

# Carter County Commission

Minutes of:

Health & Welfare Committee

January 7, 2020 6:00 PM



**RECEIVED**

01-15-2020 @ 11:05 AM

## Members:

Chairman Dr. Robert Acuff

Ginger Holdren

Mike Hill

Randall Jenkins

Brad Johnson

Ray Lyons

Austin Jaynes

Robin McKamey

### I. Call to Order

The Health & Welfare Committee was called to order by Dr. Robert Acuff at 7:05 pm.

### II. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Acuff asked to make an amendment to delete #5 Fentanyl Use/Abuse in the Region – Chief James Parrish, Carter County Sheriff's Office. A motion to approve the agenda with the amendment was made by Mike Hill, second by Austin Jaynes. Motion unanimously approved.

### III. Public Comments

None

### IV. Approval of the Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the December 2020 meeting was made by Austin Jaynes, second by Mike Hill. The motion was unanimously approved.

### ~~V. Fentanyl Use/Abuse in the Region – Chief James Parrish, Carter County Sheriff's Office~~

~~Dr. Acuff asked Sheriff Lunceford about the fentanyl use in the area. Sheriff Lunceford stated that it wasn't a huge problem in this area yet. He assured the committee that his department is very successful in fighting the local drug problem.~~

### VI. Attached: Resolution Supporting HR 1175/SB1469 which directs TennCare to reimburse ground ambulance providers at a rate not less than the current Medicare fee schedule. TASA and the bill sponsor have requested that the funding (\$16 million) for this much needed change be provided within the Governor's FY20/21 budget. (\*Note: the language within the bill is only a "caption" - amendments filed during the Summer Study Session address the actual intent of the bill). – Anthony Roberts CCEMS/Acuff

Austin Jaynes made a motion to approve the resolution, second by Ray Lyons.

Roll Call:

Dr. Robert Acuff – Yes

Mike Hill - Yes

Brad Johnson - Yes

Austin Jaynes - Yes

Ginger Holdren - Yes

Randall Jenkins - Yes

Ray Lyons – Yes

Robin McKamey - Yes

The resolution was unanimously approved.

**VII. Health and Welfare Issues Facing our County – Updates**

**a. Health Insurance Incentives for County Employees**

Chairman Acuff still has not heard from the representative from the insurance company about incentives for employees to do their preventive care that is provided. Mr. Jaynes mentioned that other companies require employees to have the health screenings and preventive care. If they choose not to have these things done, they charge a higher deductible. He doesn't like the idea of rewarding an employee for doing something that should do and don't have to pay for.

**b. Opioid Epidemic Awareness**

Chairman Acuff was at the Boys & Girls Club, they are starting a new program with young kids and teens about how to say no, how to avoid drugs and alcohol. He also learned that 50% of the clientele at the Club are either in foster care or with relative but not with their mom or dad. About 45% are with a single parent. These are issues that feed into the drug problem.

**c. Food Accessibility for Kids and Families**

We are still working with ETSU on the grant opportunity. Chairman Acuff informed the committee that the Boys & Girls Club, and the Second Harvest Food Bank want to participate. Harmony Baptist Church also wants to be part of the solution to the problem of kids being hungry. Mayor Barnett informed the committee that he was going to be part of a mayor's strategy session to discuss the Green Valley Property. Possibly using it as a mental health facility. Chairman Acuff asked the committee if they would like for him to reach out to Burt Rosen, President and CEO with the Knoxville Area Rescue Ministries. He may possibly be able to get him or a representative to come up and talk about how they handle the mental health and homeless issues.

**VIII. New Business**

None

**IX. Old Business**

None

**X. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Austin Jaynes, second by Mike Hill. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 pm.

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR  
CARTER COUNTY, TENNESSEE

REGULAR MEETING, TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2020

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

“A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING THE SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION WHICH DIRECTS TENNCARE TO REIMBURSE GROUND AMBULANCE PROVIDERS AT A RATE NOT LESS THAN THE CURRENT MEDICARE FEE SCHEDULE AND ADDING FUNDING TO THE 2020-2021 STATE BUDGET ”

WHEREAS, with the growth of our great state and the need for more and more services of all kinds, especially emergency medical services and the continuing rising costs of medical care, our agencies are constantly searching for more resources; and

WHEREAS, across our state more rural hospitals are being closed and community clinics are being downsized, requiring a great need for ambulance services as the first line of care providers and transportation from remote areas; and

WHEREAS, emergency medical services and rescue services in Carter County are provided by the Carter County Emergency Rescue Squad which responds to over 12,000 calls per year in meeting the needs of Carter County and the surrounding areas; and

WHEREAS, the Carter County Emergency Rescue Squad provides a vital service for the citizens of Carter County, and a great many of our citizens rely on Medicaid to obtain healthcare; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid (TennCare) reimbursement has not increased since the inception of the TN Medicaid managed care system; and

WHEREAS, Medicare rates do not reflect the actual cost to operate ambulance services and TennCare rates are, in most cases, half of what Medicare provides, forcing limitations of services and placing a greater burden on local agencies and citizens especially in areas such as Carter County; and

WHEREAS, ambulance services throughout the State, in order to meet growing emergency needs and reduce the burden on the local governments and taxpayers, need assistance in improving funding for the essential lifesaving services they provide; and

WHEREAS, increased funding will not cover the full cost of services, but it will begin an effort to aid communities as demand continues to increase for EMS system resources across the state including the costs of maintaining staff, equipment and training for pre-hospital emergency medical services, and filling the gap of the reduction in hospitals throughout Tennessee that is rendering EMS systems as the first line of care for many counties.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners for Carter County, Tennessee, meeting in regular session on this the 21<sup>st</sup> day of January, 2020, with a lawful quorum of said Board being present and with a majority voting in the affirmative that the Board shows its support for legislation which directs TennCare to reimburse ground ambulance providers at a rate not less than the current Medicare fee schedule.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body does hereby pray that our State Representatives and Senators be contacted and encouraged to support legislation which directs

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect from and after the date of its approval the welfare of the county demanding.

Reviewed and approved by the Health & Welfare Committee on January 7, 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_ Committee  
Chairperson

**Adopted this 21<sup>st</sup> day of January, 2020.**

CARTER COUNTY, TENNESSEE  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

APPROVED:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
RAY LYONS, CHAIRMAN  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

APPROVED:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
RUSSELL BARNETT  
CARTER COUNTY MAYOR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
MARY GOUGE  
CARTER COUNTY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM: