

ANDERSON COUNTY COUNCIL ANDERSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

All area newspapers, radio stations and television stations were informed of this meeting in compliance with the guidelines set forth in the *Freedom of Information Act*:

Chairman Tommy Dunn, Presiding
Special Called Meeting

Corrected MINUTES

July 13, 2015 -
6:01p.m.

Kimberly A. Poulin, Clerk to Council

PRESENT

Francis M. Crowder, Sr - District One

J. Michelle Cole – District Three

Tom Allen - District Four

Ken Waters – District Six

M. Cindy Wilson -District Seven

Rusty Burns – County Administrator

Kimberly Poulin -Clerk to Council

- Gracie S. Floyd – District Two – Absent

A verbatim transcript of the meeting is hereto attached for your approval. The regular business meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Poulin
Clerk to County Council

State of South Carolina

County of Anderson

ANDERSON COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 13, 2015

IN ATTENDANCE:
TOMMY DUNN, CHAIRMAN
FRANCIS M. CROWDER
M. CINDY WILSON
TOM ALLEN
J. MICHAEL COLE
KEN WATERS

ALSO PRESENT:
RUSTY BURNS
KIM POULIN

1 TOMMY DUNN: If you would I'd call this
2 meeting to order of July the 13th County Council. At
3 this time we all rise to Invocation and Pledge of
4 Allegiance.

5 **(INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE BY TOMMY DUNN)**

6 TOMMY DUNN: If you would, could I ask
7 EMS Advisory Board members to come up to the front and
8 stand here so we can see them. If y'all wouldn't mind,
9 I'm going to ask y'all to introduce yourself so
10 everybody will know everybody. And I know Ms. -- I
11 know two of you ain't here. I know Ms. Sloan's not
12 here. I talked to her and somebody else. Mr. Peace,
13 introduce yourself, please.

14 DONALD PEACE: Dr. Donald Peace.

15 TOMMY DUNN: District 5. Thank you.
16 Mr. Mack.

17 ROY L. MACK: Roy L. Mack, M-A-C-K.

18 TOMMY DUNN: Thank you, Mr. Mack.

19 TERESA MORGAN: Teresa Lett Morgan, District
20 7.

21 ERMA KINNEY: Erma Kinney with District 6.

22 TOMMY DUNN: Thank you.

23 HILDA HARVEY: Hilda Harvey, 1.

24 TOMMY DUNN: Thank y'all very much. I'm
25 going to start off saying I appreciate each and
26 everyone of y'all taking time to serve Anderson County.
27 Appreciate it very much what y'all do. The reason I
28 called this meeting tonight was two-fold. Heard y'all
29 had a meeting the other night and had some questions
30 might not been satisfied or couldn't get the answer or
31 didn't think good. I'm a big believer -- come up
32 through the fire service. I want to stop rumors. I
33 already heard a couple of them today going around. So
34 that's what I'm having this meeting for. Heard Mr.
35 Stoller called an emergency meeting tonight and do
36 this. Think the Council is going to take no action
37 tonight. Ain't about that at all. It's about y'all
38 had a meeting Thursday night or whenever it was and had
39 some issues come up and I'm here to -- and the rest of
40 the Council is too -- and I invited them to make sure
41 see if we can get to the --get y'all answers that
42 y'all need. Anybody want some anybody else. Who wants
43 to start off?

44 TERESA MORGAN: I appreciate y'all having
45 this meeting and allowing us to come before you. The
46 first thing is, we are very proud of our Council and
47 our county and we are proud to be a part of it. Some
48 of the issues that came up the other night literally
49 were because some things have gone on in one of our
50 districts that we were not made aware of until after

1 the fact, which is not unusual. I think -- I did take
2 a poll of the Council -- I mean the commissioners that
3 were there to ask them how often we actually talk to
4 our Council person. And Ms. Wilson is mine and we talk
5 frequently. I generally call her after each meeting to
6 let her know what's happened. And so I think there's
7 just been a breakdown in communication.

8 I think that we think about things -- I think
9 the biggest thing is perception. How we all perceive
10 things occurring rather than really looking to see what
11 was meant by both sides. So all we want to do is to
12 make sure that we've honestly looked at every avenue we
13 possibly can to do the best we can for the citizens of
14 this county with EMS.

15 I've been a critical care nurse now, and now I work
16 pediatric at home on ventilators so EMS is very
17 important to me. I've been a nurse for thirty-seven
18 years. And I just want to make sure that everything is
19 right because I have been in the back of that ambulance
20 with people and making sure they're getting there. And
21 right now we have got the most amazing situation here
22 in Anderson County with EMS, especially in comparison
23 to the rest of the counties in the state of South
24 Carolina. I think we've been put into this position by
25 Medicare, Medicaid and the new plan of action and I
26 think that it's -- you know, we have to work even
27 harder to come together to be as amicable as we can
28 trying to take care of our citizens.

29 So all we ask -- all I ask -- is that everyone
30 have the same relationship that me and Ms. Wilson have
31 as far as being in contact with each other. There's a
32 lot of things she could not tell me, which I understood
33 that. But what I guess I don't understand is why could
34 we not sit down, the Council and the commission, when
35 this issue came up in Williamston, sit down together
36 and try to find out what we exactly we were going to
37 do. Next thing I heard, like yourself, I heard rumors
38 that the mayor of Williamston was asking for meetings
39 behind closed doors. I don't know. I wasn't there.
40 It's perception once again. So I'm just trying to make
41 sure that we're doing everything we possibly can in an
42 open manner and for the best of our citizens. Thank
43 you.

