



COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: August 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE, PRESENTER: Consideration and Approval of the Pay Scale and Operational Changes for the County EMS Program. Mack McDonald, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION: Make a Motion Approving the Contract Award

SUMMARY

As we monitor expenditures and operations in the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program, it has become clear that there are multiple pay schedules and levels from the past, leading to inconsistencies. I am asking the Commission to normalize and approve the following pay scale. This scale is not merit-based but provides typical pay ranges for beginning, mid-point, and maximum levels based on EMT certifications:

Position	Beginning	Mid-Range	Max
EMR	\$16.36	\$17.67	\$19.14
EMT Basic	\$17.19	\$18.56	\$20.11
EMT Advanced	\$18.61	\$23.26	\$27.91
EMT Paramedic	\$19.40	\$24.25	\$29.10

On average, across the nation, EMTs earn just above \$17.00 per hour according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In comparison, our EMTs are paid less, with the current average being \$16.17 per hour across all levels, including EMT Advanced and EMT Paramedics. This proposed restructure would align us more closely with the state average for EMTs, which is \$17.64 for EMT Basics.

The shift differentials in our current system have complicated payroll and caused confusion for both full-time and part-time employees. I propose simplifying this by adopting a single 12-hour shift differential. Previously, we offered 12-hour, 24-hour, and 48-hour shift differentials, and an additional rate for covering 10 or more shifts. However, these were never officially approved by the Commission. As a result, newer employees are being asked to follow different schedules than older, tenured employees, who expect pay based on schedules that have been phased out.

By adopting this new pay scale and obtaining formal approval from the Commission, we can eliminate past departmental practices and move toward a standardized, comprehensible pay system. The 24-hour and 48-hour shift differentials will be discontinued. Employees may still sign up for back-to-back shifts, but will only be paid on an on-call basis for 12-hour shifts. This will also help us manage part-time employees to an average of 29 hours per week throughout the year.

The new proposed shift differential is as follows:

Position	On-Call Rate
EMR/EMT Basic	\$3.34/hour + hourly rate when responding (\$40 for 12 hours)
EMT Advanced	\$5.00/hour + hourly rate when responding (\$60 for 12 hours)
EMT Paramedic	\$6.67/hour + hourly rate when responding (\$80 for 12 hours)

For transports out of San Juan County:

Position	Transport Rate
EMR/EMT Basic	\$150 + hourly rate, with on-call pay if signed up prior to the call
EMT Advanced	\$200 + hourly rate
EMT Paramedic	\$250 + hourly rate

For Quick Secondary Responses (when a second ambulance is required):

- \$30 + hourly rate for those responding to a second pager call.

Event Pay:

Event Type	Rate
Games, Fair & Rodeo, Training	\$20/hour
Special Events (Movies, Rallies, Requests)	\$30/hour

On-call shifts will be treated strictly as on-call, not as actual labor. The current requirement that employees respond to a 911 call within 3 minutes will be removed. While we still expect a timely response, feedback from employees, who express concerns such as being afraid to shower in case they miss the call window, suggests this expectation is impractical and not consistently enforced.

The Quick Secondary Response pay ensures that when a second ambulance is needed, employees who respond will receive their hourly rate plus \$30 for each call. This simplifies the process and incentivizes responsiveness.

These changes will increase salary expenditures in the EMS fund, which is currently running at a deficit of \$179,000. Year-to-date, the County has spent over \$450,000 on salaries. The hope is with a shift in incentives more towards transports, we can increase revenue instead of depending solely on medical runs as recommended in last year's EMS Audit.

I propose hiring one additional full-time employee, bringing the total to six full-time employees, who would rotate on a 48/96 schedule. In this system, employees work 48-hour shifts but are not paid for all 48 hours. For each shift, employees are required to be at the station for 12 hours (from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.). For the second 12-hour portion of their shift, they will receive 4 hours of on-call time at \$24 per hour or their hourly rate for actual hours worked, whichever is greater. Each 48-hour shift guarantees compensation for a minimum of 32 hours. The 48/96 rotation means that employees work an additional

1.5 shifts per week for two weeks, followed by one shift per week for four weeks, averaging 39 hours per week over the course of a year. This does not include overnight responses or mandatory training.

An additional full-time employee would cost the County roughly \$450 per shift. Currently, we are only running two employees per shift at the Blanding and Monticello stations, and we are unable to fully staff some shifts, leaving some with no one signed up for 911 response.

In addition, I am requesting the Commission approve a one-time bonus, recognizing years of service, to be awarded at a future Commission meeting using ARPA funds set aside for this purpose:

Years of Service	Bonus Amount
5 years	\$100
10 years	\$200
15 years	\$300
20+ years	\$400