

February 5, 2024

UPDATE ON AMBULANCE SERVICE CONTRACT

On January 30, 2024, Morrow County Health District sent a draft ambulance service contract to Morrow County with a request that they give the matter prompt consideration.

Executing this contract would resolve the 90-day notice to discontinue ambulance services and would allow MCHD to continue to provide the same level of ambulance service to the entire county.

On February 1, 2024, the Morrow County Administrator published a press release stating that the contract is “unacceptable.” He provided this press release to MCHD by email adding, “The County is still open to discussing possible solutions that would be amiable to both the County and MCHD.”

MCHD responded to the County Administrator on February 1, 2024 and February 2, 2024 requesting a meeting as soon as possible to discuss the County’s feedback on the contract and to engage in negotiations.

The County Administrator responded with:

“...Yes, I would like to arrange a meeting with MCHD to discuss options. However, with MCHD’s insistence of not extending the cutoff date and the exclusive nature of the contract, the County’s priority must be to review interim services options and to review proposals from other entities before we can fully engage with MCHD. I anticipate that we could do something by February 15th of 16th if that would work with your team...”

With 36 days of the notice period remaining, we feel this response is insufficient. We are extremely concerned that the County is not prioritizing a review of the contract.

We do not believe there is another service provider prepared to step in to provide the same level of service countywide that MCHD currently provides.

We encourage the public to reach out to the Board of Commissioners to request that they prioritize a review of the contract and that they engage in good faith negotiations with MCHD. The next Board of Commissioners meeting is set for February 7, 2024 and the service contract is **not** currently on the agenda for review.

MCHD has been clear from the start that we want to continue as the ambulance service provider countywide. Our reasons for giving a 90-day notice to vacate and our reasons for declining to extend that notice are publicly available here:

<https://www.morrowcountyhealthdistrict.org/public-information-concerning-ambulance-services-in-morrow-county>

It is our sincere hope that Morrow County will engage in immediate contract negotiations to settle this matter in a way that serves the best interests of Morrow County residents.

Emily Roberts

From: Diane Kilkenny
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2024 3:46 PM
To: Emily Roberts
Subject: Fwd: Reply to County Administrator

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Diane Kilkenny <dianek@moco hd.org>
Date: February 5, 2024 at 3:42:46 PM PST
To: Matthew Jensen <mjensen@co.morrow.or.us>
Subject: Reply to County Administrator

Good Afternoon Administrator Jensen,
I am very disappointed in your reply to our communication 2/2/24 requesting a meeting for Tuesday 2/6/24 at 1pm to discuss in person the Health District proposed service contract and working out a solution.

Your reply to our request was the county's priority is looking for other providers and cannot meet until 2/15 or 2/16. Without dialogue, problems with the proposed contract cannot be discussed or either side providing an understanding of the framework of how the decisions were obtained and finally working out the hard details of compromise. You as spokesman for the county have said publicly and privately to Morrow County Health District Board members many times you wanted to work with the Health District to come to a solution. I agree this process is arduous and frustrating but so important to the best interests of all county residents in regard to their healthcare. The County and the Health District have already come to an agreement on the new ASA proposal and Ordinance. Strong progress has been made. What's left is the service contract and we are asking the County to continue to come to the table and negotiate. Hopefully we can agree both of our loyalties are to provide Morrow County residents with the best healthcare. The District has always been vocal about wanting to be the ambulance service provider so providing a proposed service contract was not forcing your hand but continuing to work towards a solution.

Additionally I am requesting a copy of all proposals, contracts, and budgets from perspective providers you have received to provide ambulance services in Morrow County. You stated publicly you have secured ambulances. In the East Oregonian on 2/1/24 in regards to applying ambulance service providers you stated "I hope to have the commissioners make a decision at their 2/21/24 meeting" You also stated Boardman Fire and Rescue has indicated it would submit a service contract proposal by 2/2/24 for county review". Morrow County Health District has been transparent with the Board of Commissioners and the residents of Morrow County with our proposal and contract by publishing them on the Health District website. In the same fairness I am requesting the same transparency from the county regarding proposals and contracts.

Thank you,
Diane Kilkenny
Board Chair
Morrow County Health District

Emily Roberts

From: Matthew Jensen <mjensen@co.morrow.or.us>
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2024 10:15 AM
To: Emily Roberts
Cc: Bob Blackmore; 'Troy S. Bundy'; Nicole Mahoney; Diane Kilkenny; David Sykes
Subject: RE: Press Release - County Response to MCHD's Ambulance Service Contract

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Emily,

Thank you for the clarifications. Yes, I would like to arrange a meeting with MCHD to discuss options. However, with MCHD's insistence of not extending the cutoff date and the exclusive nature of the contract, the County's priority must be to review interim services options and to review proposals from other entities before we can fully engage with MCHD. I anticipate that we could do something by February 15th of 16th if that would work with your team. Please let me know.

Sincerely,

Matthew Jensen
County Administrator



110 N Court Street
P.O. Box 788
Heppner, OR 97836
O: 541.676.2529
C: 541.256.0161

From: Emily Roberts <emilyr@moco hd.org>
Sent: Friday, February 2, 2024 5:11 PM
To: Matthew Jensen <mjensen@co.morrow.or.us>
Cc: Bob Blackmore <bob.blackmore@innovalegaladvisors.com>; 'Troy S. Bundy' <TSB@hartwagner.com>; Nicole Mahoney <nicolem@moco hd.org>; Diane Kilkenny <dianek@moco hd.org>; David Sykes <dsykes@co.morrow.or.us>
Subject: RE: Press Release - County Response to MCHD's Ambulance Service Contract

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] - STOP and VERIFY - This message came from outside of Morrow County Gov

Good afternoon,

We feel it is extremely important to get a meeting scheduled to discuss this in person. Would your team be able to meet on Tuesday the 6th at 1 p.m.? Our team will include Troy Bundy, Diane Kilkenny, Nicole Mahoney, and myself.

