

## **Western Payne County Ambulance Trust Authority**

### **Annual Report to Stillwater City Council**

**December 5, 2016**

#### **Background:**

- Western Payne County Ambulance Trust Authority (WPCATA) is a public trust entity developed in 2010 as a long term solution providing ambulance services to citizens of western Payne County. Services had previously been provided by members of the Stillwater Fire Department. The City of Stillwater's City Council voted to separate the ambulance service from the fire department December 31, 2009.
- WPCATA is the entity providing oversight for the system. It is multi-jurisdictional in nature and allows participation from the governmental entities (cities and county) to participate directly in decision making processes that affect the system.
- The Trust contracts with the ambulance provider, LifeNet, assigns market rights, sets standards and performance parameters, sets and approves ambulance rates, provides a subsidy and may periodically designate a competitive process to choose another ambulance provider.
- The ambulance service contract was awarded in May, 2011 to LifeNet Inc, a not-for-profit corporation based in Texarkana, TX. WPCATA renewed the LifeNet contract in April 2016 for an additional 5 years.

#### **Service Area:**

- City of Stillwater
- Western Payne County
- Perkins
- Glencoe
- Morrison and part of Noble County

#### **Board Members:**

- Elaine Ackerson, Chair, representing City of Stillwater
- Harland Wells, representing western Payne County
- Jerry Moeller, representing Stillwater Medical Center
- Ann Matoy, representing OSU
- Brian Norton, representing Perkins and Glencoe

The Board meets the third Wednesday of the month at 5:00 in the Second Floor Conference Room, Stillwater Medical Center.

**Funding:**

- Two sources:
  - User fee revenues billed and collected by LifeNet Inc., Texarkana, TX.
  - Ambulance membership fees collected by the Trust. Water utility customers are provided written information and are enrolled when they sign up for service. Members pay a \$5.00/month ambulance membership fee. If a member needs ambulance transport, their insurance carrier is billed. The insurance payment is accepted as payment in full. For those customers without insurance, WPCATA membership offers a 40% discount.

In Stillwater, approximately 77% of water utility customers are members. The percentage of members is lower than in some cities because we have a large number of rental units. Owners of rental property often opt out of the membership agreement; however, individuals living at the apartment complex or rental home may join as individual members and pay \$60.00 annually.

A monthly subsidy is paid to LifeNet Inc. as a necessary component of the system operations as the transport volume and revenue derived from transport does not adequately fund the system.

We appreciate work on our behalf by the employees of the Customer Service and Finance Department. They are the first contact for information about membership, provide written information and answer customer questions about the benefit. When questions arise, Dana, Sarah, Christy and others promptly respond and we are able resolve issues quickly.

**Financial Update:**

- Our income and expenses are stable. Stillwater submits on average of \$72,000 monthly from subscription revenues. We currently hold \$550,000 in reserve.
- An annual audit for FY 2015 was completed in May 2016 by CBEW Professional Group. We received a clean letter with no deficiencies found by the auditor.

**Response Times:**

- LifeNet ambulances respond on average to 443 dispatch events each month in Stillwater, an average of 14.7/day. The average urban Emergency response time is 4:31 minutes. Our contract with LifeNet requires an urban response time of 8:59 or less for emergency dispatch events.

Both LifeNet EMT/Paramedic staff and Stillwater Fire Department EMT/Paramedic staff respond to calls designated as Priority 1 or 2. Those are defined as life threatening emergencies. I've spoken with Tom Bradley who tells me that as the system has matured and developed, there is increased trust and a good working relationship between LifeNet and SFD. SFD and LifeNet have an open door policy where issues can be discussed and resolved at any time.

**Patient Satisfaction:**

We track answers to a key question, "Would you recommend?" with "Yes" answers typically ranging from 91-98%.

LifeNet personnel are actively involved with community education, conducting CPR classes, First Aid classes and First Responder classes throughout the communities served. The WPCATA Board reviews community outreach activities each month.

**Clinical Outcomes:**

LifeNet personnel work collaboratively with SFD personnel and SMC physicians and staff. Joe Cassil, Director of Clinical Services, internally reviews care of those patients with time sensitive emergencies: cardiac arrest, acute MI, stroke and trauma and shares findings with LifeNet staff and staff from other agencies providing care. Representatives from LifeNet, SMC, SFD and air ambulance services meet regularly to review patient care, and update care protocols with the goals of improving communication and patient outcomes.

After the OSU Homecoming tragedy in 2015, LifeNet personnel met with area first responders for an after action review of the EMS response, again looking for ways to improve care and outcomes. Zach Harris, Director of Operations and other LifeNet staff members have been invited to participate in panel discussions throughout the state and have willingly shared the many lessons learned from this mass casualty event so others can be better prepared when faced with such tragic events.

**Opportunities/Future Plans:**

Board members are committed to:

- Increase the number of Automated External Defibrillators (AED's) in Stillwater and surrounding areas. We purchased 10 defibrillators (\$1400/per unit) in 2016 to be installed at no charge to a company, church, school or other entity where members of the public gather. LifeNet personnel provide hands on CPR training to staff using American Heart Association guidelines and will replace batteries and pads at scheduled intervals, again with no charge to the organization. We have committed additional money to expand this program in 2017.
- Increase the number of trained first responders across rural areas of Payne County. There are times when an ambulance cannot arrive at an emergency quickly due to distance, weather or other factors. A trained first responder with basic medical equipment and an AED can truly make a difference. It has been a challenge to identify and train a core group of first responders in several rural areas; however, WPCATA Board members are committed to adding resources in an attempt to provide initial care while waiting for the ambulance to arrive.