

TRACY CITY COUNCIL - SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

September 28, 2016, 5:00 p.m.

333 Civic Center Plaza, Council Chambers, Tracy

1. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Maciel called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL – Roll call found Council Members Mitracos, Vargas, Young, Mayor Pro Tem Rickman and Mayor Maciel present.
3. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE – There were no speakers.
4. A CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS COUNTY EMS POLICIES THAT LIMIT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Mayor Maciel made opening remarks.

Troy Brown, City Manager provided a brief overview.

Fire Chief Bradley presented the staff report.

City Council comments and questions followed.

David Helm shared his perspective due to his past experience as a police officer and having worked dispatch. Mr. Helm's stated that when a rig rolls up to a call it doesn't cost the County anything and even if both the Fire Department and the ambulance showed up at the same time it should not impact the Fire Departments ability to provide assistance. Mr. Helms added that there will be a cost for the ambulance. Mr. Helm's stated that part of problem is that this is financially driven and it's a way to protect their profit. Mr. Helms said the City has invested in their public safety personnel and has trained them well and it does not make sense to not utilize that resource which exceeds the standards of the County. The citizens of Tracy are being held hostage by an EMS system which makes no sense. Mr. Helms added that it is unacceptable for the County to tell the citizens of this town what kind of service they are going to receive because AMR is a monopoly and they have a contract. Mr. Helm's urged the Council to do everything in their power to clip the County's wings and make sure that the current resources that the City of Tracy has are utilized. When someone is bleeding or can't breathe they need help immediately.

Pat Howell acknowledged Fire Chief Bradley for a wonderful presentation and good explanation and commended him for a job well done. Ms. Howell also acknowledged the City Manager for pleading the City's case. Ms. Howell asked the following questions: what can the citizens and the Council do; does the City have legal recourse; what can be done to resolve this issue? Ms. Howell suggested that perhaps as a City they go in mass to the County and call them out on this issue and if nothing can be agreed on through conversation or mediation then community action needs to take place.

Jim Howell asked what kind of data is there in the 90% to 100% of the failures, where are we in the situation and how bad is it? Mr. Howell expressed concern hearing that data is not being shared or is being filtered. Mr. Howell shared his experience when he worked for the County of Santa Clara with the automation system including 911 and said that there is an exception to everything. Mr. Howell said that there is always an escape

clause when these policies are written. Mr. Howell suggested that someone needs to look at the EMS policy very carefully and that the City get a lobbyist to lobby on their behalf to fix this issue. Mr. Howell said that by having the paramedics responding to more of the emergency calls it makes them better at what they do, if they are sitting on the sidelines they are going to get stagnant.

Donald Dreisbach retired Fire Chief of the City of Hayward, expressed his appreciation for Chief Bradley's report as EMS has changed considerably from back in his time. Mr. Dreisbach shared a recent medical emergency experience related to his wife, from which he learned that the Fire Department would not be dispatched. Mr. Dreisbach expressed disappointment that a big part of this problem is a financial problem and is concerned with the dispatch system in Tracy. Mr. Dreisbach said it is a shame that the residents cannot take advantage of our own Fire Department and that all this time he was under the impression that the Fire Department was responding to all the medical calls in town.

Andrew Sansaver, one of Tracy's Firefighter Paramedics, spoke on behalf of the Tracy firefighters expressing their support for Chief Bradley and his endeavor to raise the service levels in the City. Mr. Sansaver stated that Chief Bradley is well versed on this topic and has a good understanding of dispatch and the technicality of what is happening here. Mr. Sansaver said that the bare bones issue here is that the tax payers are not receiving the level of service they are paying for. Mr. Sansaver explained that he can see this from various angles, as a paramedic, a father and parent. From the professional side he understands that he can bring the emergency room into the living room of someone who needs help. From a parents stand point it concerns him that he understands that the capability is around the corner but the service is not available.

Richard English said that it is criminal to have the man power to care for people and not be able to use the resources. Mr. English expressed that he thought that the 911 calls were automatically being answered by the Fire Department and since has learned that those calls are not being answered within the City nor are they being dispatched to the Fire Department. Mr. English stated that the City has the best Fire and Police Department in the County and probably in the State. Mr. English does not understand why the City is letting the County run this system this way. Mr. English expressed disappointment with the County, as it seems that they drag their feet whenever it involves the City of Tracy. They do not have the City's best interest. Mr. English stated that he doesn't see anything wrong with the Fire Department and the ambulance arriving at the same time, or having the Fire Department respond and administer aid in the meantime before the ambulance arrives.

