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TOWN OF NEWFANE TOWN BOARD SPECIAL MEETING March 18, 2024

The Town of Newfane Town Board Special Meeting was held in the Town Hall, 2737 Main Street, Newfane, NY. The Meeting was called to order by Supervisor John Syracuse at 7:01pm.

Town Board Members Present:

John Syracuse, Rick Coleman, Peter Robinson, Susan Neidlinger, Robert Horanburg

Others present:

Fire Company Representatives Bob Synder, Larry Dormer, Thomas Tedesco, Michael Miller, Megan Synder, Shannon Coleman

Special Fire Company / Ambulance Billing Meeting Miller Hose, Olcott Fire Company and Wright's Corners Fire Company

The meeting was called to order. The discussion tonight is about the possibility of the Fire Company's new Ambulance Billing procedures with a company called PBA. The Supervisor has spoken with Olcott Fire Company members, and Miller Hose Officers and they are all are intrigued by this billing procedure that is being implemented throughout Niagara County. Gary Snyder, Miller Hose Chief, Mike Miller, Olcott Chief presented a power point and led the discussion. In 2022 Governor Hochul allowed Fire Companies to start billing for ambulance services that they provide in the community. The Fire Companies are interested because of the cost of transporting patients and the additional cost of materials that they use for these EMS calls are rising. This system with PBA is already in place and Medicare and Medicaid have SET amounts that they will pay back on behalf of the patients that use this service.

Mike Miller explained that the billing cycle is pretty easy, and they would work with PAB Billing. Many area Fire Companies are already billing and using this same service provider. Cambria, Lockport, Wendelville, to name a few. PAB only does Ambulance Billing and charges only a minimal fee.

- “Soft Billing” was discussed where-in. Town Taxpayers do not have to pay a co-pay nor meet their deductible. The ambulance service for Town residents is FREE. The billing only goes to their insurance carrier and no expenses will be charged to the individual.
- If a patient does not have insurance, they do not get billed.
- Visitors to the Town will have to pay in full for the Ambulance Service.
 - Example: Out of Town Fisherman or Air BNB people: they have to pay in full as they are not a Newfane Resident.
- Also, if an emergency call comes in from another Fire Company, say for assistance, and they have to travel to Lockport (or wherever) to help, then they would charge Lockport Fire Co in the same way they would bill the insurance company. Same applies as if the County or other towns need help from Newfane.
 - They can have a set fee for billing each other’s fire companies according to the law that is in place for this billing. The three (3) local companies will be working together towards getting reimbursement for these costs.

A new Ambulance itself is now costing over 40K not to mention fuel, maintenance, and tires. And to keep the ambulance stocked for calls, is rising as well. Shannon Coleman, an EMS Captain, who works in Health Care, stated she is aware of the needs that keep rising and since Covid things have changed from being free items (needles, syringes, saline etc.) to now costing them thousands of dollars a month, depending on the situation.

The revenue that would be generated from the billing IS ONLY for EMS supplies!! This revenue cannot be used towards any other expenses. They cannot get the free supplies that they used to get from the ER's, Ambulances or Paramedics anymore.

- These funds go 100% back to EMS supplies and EMS calls are increasing.
- We cannot afford to lose any Ambulance in Newfane. We lost a hospital ~ we cannot lose the Ambulance.

The Fire Companies are looking for formal confirmation from the Town for the Fire Companies to proceed and move forward. Rick Coleman mentioned to have a resolution in place ready for the go ahead for these Fire Companies. They want to clarify that the residents do not have to pay a co-pay or deductible. They stated that “Yes, the residents already pay taxes for the Fire District, which is very important to keep the companies up and running, but Residents do not pay into this service as their insurance carriers will cover this service” through the PAB billing.

- Rick Coleman is hoping that the Fire Services will provide information that explains this billing for the residents.
- The Fire Companies stated that they are moving along quickly because this is moving fast, and legislation may change in the upcoming months. The Fire Co’s do have to bill each other, per law. Soft billing is part of the law.
- Sue feels that maybe someone should be represented at the Town Bd meeting the month, as this will hit the paper soon and they can be there if area residents have questions. Transparency is key.
- There seems to not be any negative feedback from the area fire Co's that are already using PBA.

The Town is encouraging Miller Hose, Olcott Fire Co and Wright's Corners Fire Co. to move ahead with the soft billing with PBA. Councilwoman Sue Neidlinger made the motion and Councilman Robert Horanburg seconded. There were no questions. All in favor and motion passed.

Supervisor Syracuse adjourned the meeting at 7:36pm.

Respectively submitted,

Mary L Zeller
Confidential Secretary to the Supervisor