44 TOMMY DUNN: Thank you. I just want to
45 state that this Council's goal and certainly is mine
46 about doing what's best for the citizens of Anderson
47 County. We definitely got to do something. And as far
48 as the situation of the Advisory Board, anytime any of
49 y'all --each one of y'all been appointed by Council
50 District. Any time y'all got any questions or

1 comments, you need to call your Council person and ask
2 and find out what you call it. If you can't get the
3 answers, you think you know, they should be able to get
4 them for you. Myself, the Williamston situation sort
5 of little bit-- y'all's rumors and this and that and
6 the other going around, but this thing happened pretty
7 quick. And it was acted on quick for the best interest
8 of the citizens over there and the county as a whole,
9 what was done.

10 Just want to thank -- couple of things been out
11 there about the authority, what the Administrator done.
12 He had full authority to do what he done. Council give
13 it to him. Told him to make sure the situation, that
14 the citizens in Williamston had EMS protection.

15 TERESA MORGAN: Yes, sir.

16 TOMMY DUNN: Do what's best. And that's
17 what he done.

18 Second thing. I know it's been brought up by
19 somebody about a contract and why -- was it open.
20 Everything we done was legal and open and contracted on
21 -- in contact with the attorney, hand in hand about it.
22 Certain things is done, everything ain't done on a bid
23 -- what you call a bid process or procurement process.
24 It's done, you got professional services comes up it's
25 under a different thing than emergency situation. And
26 all this is looked at and done and on the short thing.
27 I know it's been contacting-- question about Squad 9
28 or Greg Shore's EMS service not having a contract right
29 now around the city of Anderson. And the reason that
30 don't we in a hold and looking at everything about the
31 EMS system -- I get to that in just a minute -- and you
32 don't give no contract to nobody when you're sitting
33 here and don't know what you're going to do. But we
34 got to do something in Anderson County. I'll agree
35 whole heartedly we got a great system and a good
36 system, but that don't mean it can't be better, because
37 what we got ain't -- we just start off ever what we get
38 is money. And I know it takes money. I've got a
39 letter up here right now from Pelzer asking for more
40 money. There ain't no money -- we can't raise -- state
41 law won't let us raise taxes enough to give EMS
42 everything what they want. We give them all -- what
43 they can get doing something or other. Can't operate
44 on the money we give them. And we can't give you no
45 more. We got to figure out a solution to this and do
46 something or another. Wouldn't y'all agree?

47 TERESA MORGAN: Yes, sir.

48 TOMMY DUNN: And that's what we-- that's
49 what we in the process of trying to work through. The
50 Council has asked the Administrator to look out for a

1 consultant to come in, talk -- look at the county, look
2 at our system, how can we improve, how we can tweak it,
3 what needs to be done to it. And at that time, when
4 there's one hired and one's talked about when done,
5 everybody, Advisory Board, EMS people, everybody will
6 be brought up to that discussion about what it is. And
7 that's where-- y'all know now-- y'all know just as
8 much as I do and y'all over there probably know more
9 about Williamston situation than I do.

10 TERESA MORGAN: May I?

11 TOMMY DUNN: Yes, ma'am.

12 TERESA MORGAN: This isn't the first time
13 we've had a problem with Williamston. Ms. Wilson, if
14 you recall, I don't even -- it's probably been ten
15 years ago at least, we had a similar issue. And so,
16 Belton and Pelzer and Metro, I believe, they all
17 stepped up to the plate and offered to kind of come in
18 as a triangle and take care of the situation. It's my
19 understanding at that time -- and please correct me
20 that that was going to be a feasible way of doing it
21 and it wasn't really going to cost us any more to do it
22 that way. That's what I'm talking about.

23 TOMMY DUNN: Well let me -- excuse me
24 right there. It ain't costing-- we're saving money by
25 the route we're going now. It ain't cost us no more
26 money.

27 TERESA MORGAN: Well, and I understand that.
28 But what I'm saying is, if we had gotten together -- if
29 the Administrator or yourselves had called and said,
30 you know, we need to kind of hash this out real quick.
31 So we need to have an emergency meeting just like we're
32 having tonight. And sit down and say does anybody have
33 a solution? This is what we have to offer. This is
34 what we see feasible. Because everybody on this
35 commission -- the majority of us have a medical
36 background. The majority of us -- I've worked with Dr.
37 Don Peace for thirty years, I guess. Ms. Sloan, I
38 worked with her in the emergency room for five or six
39 years. So we've got the knowledge to try to help you
40 on that level. No, do we have financial backgrounds?
41 No. I have to balance my budget, but I don't have to
42 balance anybody else's budget.

43 But if we could sit down when all -- something like
44 this comes up with whatever commission you've got and
45 say, okay guys, this is why we have appointed you. We
46 want to rack your brain here. We want to use every
47 resource we've got to try to come up with it. I
48 understand that in this particular situation, you
49 didn't -- maybe haven't been involved with the
50 Williamston situation as long as I have. I've been

1 I was on the board in Belton from '91 till I was
2 appointed by Ms. Wilson. So I was very much there in
3 the heat of things when we had problems to begin with.
4 Do I have all the answers? No. I'll be the first one
5 to admit that. But I do have the best interest, as you
6 do, for the people of this county and whatever that
7 takes for us to ensure that, not just physically, but
8 financially, we're here to do that as a group. We're
9 not the enemy.