Allison Quinteros expressed gratitude for bringing this issue to the community's attention. Ms. Quinteros said she had no idea how this worked and asked the following questions: what can the citizens do to put pressure on the County; is this only happening in Tracy, if it's happening to us it may be happening to others? Ms. Quinteros suggested that perhaps they unite with other towns to pressure the County. Ms. Quinteros asked what is the next step.

Alice English acknowledged Mayor Pro Tem Rickman for bringing this issue forward and Chief Bradley for all the hard work he has done. Ms. English stated that the City has the best Fire and Police Departments. Ms. English expressed concern that this comes down to money and not human lives and that as tax payers they have a right to be able to look

at the logs and listen to the 911 calls. Ms. English added that all medical calls should be dispatched to the Tracy's Fire Department and by not doing so it is a disservice to the City; the residents should not have to wait 10 or 15 minutes for an ambulance. Ms.

English concluded by saying we have the resources let's use it, the City cares about our residents.

Brian Hicks former Firefighter Paramedic who worked for the City of Tracy Fire Department for six and half years and currently works for the City of Oakland in the same capacity thanked the Fire Chief and the City Manager for working with the County on this difficult issue which has gone to escalating levels of diplomacy. Mr. Hicks shared a medical emergency his family experienced while he was away at work. Fire Station 97 responded to treat his infant with an air way obstruction. They arrived first on scene way ahead of the ambulance and he was grateful for the outcome. Mr. Hicks requested that someone from the City Council needs to approach the County Board of Supervisors and escalate the issue. The County needs to know that the City has the resources and that it is not taxing the City system and that the City is fortunate to have ALS certified paramedics on every fire engine. Mr. Hicks concluded his comments by says that the City has a great Fire Department and they should be responding to all medical calls in Tracy.

Robert Tanner said that the City has one of the finest Fire Departments in the County and added that each truck has an ALS certified paramedic on board which not all Cities have. Mr. Tanner suggested that rather than a six month trial period the City should push for a one year trial period to respond to all medical calls and see if it works. Mr. Tanner expressed shock about an LVN who was told not to call 911 and instead call an 800 number for an ambulance service. That approach is a way for AMR to get around the system and that needs to be corrected.

Anne Marie Fuller shared a medical emergency her family experienced a few years ago; it was the Tracy Fire Department who arrived first on scene and began treatment while waiting for the ambulance. Ms. Fuller stated that the resources are here in town and it is imperative to provide this service to the community.

Alice English expressed concern with the time this meeting took place and suggested that next time Council consider having the meeting later in the evening or even on a Saturday.

Christopher Stealle new resident to Tracy who moved from El Dorado County about six months ago spoke about the EMS system in El Dorado County and how it worked well. Mr. Stealle asked what legal recourse does the City have against the EMS agency.

Jim Howell asked how this meeting was noticed. This meeting was not noticed in the Tracy Press and suggested that there needs to be more noticing for future follow up meetings on this issue.

Gene Nielly, Fire Chief of the Lathrop Manteca Fire District expressed that they are having the same problem in their area. Chief Nielly expressed concern with their responses and shared that he has spoken with Board of Supervisors Sapien and Nguyen and has had the same meetings that Chief Bradley has had with the EMS Medical Directors supervisor. Chief Nielly expressed concern with the answers he has

received. The EMS Director is that person who wants to do something his way where mistakes are happening, unfortunately in this field people die when people push their own agenda to this point. Chief Nielly said that they are fighting this hard and they are going to seek legal action if it is required.

City Council discussion ensued.

Following Council discussion and deliberation upon consensus the City Council agreed to schedule a Closed Session meeting for a future date; agendaize the appointment of a subcommittee at the October 4, 2016 Council Meeting; and it was agreed to attend a future Board of Supervisors meeting and make arrangements to have the community join the Council and voice their concerns.

5. Adjournment – Time 7:23 p.m.

ACTION Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Rickman, and seconded by Council Member Vargas to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote found all in favor; passed and so ordered.

The agenda was posted at City Hall on September 27, 2016.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk