

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Howard Tipton, Town Manager
From: Paul B. Dezzi, Fire Chief
Report date: August 14, 2023
Meeting date: September 11, 2023
Subject: Resolution 2023-25 Amending EMS (Emergency Medical Services) User Fee Schedule and Reaffirming the Fee Schedule for other Fire Services.

Recommended Action

Pass Resolution 2023-25

Background

Longboat Key Fire Rescue (LBKFR) provides emergency medical non-transport and transport services (EMS) to the Town of Longboat Key and other surrounding areas through mutual and automatic aid response. Funding for EMS consists of ad valorem and EMS user fees. On September 10, 2007, the Town Commission passed Resolution 2007-16 that provided the general user fee schedule for EMS non-transport and transport services and other Fire Rescue Department services (i.e. fire inspections and false fire alarm responses). While the cost of providing EMS has steadily risen over the past 15 years, the fee schedule set forth in Resolution 2007-16 has remained unchanged since 2007. Resolution 2023-25 proposes amendments and increases to the EMS user fees collected and restates (without changes) the general user fee schedule for other Fire Rescue Department services within the Town (inspections and fire alarm responses).

Sarasota County recently conducted a study of EMS fees for purposes of evaluating the County's fee schedule for EMS services. Similar to LBKFR, Sarasota County has not raised its EMS user fees since 2007. Sarasota County conducted a comprehensive "Emergency Medical Services Funding Sources Report," a copy of which is attached to this memorandum, that evaluates State and regional EMS rate structures. The County's report identifies EMS increases resulting from multiple factors including, but not limited to, increases in personnel salaries, benefits, medical supplies, materials, and medications necessary to provide these services. Based upon the County's analysis, Sarasota County Emergency Services Staff is recommending that Sarasota County increase its fees charged for Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Life Support – Level 1 (ALS1), Advanced Life Support – Level 2 (ALS2), and mileage rates for ground transportation. The County is also recommending additional fee schedules for new and enhanced EMS services that include services such as Telehealth service charges, hospital wait times, and team equipment fees.

The Town's current EMS fees mirrors Sarasota County's 2007 EMS fee schedule. Accordingly, the user fee comparison cost data gathered by Sarasota County is equally applicable to the Town as a basis to revisit whether an existing EMS user fee increase is warranted as well as whether new EMS user fees should be incorporated into the Town's amended fee schedule. Other cities (i.e., City of Venice, City of North Port) are similarly relying upon the Sarasota County report as a basis to review and increase their EMS fees and introduce new fees for other services to ensure continued consistency between the

regional agencies. The report shows that all the agencies within Sarasota County have fees consistent with the rates the Town of Longboat Key has been charging.

The attached Emergency Medical Services Funding Sources Report provides rate structures from multiple agencies obtained from a State survey conducted in 2021. Tables 1 and 3 have been excerpted from the report and included in this memorandum to show proposed adjustments to the Town's ambulance user fees including an increase to existing fees as well as new fees, such as Telehealth service charges, hospital wait time, and team equipment fees. It is projected that an estimated \$20,000 would be collected with the proposed increase in transport fees and by incorporating the new EMS fees.

New EMS services and fees associated with such services that could be provided by LBKFR are described below:

- Telehealth is the distribution of health-related services and information via electronic information and telecommunication technologies. This enhanced service benefits the citizens and visitors of the Town by providing long-distance patient and clinician contact, care, advice, reminders, education, intervention, monitoring, and remote admissions in lieu of being transported to a hospital. The Town currently has all required equipment to add this service option. If implemented, patients who choose to utilize this service will be billed at a lower rate by the Town than they would have incurred had they been transported. The patient may also be billed by the selected Telehealth Provider for this service. Currently, the Town does not have an agreement with any Telehealth Providers to provide this service.
- Hospital wait time charge is an effort to reduce the time for ambulances waiting to offload patients at area hospitals. Thus, returning ambulances to service more quickly and increasing ambulance availability. This fee would be charged to the hospital in which the patient is transported to.
- Team equipment fee is to offset LBKFR's cost when we are called to provide transport assistance to aeromedical, such as medical transport helicopters/flight crews. This charge would be the responsibility of the hospital requesting the aeromedical transfer.

Table 1 reflects the average rate for service of core comparators, current fees charged through the Town resolution, and proposed rates. The mileage rate is charged for each mile driven during the transport of the patient.

There are three primary fees depending upon the type of service provided including:

- BLS - Basic Life Support transport fee is used, where medically necessary, for the provision of the basic life support services as defined in the National EMS Education and Practice Blueprint for the EMS-Basic including the establishment of a peripheral intravenous line.
- ALS-1 - Advanced Life Support is the fee used where medically necessary, the provision of an assessment by an advanced life support provider and/or the provision of one or more interventions.
- ALS-2 - Advanced Life Support is the fee used where medically necessary, the administration of at least three (3) different medications and/or the provision of one or more of the following procedures: manual defibrillation/cardioversion, endotracheal intubation, central venous line, cardiac pacing, chest decompression, surgical airway, or intraosseous line.

TABLE 1
AVERAGE RATE FOR SERVICE

The services reflected as strikethrough are proposed to be eliminated from the adopted User Fee Schedule to simplify the process.