In response to your questions below:

1. Yes, we're in agreement with working under the most recent ASA Plan and Ordinance submitted to OHA.

2. The board has not changed their position on this topic.
3. The board has not changed their position on this topic. We feel it is best for the entire county to be served by one provider. We also feel that the county does not fully understand the various practical and logistical problems having multiple providers creates and we would like to take the time to explain those issues in detail while answering any questions that arise.
4. This would be a great topic to discuss in negotiations. We submitted the contract as a starting place and welcome the County's feedback. We ask the County to engage in good faith negotiations with regard to the service contract as we have done with the ASA Plan and Ordinance.

Best,

Emily Reynolds Roberts

Chief Executive Officer
Morrow County Health District
564 E Pioneer Drive
Heppner, OR 97836
Phone: 541-676-2915

Website: www.healthymc.org

Strengths: ● Input ● Strategic ● Relator ● Achiever ● Activator



From: Matthew Jensen <mjensen@co.morrow.or.us>

Sent: Friday, February 2, 2024 2:35 PM

To: Emily Roberts <emilyr@moco hd.org>

Cc: Bob Blackmore <bob.blackmore@innovalegaladvisors.com>; 'Troy S. Bundy' <TSB@hartwagner.com>; Nicole Mahoney <nicolem@moco hd.org>; Diane Kilkenny <dianek@moco hd.org>; David Sykes <dsykes@co.morrow.or.us>

Subject: RE: Press Release - County Response to MCHD's Ambulance Service Contract

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Emily,

I appreciate MCHD reaching out on this issue. As I have repeatedly stated, MCHD is a valuable provider of services for our County and I want that to continue in the future.

The County is open to continued discussions. As stated in the recent press release, we cannot accept the proposed exclusive contract, and the County is required to consider proposals from all interested parties. The County is committed to providing quality ambulance service that meets the needs of our residents. We would like to explore all options with MCHD.

Since our last meeting, it appears that several factors may have changed. To establish a common ground to have this discussion the County asks that you confirm MCHD's position on the following points:

- **Acceptance of the proposed ASA Plan.** The February 1, 2024 article in the East Oregonian mentions that MCHD is "... on board with the plan and ordinance...". Can you confirm this statement?
- **Temporary continuation of ambulance service.** Your press release of January 9, 2024 states that MCHD will not consider an extension of ambulance coverage past March 12, 2024 per the 90-day notice. Is this still the case?
- **Consideration of multiple providers.** Is MCHD willing to submit proposals for non-exclusive ambulance services in Morrow County? Assigned areas would of course be honored as awarded.
- **Use of tax levies.** The submitted contract listed no use of MCHD tax levies to pay for ambulance services. Is this the intent of MCHD going into these discussions?

MCHD responding to these questions will help establish a starting point for discussions next week. Please advise on MCHD's position for these points and we can establish a time to meet.

I would appreciate if your responses would be limited to cc'ing Commission Chair David Sykes and not the other commissioners. We don't want to inadvertently trigger any violation of public information rules. Also, I appreciate the good faith nature of this correspondence and would appreciate not making every discussion a matter of public publication as we work through the differences.

Regards,

Matthew Jensen
County Administrator

110 N Court Street
P.O. Box 788
Heppner, OR 97836
O: 541.676.2529
C: 541.256.0161

From: Emily Roberts <emilyr@moco hd.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 5:21 PM
To: Matthew Jensen <mjensen@co.morrow.or.us>
Cc: Bob Blackmore <bob.blackmore@innovalegaladvisors.com>; 'Troy S. Bundy' <TSB@hartwagner.com>; Nicole Mahoney <nicolem@moco hd.org>; Diane Kilkenny <dianek@moco hd.org>; David Sykes <dsykes@co.morrow.or.us>; Roy Drago Jr. <rdrago@co.morrow.or.us>; Jeff Wenholz <jwenholz@co.morrow.or.us>
Subject: RE: Press Release - County Response to MCHD's Ambulance Service Contract

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] - STOP and VERIFY - This message came from outside of Morrow County Gov

Good afternoon,

We received your response stating that the contract we presented is, "unacceptable," but that you are open to discussing possible solutions. We would very much like to discuss solutions and welcome your feedback on the contract. Because we're discussing a legal document, we suggest it would be best to meet with legal counsel and representatives from both entities. As we can all agree, time is of the essence. Our attorney has some availability next week if you could propose a date and time that works on your end.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Emily Reynolds Roberts
Chief Executive Officer
Morrow County Health District
564 E Pioneer Drive
Heppner, OR 97836
Phone: 541-676-2915
Website: www.healthymc.org

Strengths: ● Input ● Strategic ● Relator ● Achiever ● Activator



From: Matthew Jensen <mjensen@co.morrow.or.us>
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 12:07 PM
To: Emily Roberts <emilyr@mocohd.org>
Cc: Bob Blackmore <bob.blackmore@innovalegaladvisors.com>
Subject: Press Release - County Response to MCHD's Ambulance Service Contract

***** CAUTION! This email came from outside the Morrow County Health District network. Do not open attachments or click links if you do not recognize the sender. *****

Emily,

Attached, please find the County's press release regarding MCHD's proposed ambulance service contract. As written, the contract is unacceptable. The County is still open to discussing possible solutions that would be amiable to both the County and MCHD.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Matthew Jensen
County Administrator

110 N Court Street
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