

TCCOG Emergency Services Planning Committee meeting  
8-14-20, Zoom Teleconference, 10:00 - 11:00 am

Attending: Rordan Hart, Irene Weiser, Jessica Verfuss, Justin Vann, Dan Lamb, Mark Witmer

Discussion of the resolution urging New York State provide funds for EMS services for all New Yorkers\*:

- Include language in third Whereas acknowledging long response times of many rural municipalities and need for EMS first-responders.
- What is the justification for funding from New York State? This is an essential aspect of health care for all New Yorkers. Rordan noted that the NY State Constitution (Article 17, section 3) expressly recognizes the state's responsibility to provide for public health.
- Discussion of how a CHIPS/STOA funding model would work.
- Suggestion to have resolutions of support from TCCOG municipalities.

Rordan will amend resolution as per today's discussion. We will request that TCCOG members solicit resolutions of support from their governing boards. At August 27 TCCOG meeting we will present:

1. Resolution requesting that Tompkins County Legislature lobby for state funding to support rural EMS services.
2. Modernizing Fire Contracts at town level.
3. Developing and facilitating EMS training: Can we identify ways to help agencies already doing training to offer that to other departments? Can we remove the obstacle of the need to volunteer in order to cover cost? The County will play a key role in coordination, communication, and possibly provision of EMS training.

Next TCCOG Meeting: August 27

\*Draft Resolution for NYS support for rural EMS services:

WHEREAS, volunteer Fire and EMS services in rural New York State have been under pressure for many years - ongoing declining volunteerism rates which leads to the closure of departments, which leads to the expansion of coverage areas for nearby agencies, which themselves struggle with staffing – in an environment of ever-increasing costs; and,

WHEREAS, efforts to increase volunteerism, particularly in EMS, while noble, are neither sustainable nor effective enough to make a meaningful impact; and,

WHEREAS, many municipalities have been forced to implement paid EMS Departments, or contract with paid departments, as a result of the foregoing; and,

WHEREAS, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical nature of EMS services, particularly in rural areas where EMS response is the primary source of frontline emergency healthcare to millions of NY residents; and,

WHEREAS, as a subset of the healthcare field, annual EMS cost increases strain the budgets of rural towns and villages who are nevertheless morally and ethically obligated to provide these services to their constituents; NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Tompkins County Council of Governments (TCCOG) requests that the Tompkins County Legislature call upon New York State to allocate funding to local municipalities to support the provision of rural EMS services; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that TCCOG suggests that the Tompkins County Legislature advocate for a CHIPS or STOA model of funding wherein funds will be allocated to municipalities on a call volume and coverage area basis.