

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GENESEE COUNTY LEGISLATURE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2022
ZOOM AT 4:30 PM**

The Genesee County Legislature attended a ZOOM video on Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

Legislature Chair Stein called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Legislature Chair Stein requested approval of the COW minutes from January 5, 2022. Motion by Legislator Maha and seconded by Legislator Dibble, carried.

Legislature Chair Stein asked County Manager, Matt Landers to open the discussion regarding the EMS Transport. This is opportunity to bring Legislature up-to-date on emerging issues going on and where the County stands as a community in relation to transports of individuals that are going through a mental health crisis. Dialogue in a recent meeting where discussion will continue to focus on the 941 transports and how they are being shifted onto law enforcement. Keeping in mind these are individuals in crisis and need mental health assistance in our community.

Lynda Battaglia, Mental Health Director and Tim Yaeger, EMS Coordinator both have contributing information regarding these issues. Counties outside of Genesee have been relying heavily on Mercy to backfill their shortcomings. Shortages fall back to volunteer services and this area is struggling. The majority of the area except for City of Rochester are using law enforcement for 941 transports unless medically indicated unable too.

How is the patient needs being met 24/7? Discussion with Dan Ireland with UMMC and other Directors will be meeting next month to discuss further.

EMS Coordinator Tim Yaeger stated LeRoy and Mercy EMS are doing a great job. His concerns are with the “level 0” notifications that come over which indicates no ambulance available. This is a problem.

Lynda Battaglia indicates it is a concerning topic. Significant shortages. Pointing out the mental health individuals in our community needs medical attention. The acute risk rises to the level of a crisis. Mental Health transports should not be the low hanging fruit. Advocates have worked hard to reduce stigmatize individuals that have a 941 crisis and being put into a law enforcement transport. This is criminalizing that is stigmatizing arriving to the hospital in that way. It is traumatizing. EMS is the most appropriate method of transportation, not law enforcement. This is also about 945's as well. It is important to remember that mental health patients are community members. This has been discussed before. The past few years the discussion have worsened because of staff shortages and the pandemic. Sheriff Sheron agrees with Lynda Battaglia and Tim Yaeger. Sheriff Sheron does not believe in putting mental health crisis individuals in the back of a patrol car with handcuffs. He does understand the issues that are out there for EMS.

It is important that the streets are protected by our Sheriffs department and the medical ambulances are not being stretched where they are not available.

Is there a written agreement with Mercy that guarantees coverage for Genesee County. Tim Yaeger – no contract with County. The county pays contribution on an annual basis. It dictates the response time not dictates level of staffing. No formal contract. Can the County recruit and provide the training to tackle the problem? Mercy lost 12 individuals this year – transferring out of this field. Need more discussion on this. Matt Landers indicated discussion will continue.

What services are available in the County where are they going and how long does it take to transport? Scope of a typical call and where are they going? Matt Landers mentioned 500 calls on annual basis. Genesee County does not have 939 facility (that takes in mental health crisis patients - 941's). There is about 125 calls for 941's.

Out of County Ambulance will not transport mental health crisis calls – this is a domino effect. All calls in general, forcing dispatchers to have to decide who gets an ambulance and who gets them first.

Executive Order 203 from Governor's office. Similar conversations. Reform that should be occurring within law enforcement. To take a different kind of position and working with the mental health community. The social climate that we are in mental health should be more incorporated into law enforcement and EMS.

Rapid response for evaluation, training through some Grants. Mental health clinician would be easier for mental health rather than EMS. Quick medical assessment – so much more to an assessment than a quick medical assessment. More research on that.

Last visit with MRI Group it was decided first priority is the EMS crisis. Tim Yaeger brief them of the EMS crisis. (85% emergency calls are EMS based). They are focusing on fixing the EMS system and the volunteer fire system.

Chair Stein stated the Legislature is thoroughly up-to-date.

At 5:30 p.m. the meeting adjourned upon motion of Legislator Hawley seconded by Legislator Clattenburg, carried.

Rochelle M. Stein