came out to no profit. But then you had to add in the capital costs, we had to take into account training. To train a paramedic takes 18 months, \$10,000 per individual, then they need a year experience before they can run on the ambulance. So it quickly became apparent that there was no way that by January, or even the following January, the Fire Department could bring in the EMS services. So that is why we wanted to rely on vendors who do this routinely, large vendors, EMS providers, to provide transition models, and we wanted to rely on their expertise, have them at their expense provide various models that we could then take, look at, evaluate, and then determine which one of those models would be feasible.

Alderman Shea stated actually this is a new dimension. In other words, the Fire Department ultimately, and maybe I'm jumping the gun, is the intent for the Fire Department to ultimately provide the services that are now being provided by AMR?

Mr. Burkush replied I think the intent here is to let the board to set the policy the way the board wants to see fit, and that is one of the reasons why we looked at a two and a half year option for the aldermen to decide what policy they want to do, whether they want to take EMS in-house. We believe, and some aldermen believe, that it should be in-house. But, again, you're dealing with a significant financial commitment up against the tax cap. I'm estimating about a 30% increase in my budget to take that in-house.

Alderman Shea asked you would have to add how many more people to your staff?

Mr. Burkush replied to do an apples to apples comparison, about 35 people.

Alderman Shea stated 35 more firefighters to handle that aspect. That is kind of a large percentage of personnel.

Mr. Burkush stated and that's why we decided to go out to this RFP to come up with some other models that a paramedic engine company or an ALS chase vehicle that could recoup some of the current money that's out there that the City is doing and going to it in a phased-in approach, go take one step at a time, and see if it works out and then go to the next step.

Alderman Shea stated right now, because AMR is providing the services, we are incurring no expense as far as the city is concerned. Is that correct?

Mr. Campasano replied correct. We actually receive a stipend for our dispatch service.

Alderman Shea stated so basically...

Chairman Greazzo interjected can I interrupt you there Alderman Shea, because there is a cost because we send 50% of our people to these responses in the first place. That right there alone is a cost to the City, which is why I'd like to take a look at it where the numbers fall. Sorry to interrupt.

Alderman Shea stated thank you.

Mr. Campasano responded you are correct. It's roughly 75% of our responses are EMS based.

Alderman Shea stated getting back, it is costing the City some money because obviously dispatch service is going, but what we're going to incur is the additional cost of adding an additional amount of personnel to the Fire Department in order to provide services that are now being provided by AMR.

Mr. Campasano responded correct. If we were tomorrow to just walk into providing service that AMR is providing today, there would be a significant increase in costs, and that was one of the reasons why we looked at a gradual implementation over time. If we were to start hiring paramedics, as an example, we could implement paramedic engines on the outskirts of the city to provide ALS service, they would also be firefighters, but we could recoup those costs, we could charge for those costs. Currently, because our ambulances are so busy, we don't have the ability to cross staff. We go to 8,000 calls a year, but our average on-scene time is five minutes, so that engine is out of service for roughly five minutes. If those same personnel were providing ambulance service, they would be out of service for almost 45 minutes. So we've seen fire departments around Manchester and throughout the State of New Hampshire that do both, but they cross staff. When they have a building fire, they don't have an ambulance, they

call mutual aid or if their ambulance is out at the hospital, they don't have the personnel to get on their engine. We're too busy for that.

Alderman Shea asked if the Fire Department were to take over, would you still provide what you're providing now? In other words, there would still be that cost that's being incurred now, there would be a fire truck going to a home and then there would be others.

Mr. Campasano replied yes. We follow the NFPA recommendation, which says an EMT basic level with an AED, an automatic external defibrillator, should arrive within four minutes and that's what the role our fire engines play. They get there within four minutes because that's that golden period, if you will, that we get a heart started or can stop a life threatening situation. And then we require that ALS, or the standard requires ALS services get there within eight minutes and that's where we took that performance standard. So we arrive first, we provide immediately life threatening care, and then ALS follow-up to provide that additional advanced level and transport.

Alderman Shea stated thank you for your explanation.

