

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STAFF FINALIZE AMBULANCE SERVICE AGREEMENT

Grand Haven Township, Michigan, February 22, 2005.

Administrative staff and legal representatives from seven area municipalities (*i.e., Grand Haven City, Ferrysburg City, Spring Lake Village, Spring Lake Township, Robinson Township, Crockery Township and Grand Haven Charter Township*) and North Ottawa Community Hospital are pleased to announce that agreement on a new thirty-two page high-performance ambulance service agreement has been completed.

“Pursuant to the direction of the Special Blue Ribbon Ambulance Service Committee, municipal managers for the seven communities, hospital officials and legal counsel for both parties and have completed negotiations on a new high-performance ambulance service agreement”, Grand Haven Charter Township superintendent Bill Cargo announced.

According to Michael Payne, NOCH President and CEO, “We have been working with area municipalities for over a year to improve EMS operations and come up with a new contract. This

was an educational and sometimes complicated process and I wish to thank everyone who has worked so hard to make this agreement become a reality.”

Normally, the process of drafting a request for proposal (RFP) and completing an ambulance service agreement takes between 18 and 24 months. “Fortunately”, Cargo notes, “the Northwest Ottawa communities have a history of cooperation and were able to complete this detailed safety agreement in less than ten months.”

Specific items cited under the new agreement include:

1. The agreement defines response time standards to both the urban and rural areas that NOCH must achieve. The response time standards are consistent with national standards recommended by the American Ambulance Association.
2. After the first year of operation, if NOCH EMS fails to meet the response time standards, fines of up to \$1,000 per month would be levied.
3. The agreement requires NOCH EMS to be certified by the Commission on the Accreditation of Ambulance Service (CASS) providers by December, 2007.
4. The agreement creates a special Oversight Committee with representatives from each of the seven communities. The Oversight Committee’s role is to ensure NOCH and the municipalities meet their obligations under the new agreement and that effective, on-going communication is happening between NOCH and the communities.
5. Under the new agreement, the hospital relieves the municipalities of any future financial risk relating to EMS services. The agreement also allows the hospital to use all but \$84,000 of the current fund balance to improve operations with the purchase of new ambulances and communications equipment. All existing capital and other equipment will be retained by NOCH.
6. \$84,000 will be equally distributed back to the six original communities. This money returns

their original investment and will provide sufficient funds to pay the legal fees incurred by the seven municipalities associated with completing the agreement.

Each of the seven communities and the NOCH Board of Trustees will be asked to consider and adopt the agreement within the next thirty days. The NOCH Board of Trustees and the Grand Haven Charter Township Board are already scheduled to vote on the agreement at their respective meetings on Monday, February 27th. “The proposed start of the new ambulance service is Monday, March 20th,” Cargo stated.

“The NOCHS Board of Trustees couldn’t think of a better way to give back to the communities we serve than by making the decision to continue EMS operations”, said Payne. “We operated under the old EMS agreement for over 30 years and we are very pleased the communities made the collective decision to continue putting their trust in North Ottawa Community Hospital’s EMS service.”

Both Cargo and Payne agree that all of the parties, ranging from the elected officials that sat on the Special Blue Ribbon Committee to the local firefighters and NOCH paramedics need to be thanked for their time and insight into the process.

“We look forward to providing the municipalities EMS services for years to come”, said Payne.

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