



Information Forum

Washburn Emergency Services Referendum

April 5, 2022

Purpose of the Referendum and Answers To Your Questions



- 1. What are the issues?**
 - Lack of EMT coverage
 - Inadequate funds to pay competitive wages to police
- 2. Background**
 - City finances
 - EMT staffing issues/increase in 911 calls
 - Police wages
- 3. What options were considered?**
- 4. What does the referendum say and how will it impact me?**

City Finances



**2022 Operating Budget Revenues =
\$2,462,248**

Shared Revenue (State Aid) = \$626,762

- Declined by \$56,000 in the past 20 years.

2022 Property Tax = \$479,443

- Levy limits of some form since 2011
- New Construction
- Increases an average of \$5,238 per year, or 0.2% of total revenues

City Finances



**2022 Operating Budget Revenues =
\$2,462,248**

Fees For Service (Ambulance Billing)

- In 2021 we billed out \$335,881, but were only allowed to bill \$188,979
- Medicare were 70% of runs in 2021
- Medicaid were 15% of runs in 2021 (prior to 2022, last rate increase was in 2008)
- Private insurance were 15% of runs in 2021

Ambulance and police expenses have increased over same period of time.

Average Cost Per “Call for Service”

| Year (# of Calls) | Operational Cost * | Vehicle Depreciation ** | Total Cost |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2020 (560) | \$413.00 | \$47.67 | \$460.67 |
| 2021 (525) | \$451.00 | \$50.94 | \$501.94 |

* Includes staffing, medical supplies, and maintenance

** Vehicle purchase costs depreciated over 20 years

Medicare / Medicaid Reimbursement Rates

Wisconsin Rural Medicaid (15% of Washburn's calls)

| | Basic Life Support | Emergent Basic Life Support |
|------|-------------------------------|--|
| 2021 | \$185.58 (37%) | \$185.58 (37%) |
| 2022 | \$191.25 (38%) | \$305.99 (61%) |

Wisconsin Rural Medicare (70% of Washburn's calls)

| | Basic Life Support | Emergent Basic Life Support |
|------|-------------------------------|--|
| 2021 | \$241.40 (48%) | \$241.40 (48%) |
| 2022 | \$241.40 (48%) | \$386.24 (77%) |