10 TOMMY DUNN: And that's what -- like I
11 said a few minutes ago, once we get a report back and a
12 study whatnot, we want to work hand in hand with the
13 Advisory Board. That other night or the other week
14 when it happened, was a pretty quick thing. Don't
15 think every options wasn't looked at and the Council,
16 along with the Administrator, thought we come to the
17 best solution for the people of Williamston in the long
18 term.

19 TERESA MORGAN: And I'm not denying that at
20 that moment, but do you understand where I'm coming
21 from?

22 TOMMY DUNN: Yes, ma'am.

23 TERESA MORGAN: Well, I appreciate you
24 taking

25 TOMMY DUNN: And that's why I say,
26 anytime you feel like that, I wish each of you or one
27 of you or whatnot would pick up the phone and call our
28 Council members.

29 TERESA MORGAN: I did.

30 TOMMY DUNN: Go talk to them.

31 TERESA MORGAN: I did. Thank you.

32 TOMMY DUNN: Okay. Yes, ma'am. Anyone
33 else on the commission want say anything? Mr. Allen?

34 TOM ALLEN: Yeah, I just have a
35 question. You know, looking at the survey that was
36 done, I think you've all seen this, about the squads
37 and the net income or losses. And a whole lot of them
38 in here show net losses for the year in dollars. And
39 you had mentioned Medicare, Medicaid and probably the
40 new Obamacare or Affordable Health Care plan, whatever.
41 My question is, money's been lost here. Do you foresee
42 losing more money in the future because of the way the
43 healthcare system is set up nationwide? Yes or no. I
44 -- in other words, I don't know how it affects you.
45 Maybe somebody could explain that. Thank you.

46 DONALD PEACE: Well, I don't know that I'm
47 an expert. I've written two published articles on the
48 Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion process.
49 And this is a challenge that I think we're only on the
50 verge of. I can see where in the next number of years

1 it's going to dramatically get worse unless we have a
2 better and more substantial plan for paying for
3 healthcare in our communities.

4 But in the shortfall, I see where -- that we can
5 only continue to lose funds. Obviously the cost of
6 care from the side of the individual in terms of what
7 we pay with our rates, are substantially higher than
8 what they have been before, even with the insurance
9 exchange for those persons who are not fortunate enough
10 to be employed and have some substantial compensation
11 through their employer to help offset some of those
12 expenses, we're just seeing that that cost of care
13 going dramatically higher and higher every day.

14 And so, to answer your question in a short way, I
15 personally don't see how we can not continue to bleed
16 to death as we have continued to done -- to do. And my
17 hat's off truly to the EMS personnel in our community
18 here. They're doing an incredible job trying to
19 maintain a quality of care and a continuum of care from
20 the patient's home to the hospital bedside, getting
21 them from Point A to Point B. And I think they're done
22 an outstanding job.

23 Truly we recognize there are some substantial
24 shortfalls in funding and financing and from the tax
25 infrastructure that you guys provide for these agencies
26 to sustain. That's only-- we understand that
27 shortfall. I just think we're going to continue to see
28 these kinds of things. Cost of care is going to
29 continue to rise. Our payrolls -- our bank accounts
30 continue to shrink and the cost of living continues to
31 increase and the cost of care is going to continue to
32 increase. So we're caught in the middle. And my hat's
33 off to these EMS squads who get out there and do the
34 best they can and manage their funds the best they can.
35 But quite frankly, I think many of them are in just a
36 severe losing process. It's going to be very difficult
37 for them to ever maintain that type of care that maybe
38 they could have done a number of years ago with the
39 same amount of funding.

40 TOM ALLEN: And I, too -- I want to add,
41 I think what the EMS crews do is fantastic, and I thank
42 you. I sincerely do. What would we do in this county
43 without you? And I understand the situation you're in.
44 And you stated that medical care costs will continue to
45 rise, but is there a why, an answer to that? What's
46 causing them to go up? Do you know?

47 DONALD PEACE: Well ---

48 TOM ALLEN: I don't mean to put you on
49 the spot. I don't ---

50 DONALD PEACE: It's okay. I live on the

1 spot. So that's okay.

2 I think, honestly, we were not ready to have the
3 Affordable Care Act thrust upon us. We had worked,
4 ideally since 1968, under a financed healthcare system
5 that's predominantly governmentally funded. And so we
6 have seen that grow -- that growth and development in
7 both from the federal fiscal side of the House
8 providing funding to our healthcare infrastructure to
9 now that dwindling amount of money going into the
10 infrastructure. Keep in mind, too, we have so many
11 more people on the boat, as it were, requiring
12 healthcare that's not being compensated by employers or
13 out of pocket. And of course, the Affordable Care Act
14 was really, truly, put in place to try to provide a
15 greater expansion to numbers of persons who are able to
16 get that healthcare resource. But what it failed to
17 do, and I don't mean to be preachy here, but what this
18 failed to do, is we're not --we don't have enough
19 money going into the system to keep it viable. And so,
20 that's on a macro level. On a micro level we certainly
21 understand. We have fiscal constraints from your
22 perspective. Folks, they have the constraints of many
23 things going on on their side. They have persons that
24 they go and in good faith attempt to provide good
25 quality care to, get them to their local hospital and
26 expect the measure of compensation on behalf of that
27 person's insurance or out of pocket. Many times these
28 organizations are not being compensated at all. The
29 individual may not pay their bill. Or, you know, it's
30 a loss. So it's a significant problem, and yes, I
31 expect this is going to continue to exacerbate and get
32 worse over the course of time.