Billing Level	Average Core comparators	LBK Current	LBK Proposed
Basic Life Support (BLS) Emergency	\$653.69	\$600.00	\$700.00
Advanced Life Support Level 1 (ALS1) Emergency	\$727.98	\$600.00	\$0
Advanced Life Support Level 1 (ALS-1)	\$727.98	\$600.00	\$800.00
Advanced Life Support, Level 2 (ALS-2)	\$787.80	\$650.00	\$825.00
Aero Medical Transport, Emergency Transport	N/A	\$0.00	\$825.00
Emergency Response Requested, Patient Non-Transport	\$156.25	\$0.00	\$175.00
Patient Transport Mileage	\$12.29	\$10.00	\$14.00

TABLE 3
NEW SERVICE & FEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposed New Fee Type	Fee(s)
Team Equipment Fee	\$220.00
Telehealth Service	\$175.00
Hospital Wait Time (Initial)	\$150.00 after first 30 minutes
Additional time	\$75.00/each 30 minutes thereafter
Stat Transport	\$1,500 plus mileage rate
Aero Medical Transport, Emergency Transport	\$825.00
Emergency Response Requested, Patient non-Transport	\$175.00

Definitions

For purposes of collective understanding the existing service fees and new proposed fees, the following are the definitions associated with the levels of service.

Team/Equipment Transport Fee: Base fee charged for each transport where a patient is not on board (i.e., medical team(s) and/or medical equipment only). Longboat Key Fire Rescue personnel and apparatus are called upon on a regular basis to provide transport assistance to aeromedical services. Fire apparatus standby while aircraft are landing and taking off for safety purposes and rescue units and personnel are utilized to transport medical teams to hospitals for patient transfer. Once a patient is transferred to an aeromedical service, Longboat Key Fire Rescue personnel transports the patient and medical crew members back to the aircraft.

Telehealth Service Fee: Base fee charged to each patient who is assessed and meets the criteria to be transferred to a Tele-9 1 1 Emergency Physician.

Hospital Wait Time: A supplemental fee to be charged to the facility receiving the patient when there is a delay in transferring the patient from the care of Longboat Key Fire Rescue to the care of the receiving facility. A minimum of 30 minutes waiting time must accrue before charging for the first 30-minute period. Thereafter,

the 30-minute charge applies for each occurring increment greater than 20 minutes, rounding up to the next 30 minutes.*

**Note: Charges would be billed to the facility and/or hospital directly.*

Stat Transport Fee: Base fee charged each time Longboat Key Fire Rescue responds to a facility to transport an emergency patient to another facility for specialized or higher level of care.

Treatment with Non-Transport Fee: The fee that will be charged to each patient that is treated on scene of an incident or received an ALS assessment and is not transported.

Basic Life Support Transport Fee (BLS): Basic Life Support transport fee is used, where medically necessary, for the provision of the basic life support services as defined in the National EMS Education and Practice Blueprint for the EMS-Basic including the establishment of a peripheral intravenous line.

Advanced Life Support (ALS-1) Transport: Base ALS-1 fee charged to each patient transported by Longboat Key Fire Rescue and receives any of the listed procedures. This fee is inclusive of, but not limited to, the following procedures:

- A. Cardiac monitoring
- B. Vascular access (including IV catheters, saline locks, administration sets, blood draws, and all fluids)
- C. Obstetrical Kits
- D. Medications approved by the Longboat Key Fire Rescue Medical Director and administered to patients including, but not limited to, those medications listed in the Department Medical Protocols Medication Formulary.

Advanced Life Support 2 (ALS-2) Transport: Base transport fee charged to each patient that is transported by Longboat Key Fire Rescue and receives at least three administrations of medication(s) by IV push/bolus or continuous infusion and/or the provision of at least one of the following ALS procedures. This fee is inclusive of, but not limited to, any of the following procedures:

- A. Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation
- B. Defibrillation/cardioversion
- C. Endotracheal/Nasotracheal intubation
- D. Cardiac Pacing
- E. Chest decompression
- F. Surgical airway including needle cricothyrotomy
- G. Intraosseous line
- H. Medications approved by Longboat Key Fire Rescue Medical Director and administered to patients including, but not limited to, those medications listed in the Department Medical Protocols Medication Formulary.

Transport Mileage: Minimum of one mile. This charge will begin when transporting patients or specialized teams such as aeromedical crew.

Telehealth: The distribution of health-related services and information via electronic information and telecommunication technologies. This enhanced service benefits the citizens and visitors of Longboat Key by providing long-distance patient and clinician contact, care, advice, reminders, education, intervention, monitoring, and remote admissions in lieu of being transported to a hospital. The Town currently has all required equipment to add this service option. If

implemented, patients who choose to utilize this service will be billed at a lower rate by the Town than they would have incurred had they been transported. The patient may also be billed by the selected Telehealth Provider for this service. Currently, the Town does not have an agreement with any Telehealth Providers to provide this service.

In summary, LBKFR is recommending that the Town Commission adopt Resolution 2023-25 and the proposed fee increases to the existing EMS (BLS and ALS) services to address the increased costs associated with providing EMS services. As stated above, the increases will enable LBKFR to have the end user pay for the service they are rendered and remain consistent with the other EMS providers in Sarasota County. Additionally, LBKFR recommends the inclusion of new fee schedules to pay for additional EMS services (i.e., Telehealth, etc.) as described above in anticipation of LBKFR providing those levels of service in the future.

Finally, the general user fee schedule provided for in Resolution 2023-25 for other Fire Rescue Department services (inspections and fire alarm responses) remains unchanged. Those schedule are included in this Resolution so that all of LBKFR's user fees for response services (excluding building permitting and inspections) are set forth in one governing document.

Staff Recommendation

Following public hearing, pass Resolution 2023-25.

Attachments

- A. Resolution 2023-25 (Available in the Town Clerk's Office)
- B. May 16, 2023, Sarasota County Memorandum from Sarasota County Emergency Services Director to the County Administrator relating to "Update EMS Billing Resolution to Maintain and/or Enhance Services" (Available in the Town Clerk's Office)
- C. Sarasota County's Emergency Services Funding Report (Available in the Town Clerk's Office)
- D. Town Resolution 2007-16 (Available in the Town Clerk's Office)

End of Agenda Item