Alderman Osborne stated thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is not a question at all, this is just a comment. I remember when this came back three years ago and we were fighting over Rockingham or AMR, and I am one of the ones, I don't think there were very many, who voted against the transition because Rockingham spent a lot of time with the City of Manchester, 15 or 16 years, or something like that, we had no problems with them at all. But yet everybody wanted to change over to this other company. So I'm just bringing that up now and you can see where we are now. It doesn't make me feel good but at least I know I feel that in my heart I still am thinking about Rockingham, and I don't know to this day why we made

the change from Rockingham to AMR. I still can't figure that one out. That is just a comment. I thank you for your time.

Chairman Greazzo asked Your Honor, did you want to comment before we take a vote on this?

Mayor Gatsas replied yes. I think the interesting part of this whole discussion is about transition. I think that it is easy enough to meet with surrounding communities like Goffstown and Amherst and have them tell us that they provide ambulance service through the Fire Department. But I guess I would ask you, and I think you've probably looked at the financials, in Manchester AMR can you tell me how many people don't pay and how many people don't pay in Goffstown and how many people don't pay in Amherst? Your collection rates would be much different in the city of Manchester than they would be in the surrounding communities. So I think that Mr. Sanders did a quick synopsis with the chief and a few other people in regards to the ability of bringing it in-house and what the cost was going to be. Chief, I think your budget is \$20 million. If you say it's an increase of 33%, then you're going up by \$7 million in your budget. And we can talk about transitioning but it sounds like that's what our plan is, not what it might be, but that's what our plan is. I talked to the chief probably two years ago about the number of calls that we send fire trucks out on and couldn't we send two firemen or three firemen in a much smaller vehicle to respond to those 8,000 calls. That's certainly something that the discussion should be about and how do we do it and how do we reduce cost because that \$800,000 piece of equipment responding 8,000 times is not a good business model. I know it's important for the safety of our folks, but I can tell you.... I will give everybody a copy of the news release that was released by Anthem and AMR today about them coming to a contract, and I think that that was the biggest problem that we had and that's based on not just one rate but all rates. And I think that the discussion that we had

was that we were anxious to get a contract extension back in December. Chief, weren't you very anxious to get that done?

Mr. Burkush replied yes, we needed a contract.

Mayor Gatsas stated okay, but at that time there was no discussion about going out for a RFP. So I don't know how this all of a sudden became a discussion in the last 45 days, and my understanding is that there is a cover letter that's on that RFP, and I'm not too sure that all people are in the same agreement. My question is, and certainly we have changed it and Anthem is very happy to have, I think AMR is the only certified carrier in the state.

Mr. Campasano responded they are accredited.

Mayor Gatsas asked they are the only accredited?

Mr. Campasano replied correct. They were not when they first came. That was a requirement of the RFP as it would be in this contract. If I could respond. You are absolutely correct. We looked at the surrounding communities and our payor mix is very difficult. We have a high percentage of self-pay, a huge percentage of Medicare and Medicaid, and I think that was one of the reasons why we didn't come back with a recommendation that we should take it over. We understand the financial situation. It's a very risky operation, particularly where we would not be providing inter-facility transports, which is a large portion of a private vendor's income. The transition models were just to provide us with guidance for the future. There is no obligation to do that, and I'll speak frankly, I don't see in the near future the financial feasibility of the Fire Department providing what we have today. But I think we could bring additional revenue into the city in the future by potentially having additional paramedics or having an advanced life support fly

car. There are things that we could do moving forward that could bring additional revenue. But there is no obligation with this RFP to implement any transition.

Mayor Gatsas stated in your comments can you give me an idea, because I know you looked at the financials, what is the non-pay percentage.

Mr. Campasano replied I don't have that information.

Mayor Gatsas stated I think it's around 55%, isn't it.

Mr. Campasano replied I'm not sure. I would be guessing. I don't have that information.

Chairman Greazzo stated I appreciate the billing concerns. I think modern billing has changed quite a bit from the last time the Fire Department had it. I understand there will still be some issues that we have with it, but I wanted to see numbers and statistics. You just mentioned, deputy chief, that you don't think taking it over completely is something that's feasible, but some integration would be, and that's the kind of plan that I was looking for and was hoping to expect at this meeting.