33 TOM ALLEN: And I think, well, like you
34 said, there are more people entering into the system
35 and that's --us baby boomers can take some of that
36 blame. There's a lot more of us out there needing more
37 care now than there were before.

38 DONALD PEACE: Yeah, I am one of those
39 boomers and I'm consuming as much as I can today.

40 TOM ALLEN: But you mentioned the cost
41 care going up and this is something that I know there
42 was an article in the Charlotte Observer and then there
43 was one out of a Nashville newspaper and they're
44 talking about the cost in states of health insurance
45 going up any place from eighteen to almost forty
46 percent over the next year. So we're all going to be
47 in this boat. And I look at these numbers here. If
48 the county was to try and make you whole, each
49 department, I don't know where we'd get that money
50 from, either. That's a lot of money.

1 DONALD PEACE: Absolutely. And see, these
2 are individual businesses out here, as it were, and you
3 guys are providing some substantial assistance. But by
4 no means are you compensating all of their needs. And
5 I don't know that we can, as a county.

6 But first of all, I just want to say my hat's
7 off to Mr. Burns, who was called the other night, as a
8 means of trying to find some answers. We were being
9 posed with some very serious questions that we had no
10 response to. And my hat's off to you, Mr. Burns, for
11 your willingness to come and, or at least by phone,
12 being able to speak with us and answer some questions
13 that seemed to ameliorate some of the concerns that
14 were being addressed to us. So thank you very much.

15 TOM ALLEN: I thank you. And again I'll
16 kind of reiterate what Mr. Dunn said. What was done
17 here the other night was more or less an emergency
18 stop-gap measure. There's-- you know, we're still
19 trying to figure out what we really need to do. Thank
20 you. Mr. Chair.

21 TOMMY DUNN: Mr. Waters?

22 KEN WATERS: You had mentioned you had
23 written a couple of articles about the Affordable Act
24 Care. Was that correct?

25 DONALD PEACE: Yes, sir.

26 KEN WATERS: Did I hear that? I've read
27 some of the summaries and from what I understand this
28 thing's going to level out in the negative run of it.
29 No matter what we do, it's going to level out and be
30 equally a loss. Is that correct?

31 DONALD PEACE: It's going to be a -- it's
32 always going to be a loss. Anytime that you have more
33 people consuming than the amount of dollars going into
34 the system -- and you know, I'm sort of a country boy
35 at heart here. But I always learned when you're in a
36 hole, quit digging. We haven't learned that as a
37 culture yet.

38 KEN WATERS: That's correct. That's
39 correct. And so, from what I see I agree with what,
40 what I've read.

41 Now, to get back to what we're here for, is
42 the EMS. You guys as an Advisory Board, I appreciate
43 everyone of you taking your time to come do this. But
44 there are going to be things -- we've been working on
45 this probably-- I think it's been ever since I've been
46 here, this has been an issue. And it's not going to
47 get fixed over night, just as you heard the doctor say.

48 Now, all seven of us up here were elected by
49 the people to make decisions. And I take my job
50 serious. I'm going to make a decision. Now, just

1 because you guys don't get a call and we don't ask you
2 individually what you think, that's probably how it's
3 going to happen. Because you are an advisory
4 committee. And I appreciate what you do, don't get me
5 wrong, but when it comes time to make a decision, I'm
6 not afraid to do that. And with the information we
7 get, we're looking at about four or five years worth of
B information and there's still not a good answer and
9 from what it looks like in the future there's not going
10 to be a good answer. The cards we've been dealt, we're
11 going to have to make the decision and so you're just
12 going to have to trust us on that.

13 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 TOMMY DUNN: Thank you. Mr. Crowder.
15 Mr. Crowder.

16 FRANCIS CROWDER: Oh, got to put on my
17 speaker. I actually put a BQ on my thing. Stands for
18 Be Quiet. Well, I don't want to boast, but I've
19 followed the Affordable Care Act since they first
20 drafted draft one. I've read every line of it. The
21 first version, the second version, the third version,
22 the fourth version, the fifth version, the sixth
23 version, the seventh version and the final version.

24 And first of all, South Carolina has been
25 identified as one of several states that are under
26 extreme scrutiny by CMS because of the possibility of
27 over-billing, fraud. Not in our county. And so that
28 has actually placed a significant burden on people like
29 you. I greatly appreciate what you do, because I'm a
30 great believer that if you involve people in the
31 decision-making, it will be more acceptable. I hate to
32 force anything down anybody's throat. Because if you
33 do, people are going to buck up. I'm just that
34 country.

35 Secondly, it is my thought, after looking at
36 the data and analyzing it, that probably one of the
37 problems that you're dealing with is the fact that
38 services that are non-emergent, that are convalescent
39 care, has probably significantly destroyed you, for
40 lack of a better word. Is that true? In other words,
41 carrying people to clinics for dialysis and other
42 things. And so, consequently, I see your business as
43 two types of business, even though you run a squad.
44 You actually have a squad that provides emergency care
45 and you're a squad that provides convalescent care.
46 And in my mind that's two different cost centers. And
47 so, I hope whomever the county selects to do the study
48 will keep that in mind. I hope that they're going to
49 select somebody who are just not counters or bean
50 counters and I don't mean that in a disparaging word,

1 to do the study because there are firms around the
2 country that specialize in this type of environment.
3 And I feel like, as a part of that study, the Advisory
4 Committee should be part of that team that has input
5 into that study. And not be the recipient of the
6 report after the fact. Does everybody hear that?
7 That's my opinion. My other Council members may not
8 share that. I only can speak for myself. But of
9 course, on Council it takes four votes to make anything
10 pass. I do appreciate what you're doing. I know it is
11 a challenge. I actually have spent hours and hours and
12 hours in spare time that I've had lately because I
13 haven't felt too good, in reading up on the different
14 models of providing both convalescent care and
15 emergency medical services ranging from the county-run
16 model, the hospital-run model, ABC model, XYZ model.
17 And there's no one model that fits everything. That's
18 not to say that you cannot come up with a model that
19 will suit Anderson County. But I think that's going to
20 be highly dependent upon the input of all those who are
21 involved. I think citizens need, to an extent, to have
22 input into how emergency services are going to be
23 provided in Anderson County, because I was the
24 recipient for that kind of service four weeks ago when
25 I had to call 9-1-1 and be taken by Med-Shore to the
26 hospital, to ER, which I would give a C or a D for the
27 service, not of Med-Shore but of the emergency room.
28 And so I had a great appreciation of what went on. I
29 looked at everything they did, you know, including the
30 stuff sticking in my arms and the EKG machine being
31 read. And so that gave me a first hand appreciation of
32 what you do and what your staff does. And I can tell
33 you that the people who served me operated in a
34 technically wonderful fashion as well as being
35 compassionate about giving the care that they give.

36 I say that because often that is not the kind
37 of response you can get in institutional healthcare.
38 It has to be based in a level of service where people
39 put their all in it and I think Anderson County EMS
40 providers do do that. And so, with that, it may seem
41 like I was wandering, but I really was not. I knew
42 what I wanted to say, but I just didn't know quite how
43 I wanted to say it.

44 So thank you, Mr. Chairman, and like we would
45 say in Congress, I turn the rest of my time over to
46 you.

47 TOMMY DUNN: Thank you. Ms. Wilson?

48 CINDY WILSON: May I? Oh, thank you, Mr.
49 Chairman. There's no question that when our citizens
50 dial 9-1-1 they expect help within ten minutes and

1 great help and we've been blessed in this county. I
2 know of no complaints for the last several years as far
3 as the quality of care and the response time. It's
4 been an incredible collaborative effort. We have a
5 good Advisory Commission, we have the Chief's Squad and
6 we have the individual squads. And it seems that our
7 dispatch has done a good job, too.

8 What we have now, with the advent of the
9 Affordable Care Act, we have the shifting sands of
10 requirements and it's very difficult for an individual
11 squad to even begin to keep up with the demands. You
12 have the training aspect of it, you have the billing.
13 And in the years past, the convalescence transport
14 pretty much helped support each squad. And there were
15 several things that happened over the years to really
16 wipe the -- knock the feet out from those efforts. For
17 example, I remember several years back a lot of the
18 squads went out and bought more units and then former
19 Governor Sandford then decreed that there would be some
20 group out of Missouri, I think, to do that. So the
21 squads that had just bought new equipment, hired new
22 people, they were left in a jam.

23 So we've had, you know, all kinds of scenarios
24 for the squads to deal with. And they all started out
25 as volunteers borrowing or driving a hearse and it's --
26 it has morphed to this level. And the county and our
27 squads have done a remarkable job adjusting until
28 recent years -- well, until this past year. I know one
29 squad requested that we meet and we talked with
30 Congressman Jeff Duncan and his office because that
31 particular squad was almost totally put under
32 financially because they had been taking a lot of
33 people for convalescent routes and so forth. Their
34 billing -- their revenues were not there. They were
35 being denied approvals and so forth all of a sudden.
36 And they made the simple request through Congressman
37 Duncan's office, they said that they knew there would
38 be another wave of this hitting this fall and they
39 requested that there be some training put in place
40 before that deadline and maybe a phase-in time of a
41 month or two to give them time to adjust. And it seems
42 that as we move through coming up with a model, it will
43 be difficult to have a model that will work now that
44 will work in five years. We've already learned that
45 things have changed so rapidly. But the important
46 thing is so far we've been able to adjust to
47 accommodate all this. We've had one squad that kind of
48 fell by the wayside, but another one stepped up to the
49 bat to carry it on. We're either out of contract or at
50 contract deadlines on some of these agreements and it's

1 been very difficult to figure out how to proceed. So
2 it's going to take all hands on deck to come up with
3 something that will work and have measures in place,
4 perhaps, that give us some adjustability to increased
5 demands and so forth. We know we have an increasing
6 population. We know we've got traffic increasing.
7 That compounds the difficulties for response times.

8 And I know in reading the EMS agreed-upon
9 procedures that Mr. Green was kind enough to work
10 through with each squad, because each squad originated
11 and evolved individually, the accounting for each squad
12 is so dramatically different. And some squads were
13 more dependent on convalescent transports to provide
14 them that base foundation of financial security. And
15 others relied more on the county tax funds that we
16 provided. But it may be time that we pull everybody
17 together and look at some kind of -- as per the
18 recommendation in this report, we look at providing
19 some stronger leadership and direction with the squads
20 in areas of communication, financial training, billing
21 training and the actual training for the emergency
22 care. And perhaps we need to work better on our
23 communication and come up with some common grounds
24 before we head off to areas where some of the squads
25 might have particular differences.

