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City Council

Approval of a Resolution Finding that Basic Life Support Transport Provided by Private Ambulance Services in Olympia is Inadequate and Approving the Issue of 60-day Notices to Make Improvements to Private Ambulance Services Operating Within Olympia

Agenda Date: 6/21/2022
Agenda Item Number: 4.J
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Title

Approval of a Resolution Finding that Basic Life Support Transport Provided by Private Ambulance Services in Olympia is Inadequate and Approving the Issue of 60-day Notices to Make Improvements to Private Ambulance Services Operating Within Olympia

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve a Resolution finding that Basic Life Support Transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia is inadequate; providing results of the City's study on the issue be published; and directing the City Manager to issue 60-day notices to make improvements to private ambulance services operating within Olympia.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve a Resolution authorizing finding that Basic Life Support Transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia is inadequate; providing results of the City's study on the issue be published; and directing the City Manager to issue 60-day notices to make improvements to private ambulance services operating within Olympia.

Staff Contact:

Mark John, Fire Chief, 360.753.8348

Todd Carson, Deputy Fire Chief, 360.753.8460

Annaliese Harksen, Deputy City Attorney, 360.753.8338

Presenter(s):

None - consent calendar item.

Background and Analysis:

The Olympia City Council received a presentation on May 24, 2022, regarding the Olympia Fire Department's concerns about private ambulance services transport availability degradation concurrent with an increase in total call volume, and its negative impact on Basic Life Support (BLS) service levels for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) resources to residents within the City of Olympia, but deferred the decision to June 21, 2022 to hear from emergency services partners regarding their concerns. The Olympia Fire Department engaged in dialogue with our response partners, including both regional private ambulance stakeholders, American Medical Response (AMR) and Olympic Ambulance. The intent of these conversations was to ensure questions were answered and to also understand any perceived concerns of a City BLS Transport program. On June 2nd, the Olympia Fire Department presented the BLS Transport Program proposal to the Thurston County Operations Committee. After answering several questions from the committee, a motion was called to vote for support of the proposal, it passed unanimously. Finally, on June 14th -15th, the Olympia Fire Department will present the BLS Transport Program proposal to both the City of Tumwater Public Safety Committee, and then to the Thurston County EMS Council. The Olympia Fire Department will be happy to share any concerns with the Olympia City Council that may arise as a result of these conversations.

The City engaged the professional services of FCS Group to study, analyze, and report, among other issues, the adequacy of BLS transport services within the City. FCS Group prepared and presented its report to the Finance Committee on April 20, 2022.

The Finance Committee found that BLS transport services within the City were inadequate and recommended that FCS Group's report and analysis be presented to the full Council at a regularly scheduled business meeting.

The proposed resolution finds basic life support transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia to be inadequate, provides that the study of the issue shall be published, and directs 60-day notices be issued by the City Manager to private ambulance services operating within Olympia to make improvements meeting the generally accepted medical standards and reasonable levels of service required.

An internal BLS transport program would offer the following benefits to the City:

- Improved overall service levels to the community
- Offset program costs and generate revenue
- Reduction in response times
- Increase in unit availability
- Reduction of service maintenance on larger response apparatus
- Potential to improve the current WSRB rating from 2 to 1 (a higher rating), possibly resulting in decreased insurance premium

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The degradation in private ambulance services availability, along with an increase in total call volume for BLS transport services, has had a negative impact on service levels on the Olympia Fire Department's EMS services in the City of Olympia.

Options:

1. Approve the Resolution finding basic life support transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia to be inadequate; providing that results of the City's study on the issue be published; and directing the City Manager to issue 60-day notices to make improvements to private ambulance services operating within Olympia.
2. Do not approve the Resolution finding basic life support transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia to be inadequate; providing that results of the City's study on the issue be published; and directing the City Manager to issue 60-day notices to make improvements to private ambulance services operating within Olympia.
3. Direct staff to amend the Resolution finding basic life support transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia to be inadequate; providing that results of the City's study on the issue be published; and directing the City Manager to issue 60-day notices to make improvements to private ambulance services operating within Olympia, and bring back to the City Council for future consideration.

Financial Impact:

Should the Olympia Fire Department move forward with implementing a new BLS Transport/CARES program, the estimated initial cost is \$4.1 million, and will include substantial insurance billing and State GEMT revenue to offset the expenditures realized in year two. Analysis completed by FCS Group shows that the programs should be able to fully recompense the initial \$4.1 million investment by year 2029 - 2031. There is no known financial impact related to approval of the Resolution.

Attachments:

- Resolution
- BLS Transport Analysis
- Presentation