Alderman Katsiantonis stated my suggestion was what if we wait until we get the new information about the contract between Anthem and the ambulance service and see the contract and see what they're doing, then take a vote or send it back to the committee.

Alderman O'Neil stated I have two points. The mayor talked about collection rates. Providence, Rhode Island, fire department provides the service and they transport. They must have the same collection rates we do. Warwick, Rhode

Island, is very similar in demographics and population, they provide transport so I'm sure they have the same collection rates we do. Portland, Maine, there are models out there. Albany, New York, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, there is private transport but the advanced live support is provided by the fire department and they are reimbursed for those services. Even though we may want to say the surrounding towns don't have the same collection rates that we do, many other cities in New England have similar demographics to us and are in this business. We're losing money and the taxpayers of this city are subsidizing a service that we should be receiving some revenue. I may not be 100%, but we respond to 8,000 calls now and get no revenue for it. Having been through this billing issue personally, whether they had an agreement with Anthem or not had nothing to do with the fact that they sent three different bills with three different amounts, and if my wife and I would have jumped on it on the first bill, we would have paid more than what we actually owed. And I wonder if we would have been reimbursed. You may recall folks that at one point there was potential of \$400,000 in overbilling by AMR; \$400,000 that the citizens of this city were overbilled. We asked the internal auditor to do the best he could working with the Fire Department and up until two weeks ago there was still overbilling issues. I don't want to get hung up with that this has something to do with Anthem. It has nothing to do with Anthem. It has to do with business practices of AMR, and in all honestly, maybe the attorney general needs to be investigating it because \$400,000 is a crime. To hang this up on we should delay this because of Anthem, it has nothing to do with Anthem. It's the business practices of AMR. Thank you.

Mr. Campasano stated I just wanted to say this doesn't have to be mutually exclusive. We could go out to RFP and still if we chose not to take any of those, extend the contract by one year. So one doesn't necessarily exclude the other.

Alderman Shea stated what I want to know is I'm in favor of tabling this for the time being so that we can get information from the different areas that Alderman O'Neil quoted. In other words, what their collection rate might be. I'd like to get more information about how these particular fire departments billing is coming through to them.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Katsiantonis, it was voted to table this item with Alderman O'Neil voting in opposition.

Chairman Greazzo addressed item 8 of the agenda:

8. Communication from Normand Lavigne regarding the Cruising Downtown Car Show event.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Gamache, it was voted to approve this item.

Chairman Greazzo addressed item 8 of the agenda:

9. A request to discuss the denial of consideration as a towing contractor with the City.

(Note: Communication from the Police Department is attached.)

On motion of Alderman Katsiantonis, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to enter non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3(II)(c).

A roll call vote was required on the motion. Aldermen Greazzo, O'Neil, Shea, Katsiantonis and Gamache voted yea.

Chairman Greazzo called the meeting back to order.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to deny the request. The motion carried with Alderman Katsiantonis abstaining.

TABLED ITEMS

(A motion is in order to remove any item from the table.)

10. Presentation by Robert Cote, President of Brattle Consulting Group, Inc., regarding SubItUp.com and its impact on the Manchester Police Department.
(Note: Retabled on 8/30/2010; Police Department to evaluate through December 2010. Originally tabled 4/20/2010.)

This item remained on the table.

11. Communication from Mayor Gatsas regarding water shutoff for non-payment of EPD bills.
(Note: Tabled 9/18/2012; City Solicitor to research NH RSAs.)

This item remained on the table.

12. Communication from Mayor Gatsas requesting closing Hanover Street from the Citizens Bank alley entry to Elm Street on Thursdays for the Farmer's Market.
(Note: Tabled 1/15/2013)

This item remained on the table.

13. Communication from Timothy Soucy, 239 Wells Street, regarding an amendment to zoning ordinance 8.08 Agriculture and livestock.
(Note: Tabled 9/18/2012; Information and a draft ordinance revision have been submitted by the Planning & Community Development Director.)

This item remained on the table.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.



Clerk of Committee