26 But, anyway, I have to say thank you. I've
27 been a recipient, like Mr. Crowder, of our EMS and I've
28 never been so grateful to see squads arrive in all my
29 life as when Williamston and Med-Shore on various
30 occasions came to our -- the rescue in my family and
31 out at our farm. It was just -- it was breathtaking
32 how quickly the help got there and how professional the
33 triage efforts right there on the ground communicating
34 to hospitals and other doctors. We can take great
35 heart in knowing that we do have incredible
36 professionals who do have great care and compassion for
37 their fellow man. So I think that there's a good
38 chance we get this figured out in the not too distant
39 future. Thank you.

40 TOMMY DUNN: Thank you. Mr. Cole.

41 MITCHELL COLE: I, too, have a great
42 appreciation for the rescue squads. My dad was a
43 member of the Fort Rescue Squad for about twenty years,
44 till the education requirements outgrew his education
45 and he couldn't do it anymore. Bottom line, it is all
46 about money and we've got to figure out a way to make
47 it viable for everybody. Working together there's a
48 way we can do that. Thank you.

49 TOM ALLEN: Mr. Chair.

50 TOMMY DUNN: Again. Go ahead, Mr. Allen.

1 TOM ALLEN: Well, just very quickly, to
2 cut to the chase. We've all said a lot of things up
3 here tonight that we kind of all know. But what we
4 need are answers. And even though we will have a
5 survey done and an audit team come in or whatever you
6 want to call them, we're going to have anybody to look
7 at the uniformity of the squads and the way they're
8 going to run?

9 TOMMY DUNN: What I envision and what the
10 Council asked, is a consultant, come a group that
11 specializes in EMS to come in, not audit nobody, but
12 come and look at our system.

13 TOM ALLEN: As a consultant. But I
14 would say the EMS committee, your input will be
15 extremely important. And if you folks could put
16 something together, you know, put it in writing. Step
17 one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight; here's
18 how we think we can do things a little better. We can
19 be more uniform. You may not -- you may still be in
20 the red on dollars, but your input's going to be very
21 important and I would hope you would let me know
22 I'll be more than happy to talk to you. But you know,
23 we need to have your input to go along with this survey
24 that's going to come up. So, that's all I had to say.

25 TOMMY DUNN: Thank you, Mr. Allen. I
26 just want to say again, appreciate everybody and
27 thankful for what everybody's done. But this to
28 come in, there's no easy answers, I just want to make
29 it clear, you know, when this Council come on a few
30 years ago, we put more money in EMS than was there
31 before. And we're still not enough. We still have one
32 go under. So we can't just keep doing the same old,
33 same old what we're doing. And that's what we got--
34 we got -- we have fixed a couple of little spots. We
35 still got dead areas in Anderson County. We shouldn't
36 have these spots. Because, as Ms. Wilson said,
37 response time, it ain't the same in the county. We
38 need to fix it that way. We need the same -- it
39 shouldn't matter if you have a heart attack and need
40 medical care in Pendleton, Iva or Williamston or
41 Anderson, or whatnot, you ought to get the same level
42 of patient care. That's this Council's goal. I hope
43 --hope it's-- and to get the most when you have our
44 money.

45 But like I said, even if we -- if this Council
46 wanted to, we can't raise taxes by state law to give
47 everything we want to. Just can't. So we've got to
48 look at everything. And I don't want to be in no way,
49 shape or form said a while ago, that y'all wouldn't
50 have no input in this thing. But this consultant comes

1 in -- I've been talking to the Administrator about when
2 he pick one --it'll be somebody that don't know
3 nothing about Anderson County, non-biased, and they
4 going to ask input from y'all and everything in the
5 survey and Mr. Allen said survey. But I think it's
6 more of a study what we got and issues and this will be
7 a company that specializes in this kind of thing and
8 see what we can do to get the best things for our
9 citizens of Anderson County.

10 And I do appreciate y'all's time tonight. Mr.
11 Burns, any citizens --yes, ma'am? If you would, step
12 up to the mic so we can hear you.

13 ERMA KINNEY: Ms. Wilson had a very valid
14 point. She said lack of communication.

15 TOMMY DUNN: Yes, ma'am.

16 ERMA KINNEY: And that's what we have so
17 desperately needed. And at the meeting the other night
18 -- at the meeting the other night -- at the meeting --
19 thank you. At the meeting the other night, one of the
20 chiefs pointed out to us that an audit had been made,
21 which I think is wonderful that we would have that
22 made, and the study was done on the financial aspects
23 of it. But they knew nothing about the audit until it
24 was done. Then they ---

25 TOMMY DUNN: Excuse me, ma'am. Who
26 didn't know nothing about it?

27 ERMA KINNEY: The chiefs. And then the
28 they had never received any follow-up work or
29 correspondence on the results. We're going back to the
30 lack of communication. And I think that's what we as a
31 Commission are so interested in being. Is there any
32 purpose for us?

33 TOMMY DUNN: Yes, ma'am.

34 ERMA KINNEY: You know, there hasn't
35 seemed to have been.

36 TOMMY DUNN: Well, that's what we need to
37 work on. You got some things in y'all's job
38 description that needs to be tweaked and we're going to
39 do that at next Council meeting.

40 ERMA KINNEY: Just communications ---

41 TOMMY DUNN: It is. Communication is
42 everything in life.

43 ERMA KINNEY: --- that we need.

44 TOMMY DUNN: But it's like these little
45 things -- but the rescue squads -- I don't like to call
46 them rescue squads -- the EMS providers, the chiefs
47 might not have known, but if it was, it was lack of
48 communication on their part because these people got
49 the information to do this audit from the rescue squads
50 so they did know.

1 ERMA KINNEY: I think that's wonderful.
2 They did.

3 TOMMY DUNN: They had to know. The
4 reason, the reason they haven't got the information is
5 -- is we haven't known what to do with it. We just
6 trying to study -- see what to do if we get it. nd I
7 think Mr. Burns got everybody a copy and asked them to
8 give all the board members a copy.

9 ERMA KINNEY: On Friday.

10 TOMMY DUNN: Today, I think it was
11 Friday, and I hope they'll do that because talking to
12 some board members today they still hadn't got their
13 copy of their audit. So I hope -- communication goes
14 two ways. Hope they can get that.

15 And again, I want to impress, I can't press
16 enough, y'all as EMS Advisory Board, anything you got a
17 question -- just like the other night that could have
18 been well avoided if you just call -- pick up the phone
19 and call the Council member, or call Mr. Burns ahead of
20 time instead of that night. Call your Council members.

21 ERMA KINNEY: We did.

22 TOMMY DUNN: We appreciate it.

23 CINDY WILSON: May I?

24 TOMMY DUNN: Yes, ma'am.

25 CINDY WILSON: One of the things that we
26 discovered recently that we need to make sure everybody
27 understands. A lot -- sometimes there would be a board
28 at a squad. Some of the boards are very active, very
29 informed, very engaged, but some of them apparently are
30 not and didn't realize they had fiduciary
31 responsibility. That brought up a very difficult
32 situation because if the squad is formed or founded on
33 that framework and the board is not staying informed
34 and involved in asking questions and getting
35 information and providing input and guidance to whoever
36 the chief is, it can quickly unravel. And that's one
37 of the issues that we found in one of the -- one in my
38 districts. So that's something that needs to be--
39 that our board members are made aware of. Some boards
40 both corporate and foundations, they will have, for
41 example, insurance to cover board members in case they
42 made a mistake or what have you. But a lot of these
43 people, some of them were very highly educated, but
44 they apparently didn't know what they were responsible
45 for. And that is an issue that we need to address with
46 each of our squads.

47 TOMMY DUNN: We just -- if you would
48 you're exactly right on that Ms. Wilson but ---

49 CINDY WILSON: May I say one more thing
50 real quick?

1 TOMMY DUNN: Yes, ma'am.

2 CINDY WILSON: You see, the county
3 contracts with the squads.

4 TOMMY DUNN: Contracts, I was going to
5 say.

6 CINDY WILSON: And so we have an agreement
7 of what we pay and what we're to receive and those
8 things may need to be adjusted now. And so, it's very
9 important that all of our squads look at their level of
10 service and their funding and what we're requiring of
11 them, and we need to look at all the reports and get
12 together and try to come up with something that works.
13 And we may have to do contracts that are maybe not as
14 long a term or something just to allow some
15 flexibility. There's a lot at play here and it's going
16 to require a lot of brighter minds than mine to come up
17 with the answers. Thank you.

18 TOMMY DUNN: Yes, ma'am. I just want to
19 touch on what you said. That's exactly right. The EMS
20 providers in Anderson County are sub-contractors to us.
21 So we ain't got no say in about their boards or
22 nothing. You're right, they should, anybody on the
23 board ought to well have enough sense enough to know
24 they ought to be -- what their responsibility is and
25 what they're liable for. That's something I'm talking
26 about when -- the system we got needs to be looked at.
27 That was going to come up. We don't have not one say
28 in -- no accountability. Our boards are picked.
29 They're just randomly picked, people looking for them
30 pick them or community votes for them or how-- how's
31 the board's doing; we don't have no say in that. Got
32 none whatsoever. And so, that's something got to be,
33 you know, about the fiduciary duty. All they are is a
34 contract getting thing and like I said, we give them
35 more money and, you know, what we're talking about, you
36 know, we kept talking about the Affordable Care Act,
37 and I understand that, and we're certain. But what
38 we're talking about is emergency calls. That's what
39 we're responsible for for our citizens. Emergency
40 response. Emergency calls. Yes, ma'am.

41 TERESA MORGAN: One last question, or one
42 statement. I think that one aspect we really need to
43 consider and something that I forgot to say initially
44 was, the piece of this puzzle that we're not putting in
45 place, too, is the chiefs themselves. They've been in
46 on the ground level for years, many of them, and they
47 know exactly how the county works, exactly where all
48 the lines are drawn. They know these things. And
49 sometimes I think we -- as a system we have evolved and
50 as a group we have evolved. We used to have a lot of

1 distrust and many other things. But now I think we are
2 more unified so we can actually utilize what we have as
3 a resource, which is these chiefs. And we have Mr.
4 Stoller. You know, he's done an admirable job and I
5 respect him dearly and greatly for what he's done. But
6 we really need to involve these chiefs in this process.
7 As an Advisory Committee we can help, we can
8 help with what we know. But these chiefs are on the
9 ground level. So when the consultant firm comes in, I
10 would like to really see the chiefs involved. And
11 you're right, the board members, when I was on the
12 board, and I'll say Mr. Robertson, in Belton, he made
13 sure we got a financial report every time and I wanted
14 to cry every time I saw it. And this was years ago.
15 Because we were always trying to make a little -- make
16 sure we had everything taken care of. I don't know how
17 in the world he did it, but he did. And he still does.
18 So with that respect we need to make sure these
19 gentlemen are out there and have a say in all this.
20 Thank you.

