

Council Meeting, Avoca City Council, May 20, 2023

Attending: Mayor: Tom Bruck  
Council: Fred Miller, Matt Gramkow, Diane Stamp, Bill Dea  
Fire Depart. Chief Drew Becker, Caitlyn Becker, Keenan Martin, Jessie Tooley,  
Justin Tooley

Mayor Tom Bruck called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. Motion by Gramkow, seconded by Miller to approve the agenda.

Caitlyn Becker supplied hand-outs.

- a list of duties which would be completed by a full-time EMS. (see attached)
- a copy of Iowa Code 2023, Section 384.12 which explains tax levies
- a copy of Iowa Code 2023, Chapter 357G regarding City emergency medical services

Caitlyn Becker informed the council that the Avoca Volunteer Fire Department is a “fire” based department. We are NOT EMS essential. This means there is no guarantee or requirement that an ambulance will show up, if you call 911. In the summer of 2021, Governor Reynolds signed a bill allowing Iowa counties to become EMS Essential. Presently there are no cities within the state that are EMS essential, and there are very few counties. This EMS designation would provide our fire department with more public safety tax funding, but it must be balloted upon and have 60% voter approval. While this funding sounds like a solution, it was noted that it is a lengthy process (our city would be the first, and it doesn’t sound like the county is actively pursuing this). This approach would not solve our current urgent need.

Chief Becker mentioned that Shelby, Oakland, and Elkhorn have a full-time EMS on staff. If we should hire a full-time EMS, he estimates our cost to be \$55,000 to \$58,000, or around \$22 per hour. Councilman Gramkow reminded the council that hiring a full-time EMS has been on our horizon for the last two years, and he feels that now is the time to proceed.

Discussion was held regarding how to increase emergency revenue.

- Councilman Miller had concerns that not all citizens are paying for this service. Levied taxes are only paid by property owners.
- Chief Becker suggested a monthly emergency fee to be added on our water bills? Legality was questioned. He also stated that ambulance fees should basically fund the full-time EMT cost.
- Justin Tooley suggested a MidAmerican Energy Franchise Tax. Walnut has recently obtained this revenue stream to help their fire department. Citizens would be charged a percentage of their monthly gas/electric bills which in turn would be submitted to the city for public safety.

Action steps:

- An advertisement will be placed for a full-time EMT.
- Mayor Bruck will look into the MidAmerican Franchise tax
- Everyone is asked to look for other areas of possible revenue.

Councilman Gramkow motioned to close the meeting. Councilman Miller seconded.  
Meeting adjourned at 9:13 a.m.

ATTEST:

Diane Stamp – Councilwoman

