

Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
July 13, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Mayor John Davis, Mayor Pro Tem William Justice, Commissioner Pat Turner, Commissioner Joseph Brown, and Commissioner Douglas Eckendorf. Commissioner Jeffrey Conaway was absent.

Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Pledge

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am. Mayor Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance. The purpose of the meeting was to continue discussion, receive/review funding details, and to make a decision on proceeding with the process to establish an Advanced Life Support Enhancement System in the Town of Swansboro.

Fire Chief Jacob Randall reviewed that following the July 9, 2024, regular meeting, cost details were requested to clarify and refined both Plan A and Plan B for the EMS staffing model, aligning them with a phased approach over three years. (see attachment A) In Plan A, paramedics were to be trained to become firefighters, offering cost savings by utilizing existing personnel, while Plan B involved hiring certified firefighters directly. Both plans relied on natural staff attrition to transition toward full Advanced Life Support (ALS) capabilities, with vacant firefighter EMT positions remaining unfilled and firefighter paramedics covering those roles. The plans also outlined the need for training time, as it would have taken two years to train personnel to the paramedic level, necessitating part-time staff during this transition.

Additionally, alternative plans (A-T and B-T) were proposed, involving the upfront hiring of three staff members who would fill vacancies as current staff left, thus maintaining flexibility and controlling costs. (see attachment A) The financial details were provided for the first half of 2024-2025, with personnel starting in January after a hiring process in late 2024. By 2025-2026, the plan included full salaries, benefits, and overtime for paramedics working 24-hour shifts, providing 24-hour coverage under the current shift model. This approach aimed to ensure readiness by the beginning of the year and maintain operational efficiency as the EMS program transitioned to full implementation.

In response to inquiries from the board Chief Randall clarified the following.

- The projected cost of \$265,000 was expected to decrease over time as attrition occurred. Retention efforts made it difficult to predict exact losses, but staffing remained stable, with only two mid-level management departures over the past year. The department had been working to avoid significant staff losses, but natural attrition would lead to a decrease in costs. Additional expenses for personnel, including maintenance and labor costs, would be budgeted for future years.

- Up front Equipment costs included turnout gear and was estimated at \$85,000 with recurring costs for maintenance and supplies at roughly \$45,000 per year.
- Cardiac monitors had an expected life span of 5-10 years, with phased replacement starting after 5 years and turnout gear had a 5-year lifespan and would be incorporated into future replacement plans.

Chief Randall shared that he recommended Plan BT, as it provided a cap on costs while allowing for flexibility in hiring and training certified firefighters and paramedics, as well as opened up opportunities for current staff to advance through in-house training programs.

On a motion by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf, with unanimous approval, Fire Chief Randall was authorized to proceed with seeking designation as an Advanced Life Support (Paramedic) First Responder program within the Onslow County – Camp Lejeune EMS System plan with a three-year phased implementation design using the Plan B-T as reviewed.

Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf, the meeting adjourned at 8:32 am.

**Advanced Life Support Enhancement
(Estimated Additional Financial Impact)**

Total Program Cost (Per Plan – Per Fiscal Year)				
	FY 2024 – 2025	FY 2025 – 2026	FY 2026 – 2027	FY 2027 - 2028
Plan A	\$ 197,065	\$ 259,401	\$ 317,736	\$ 310,008
Plan B	\$ 199,545	\$ 267,090	\$ 330,636	\$ 325,635
Plan A – T	\$ 238,195	\$ 310,008	\$ 310,008	\$ 310,008
Plan B – T	\$ 245,636	\$ 325,635	\$ 325,635	\$ 325,635

Full - Time Salary Cost (Per Plan – Per Fiscal Year)				
	FY 2024 – 2025	FY 2025 – 2026	FY 2026 – 2027	FY 2027 - 2028
Plan A	\$ 42, 065	\$ 130,401	\$ 218,736	\$ 265,008
Plan B	\$ 44, 545	\$ 138, 090	\$ 231,636	\$ 280,635
Plan A – T	\$ 126,195	\$ 265,008	\$ 265,008	\$ 265, 008
Plan B – T	\$ 133,636	\$ 280, 635	\$ 280,635	\$ 280,635

Personnel Related Cost (Per Plan – Per Fiscal Year)				
	FY 2024 – 2025	FY 2025 – 2026	FY 2026 – 2027	FY 2027 - 2028
Plan A	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 0
Plan B	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 0
Plan A – T	\$ 27,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Plan B – T	\$27,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0

ALS Related Cost (Per Fiscal Year)				
All Plans	\$ 85, 000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$45,000

Transition Plan

1. Full Implementation Year 1 (January 4, 2024) – If Approved by PRC
2. Maintain Level of Service Continuously
3. As Department Attrition Occurs – Firefighter/EMT Positions Reclassified to Firefighter/Paramedic Positions
4. Staffing Levels, Through Natural Attrition, Targeted to Pre-Enhancement Level or Level of Current Need as Approved
5. Initial Impact of Cost Consist of Non-Recurring Expenditures (Exception – Personnel and ALS Related Equipment/Supplies)

Plan A – T versus Plan B – T

1. *Plan A – T* – Paramedic – Non-Firefighter (Will be Trained to Firefighter Level In-House)
2. *Plan B – T* – Paramedics with NC Firefighter Certification