21 TOMMY DUNN: And I do -- what --
22 everybody and I would say everybody should have a say.
23 But also, it's very important for a fresh pair of eyes
24 in this. Not getting paid or getting no money, got
25 nothing, no dog in this fight. Just work for the best
26 thing. I think that's very important, very important,
27 too. When you got some squads, I said earlier, that's
28 got umpteen thousands and thousands of dollars in the
29 bank and this one over here is just barely getting by,
30 this chief ain't run -- this squad ain't running but so
31 many calls, but that EMS chief might be getting paid
32 this and this one here's running all kinds of calls and
33 like that, which we don't have no say in, that's part
34 of the problem, in my opinion. But the whole issue
35 needs to be looked at.

36 And also, I definitely want the EMS people
37 you brought up about district lines. It's something to
38 think about. You know, that run this in the fire
39 service. That patient's having a heart attack, they
40 don't care how they -- who helps them, how they get
41 there. So this district line thing something, and we
42 still have that going on to this day about this jumping
43 my line. We need to look at what's best for the
44 citizens of Anderson County. And I hope we'll do that.

45 Mr. Burns, you got anybody that signed up?

46 RUSTY BURNS: Mr. Dan Durham.

47 TOMMY DUNN: Dan Durham.

48 DAN DURHAM: I just signed up to speak
49 because I wasn't sure what this entire meeting was
50 about.

1 TOMMY DUNN: Yes, sir.

2 DAN DURHAM: First thing I want to do is
3 thank you for coming before and allowing the EMS
4 commission to answer some questions or ask some
5 questions and you provide the answers. I want you to
6 realize, too, that there are only two members of
7 Council that have been around long enough to see what
8 the EMS system in this county has evolved in in the
9 last twelve, fourteen years. That's the number of
10 years I've been on the EMS board at Pelzer. And that's
11 Ms. Wilson and Ms. Floyd. They know what it was like
12 and what we faced when we were trying to get under one
13 contract with the county. They understand, too, that
14 convalescence was our life-blood, Mr. Crowder. It has
15 not killed us. It allowed us to provide the funds that
16 we needed to operate on to make up the difference
17 between the stipend that the county was paying in
18 addition to our total costs.

19 Yes, Pelzer has very little money in the bank.
20 We recognize from this audit, which we really can't
21 call an audit because it's basically just a study that
22 determines the cash level of each particular squad.
23 And that's important because that lets you know how
24 long if everything's shut off tomorrow, how long that
25 squad could survive. Okay? We don't have the money in
26 the bank that Pendleton has, according to this report.
27 By that you would think that, you know -- and Pelzer
28 board recognized quite a while ago, that we are asset
29 rich and cash poor. Yet we've been able to keep our
30 heads above the water with no problem. Three or four
31 years ago we had four hundred thousand dollars in the
32 bank. Okay. We bought equipment in the last few years
33 and we paid cash for it. You know, rather than
34 financing it and paying interest and all that good
35 stuff. Our board's actively involved in the financial
36 side and we've been keeping a close eye on it. Have
37 been, will continue to be.

38 Now the Affordable Care Act, not so much, that
39 hurt, too. But this new Medicare program that we're in
40 this three state trial basis, basically, that thing hit
41 the ground before Medicare folks knew what to do with
42 it. Before we knew what to do with it. Before the
43 billing agencies knew what to do with it. When the
44 pre-approved process was put in, you know, it caused us
45 to do some changes. And there was actually a two week
46 period there that went by that Medicare just put a
47 moratorium out there, there was going to be no payments
48 at all made, okay? That has eased up a little bit. I
49 say eased up, we're still fighting it and we're still
50 complying with it, but hopefully it's going to continue

1 to get a little bit better.

2 I don't want to ramble too much on this, but
3 Pelzer's sitting there with three stations, you know,
4 we got a bunch of folks that work for us. The other
5 thing that we've got to look for, too, is what happens
6 if we go over that magic number of fifty employees and
7 we have to wind up providing the insurance for those
8 employees? Now we provide some insurance benefits now,
9 but I don't think it's quite to that level.
10 Nonetheless, we contract with our billing agency;
11 basically we've got the contract with a bookkeeping
12 service. We've got a local squad bookkeeper that keeps
13 our own things for us. So there's a number of
14 different things that we can do to try to keep a firm
15 handle on our financial situation. But you talk about
16 communication, yeah, we need some help on that. And
17 I'm going to lay out the invitation tonight. The
18 Pelzer board meets at seven o'clock the first Thursday
19 in every month. Well, we delayed it because it was
20 Fourth of July week this time, till last week. But
21 then when the EMS Commission met and we found out what
22 was -- that subject was about, we delayed it one more
23 time till this week. So I invite the three County
24 Council representatives, Mr. Allen, Mr. Waters and Ms.
25 Wilson, to be at the Pelzer board meeting at Station 1
26 at seven o'clock Thursday night and invite you to
27 communicate with us.

28 Again, thank you for your time. I do
29 appreciate the effort that you folks put in place on
30 behalf of the county and of the EMS service. Thank
31 you.

32 TOMMY DUNN: Thank you, Mr. Durham.
33 Anyone else? Appreciate all the Council members coming
34 out tonight. Meeting be adjourned.

35
36

(MEETING ADJOURNED 6:50 PM)