

SMCAS Q & A FROM DIRECTOR BRIAN SCRIBNER

The following questions and answers were submitted via email by SMCAS Director Brian Scribner, in response to questions posed by Buchanan City Commissioners:

From: Brian Scribner <bscribner@smcas.org>
Sent: Monday, August 1, 2022 10:13 AM
To: Kalla Langston <clerk@cityofbuchanan.com>
Subject: RE: SMCAS Resolutions

Hi Kalla,

First, I apologize for not being at that meeting. I don't think we were aware that it was happening. I am trying to make it to all of them. Yes, we will be there on the 8th.

The funding shortage that is happening here, is happening everywhere in our industry. SMCAS is actually one of the more solid agencies and will weather this challenge better than most. It comes down to one simple fact; EMS across the nation is in a staffing crisis. This is a problem that will not be resolved quickly. Paramedics take at least two years to train and even more time to develop into confident, autonomously functioning care providers. To make it worse, there aren't nearly enough paramedics in the training pipeline to resolve this problem. This is due mostly to the fact that Nursing training takes approximately the same amount of time to complete and provides much better pay. So the problem will not be fixed until potential paramedics see a viable career with good pay and begin enrolling in training programs. Wages are going to have to increase everywhere. In the interim, there is heavy competition for the few paramedics there are. The largest employer of paramedics in our state, Emergent Healthcare Partners, has recently made this move and now has a pay scale that is \$20,000 higher than ours at top of scale.

The staffing shortage in our Nation has been happening for more than a decade. However, the Pandemic caused a rapid spike in the number of people leaving our field and a rapid decrease in the number of people entering it. This took the industry into an absolute crisis very quickly. In the midst of this crisis, SMCAS has remained fully staffed. This is primarily due to the fact that we have extremely dedicated people who care about this community. We work hard to maintain a positive work-place environment where people enjoy coming to work. I don't believe we need to be the highest paying agency in the region but we do need to be somewhere in the range. Our people all have families and will eventually need to consider higher paying jobs if we fall too far behind. This increase would take our wages 12%-17% higher than they are right now, which I believe will help us recruit and retain high quality staff.

- 1) Is there a way we can get the PowerPoint presentation that Josh gave to us a few weeks ago so we can display it on our website and have on hand for our residents.
 - a. I will assemble a self-playing deck for your residents.
- 2) Do you have recent budgets, audits, or financials that are residents and commission can look at, or minutes from your board meetings?
 - a. All of our financials, budgets, and audits are shared with you through our monthly board reports. They are a matter of public record so I am happy to provide you with whatever you would like.
- 3) They would like a closer look on to where the money is going now and what plans you guys have for the future.
 - a. Virtually all of the requested increase will be going toward increasing our pay scales to make us competitive with surrounding agencies
- 4) What happens if they reject this special assessment?
 - a. Each municipality is responsible for their share of the subsidy for funding.
- 5) If one of the partners in the district doesn't move forward does the assessment become void?
 - a. No. The SAD is simply a way to pay your portion of the subsidy. Municipalities can fund it a different way if they choose.
- 6) Or do they have to find another way to pay?
 - a. Yes The municipality would need to find other funding sources. For example ARPA money could be used.
- 7) If say they don't approve the assessment would this leave us without ambulance service completely?
 - a. Buchanan City is one of six owner-municipalities of SMCAS. So all required subsidies for its operation remain a responsibility of those municipalities.
- 8) Does the whole thing start back over? Can they adjust the rates? Or does it have to be what you gave us?

From: Kalla Langston <clerk@cityofbuchanan.com>

Sent: Saturday, July 30, 2022 8:12 AM

To: Brian Scribner <bscribner@smcas.org>

Subject: RE: SMCAS Resolutions

Good Morning Brian,

We had the first Public Hearing this past Monday, and it brought up a lot of questions by the commissioners and residents. Can you help me answer some of these questions and possibly be at the next meeting on August 8th and 7:00 PM?