

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOWNSHIP VOTES TO REPLACE AMBULANCE AGREEMENT

Grand Haven Township, Michigan, October 24, 2005.

The Grand Haven Charter Township Board unanimously voted to replace the current NOCH Ambulance Service Agreement. This action was taken pursuant to the Sixth Amendment of the Agreement and is meant to ensure that the current ambulance service, which is rapidly losing money, is replaced with high quality service that will be able to effectively compete in today's health care market.

“The area communities are cooperating on developing a new emergency ambulance service agreement that should be complete by December 31st of this year,” says Supervisor Joanne Marcetti. “If NOCH and the member units follow the agreed upon schedule to develop a new ambulance service, this new ambulance service will be in place before the current agreement expires.”

“However, if the township fails to exercise this replacement clause before November 1st, the current system could continue to operate until June 30th of next year,”

Marcetti explained. “GHT is trying to protect the cash reserves and capital assets that are being held in public trust by NOCH.”

The NOCH Ambulance Service lost \$89,000 in 2003, \$152,000 in 2004, and is expected to lose about \$106,000 for the current fiscal year. Given the losses over the past three years, an additional six months under the current agreement could create further losses of \$50,000 or more.

“The Township Board is trying to ensure that the transition to a new emergency ambulance service agreement moves ahead rapidly. By voting to replace the existing contract, GHT and the other area municipalities will be required – either together or separately – to quickly replace the current agreement,” Trustee Thomas Jenkins explained.

The area units have been working to replace the current ambulance service agreement for about eight months. And, the Ambulance Service Committee has adopted a schedule that calls for a new NOCH operated ambulance service to be in place by December 31st. Unfortunately, the NOCH proposal will not be available for public consideration until mid-November, which is almost three weeks after the last opportunity to dissolve the existing contract.

“It is also important to understand that if the communities need to extend the timeframe beyond December 31st to allow the consensus process to be finalized, a simple vote of each member unit would be sufficient to delay the final operating date of the NOCH ambulance service agreement,” Jenkins continued. “This simple vote would allow the consensus process to be completed should a small delay occur but

would not allow the process to be continued indefinitely.”

“Ultimately, we hope and expect that NOCH will provide a proposal that all of the member units will find exemplary,” Marcetti noted. “However, a specific deadline will focus the attention of the communities and hospital to resolve the matter in a timely fashion.”

The Board noted that Grand Haven Charter Township and the other communities will not be at risk of losing the protection of emergency ambulance service even though the agreement providing this service will be changed in the coming weeks.

END