% reimbursement based on 2021's \$501.94 total average cost

Ambulance Service

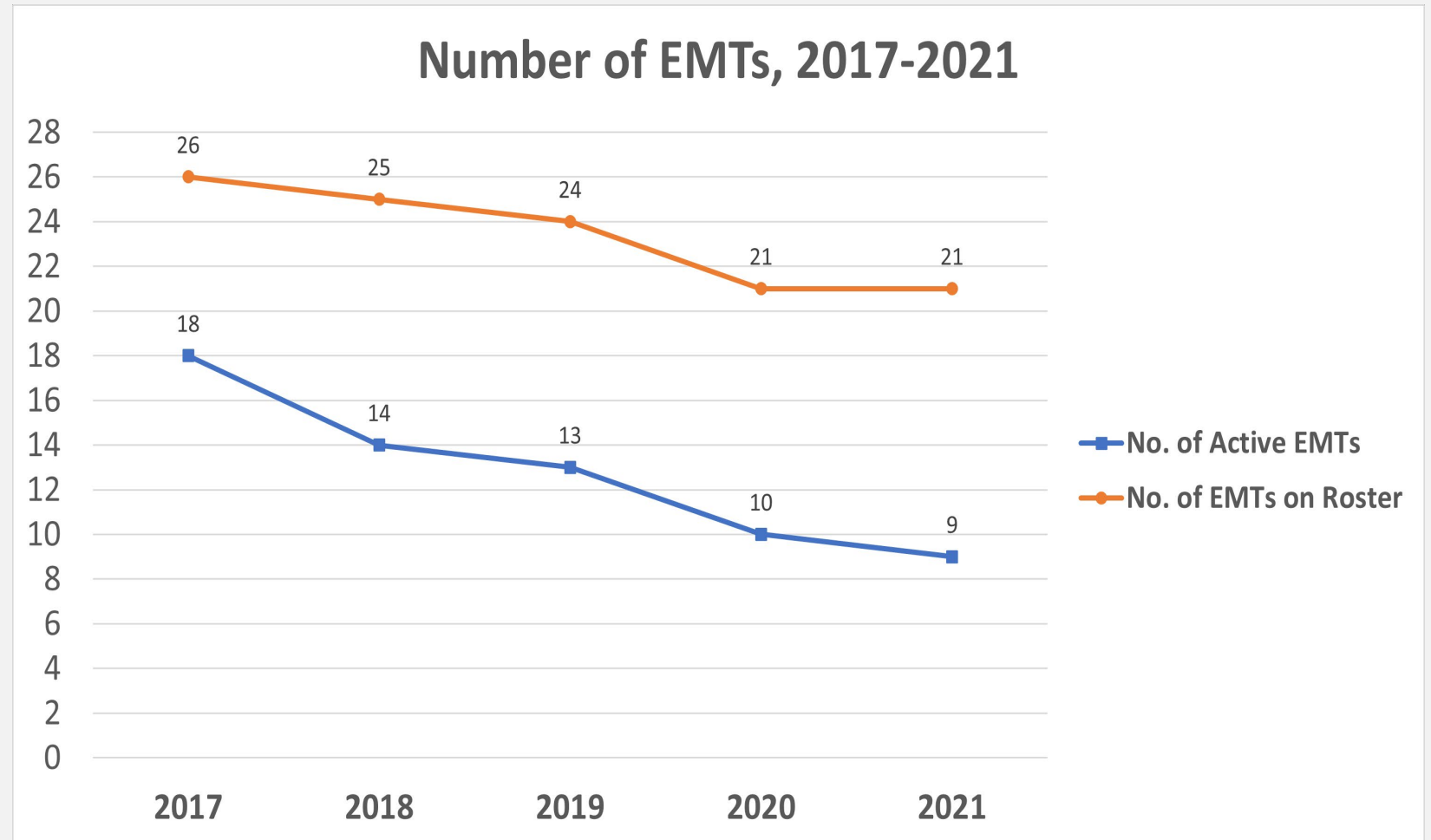


- Currently a paid-on-call (volunteer) service.
 - \$3 per hour of on-call time
 - \$40 per run
- There are 21 EMTs on the service.
- Many EMTs work other jobs, so are not available during weekdays.
- Some EMTs looking to retire.
- Not enough new recruits to replace inactive EMTs and those who are retiring.

Current EMT Staffing Shortage



“Active” EMT = 36 hrs/mth (>432 hrs/yr)

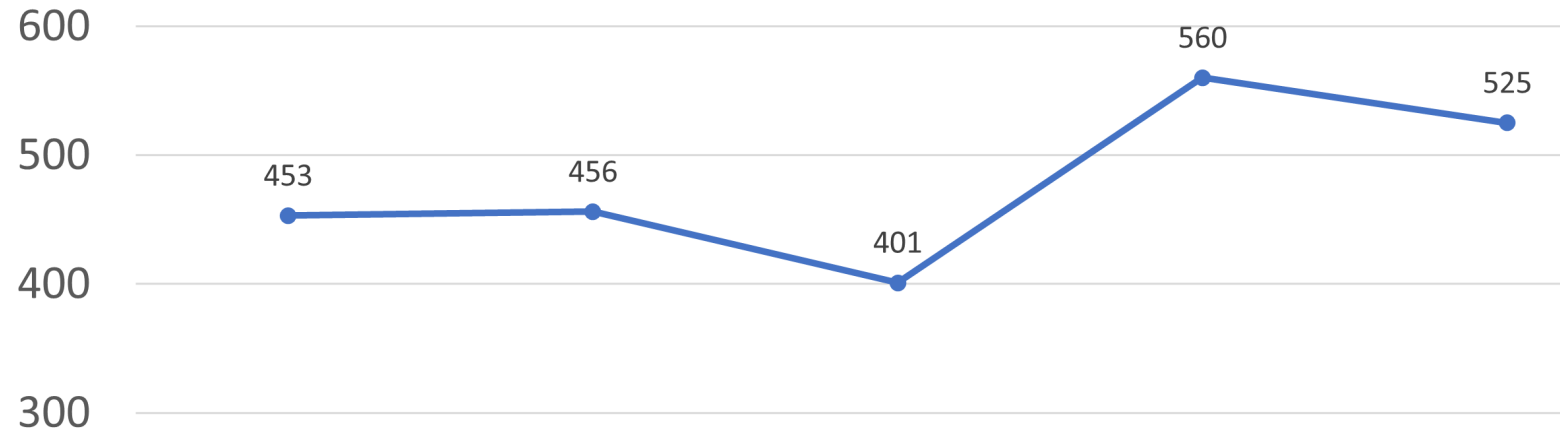


State requirement for a 911 ambulance service:
2 licensed EMTs 24/7

Increasing 911 Calls



Number of Calls, 2017-2021



- 561 calls in 2020 (a record year)
- 525 calls in 2021
- Average call volume has doubled in past 20 years
 - Lack of home health care
 - Fewer family members around
 - Ease of use (lift assists)
 - Someone will respond

Other EMS Options



- Make entire department full-time.
- Add Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs).
- Maintain current structure but increase on-call pay.
- Contract out emergency medical services.

Police Wages



- Washburn police officers were the lowest paid in northwest Wisconsin
 - \$1.72 less than City of Ashland
 - \$2.65 less than City of Bayfield
 - \$3.49 less than Bayfield County
- Police vacancies are numerous across the state and in the region – Not enough new recruits to fill vacancies.
- City Council approved contract with increase, but we are tapping into our savings to do it.
- Alternative was to risk losing staff.

Referendum Language



Under state law, the increase in the levy of the City of Washburn for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year (2023) is limited to 0.69%, which results in a levy of \$1,096,483.

Shall the City of Washburn be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year (2023) for the purpose of maintaining public safety services, specifically for two full-time EMTs, stipend/expenses to maintain paid-on-call EMTs, and for police wages, by a total of 18.24%, which results in a levy of \$1,296,483, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$200,000 for each fiscal year going forward?

What Would the \$200,000 Be Used For?



- \$145,400 Hire two full-time EMTs (wages and benefits)
- \$29,600 Increase stipends/on-call/incentives for paid-on-call EMTs
- \$25,000 Cover costs of increased police wages

\$200,000

What Will This Cost You?



Our best estimate indicates that the City's mill rate would increase by \$1.83 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

So....

- A property assessed at \$100,000 would see an increase of \$183 per year in property taxes.
- A property assessed at \$200,000 would see an increase of \$366 per year in property taxes.

What Can You Do?



We know no one likes to pay more in property taxes. This will not completely solve the issue, but it's a good start.

- Talk to your neighbors about this important issue.

This is a statewide issue; we continue to push for legislative changes.

- Make some noise! Tell Madison you are mad, too!



Questions?

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Cast your vote on April 5, 2022!