

MINUTES OF A PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON MARCH 3, 2015 AT 5:45 P.M. TO RECEIVE CITIZEN INPUT ON THE WILCOX COUNTY EMS EXPANSION. THE HEARING WAS HELD IN THE WILCOX COUNTY LIBRARY.

Those present for the meeting were as follows:

David Brown	Chairman
Jowan Johnson	Vice Chairman
Huck Greene	Commissioner
Lanier Keene	Commissioner
Tracy Tyndal	Commissioner
Paula Jones Ball	County Manager/Clerk
Andrew Coccaro	EMS Director

Chairman David Brown called the hearing to order.

The hearing began with a presentation from EMS Director Andrew Coccaro in which he provided facts and statistics from the EMS call history over the last three years.

John Selph requested the Commission make an informed decision. We are a rural county and maybe we should look at abuse of the system.

Carrie from the nursing home stated a station in Abbeville is a good idea.

Joe stated he would like to see a quick response time in Abbeville.

Dot said a station in Abbeville is a good idea. She has a 67 year old mother and father and a 90+ year old grandmother.

A gentleman stated we should look at the #s and the ambulance needs to be where the calls are. We do not need both ambulances in the same location.

Vera Crump stated she is about as close to Rochelle as Abbeville.

Darryl Talley stated the move makes no sense at all. It is not economical.

Wilton King stated if he was from Abbeville, he would be for it to but he is not.

Bill questioned if the Rochelle ambulance was out on a call, Rochelle would not have coverage. What about the Doublerun or Pleasantville Communities? He is against it.

Phil Conner stated he is against it.

Lisa McKinley stated 65% of the calls are elsewhere and not in Abbeville. The County has worked hard to get in good financial shape so why not give the EMS Director time to finish his study and come up with something that would be better for everyone in the County.

Carey Anderson stated he is all for it.

Joe from Abbeville, stated he is all for it.

Marvin Talley stated he would like to see a central location which made more economical sense.

Ophelia stated she is all for it. There are more elderly people in Abbeville.

Another Abbeville resident stated they were all for it.

Sarah stated she is all for because of the number of older people in Abbeville.

Lurrelle Wheeler stated she is in favor of it. She has a sister at Shady Pines Assisted Living Home in Abbeville and she had a case where it took the ambulance 1 hour and 30 minutes to get there. We need an ambulance in Abbeville. She has experienced a matter of life and death and response time matters.

A resident on McCampbell Street stated we need three ambulances. Let the EMS Director work on his model to come up with a plan. Maybe we cannot do it tomorrow but in the future we might.

Emanuel Phillips stated he was for an ambulance in Abbeville. EMS saves lives.

Norma Chastain thanked the Commissioners for the public hearing which allows everyone to have input. She stated everyone wants help quickly. We are taxpaying citizens. She feels the move would delay response time to other areas and cost more. When the County has more money and can support three ambulances two additional stations would be good but she is against one in Abbeville. Everyone pays taxes.

Jack Chastain asked if the prison pays the county. Director Coccaro stated they pay for all transfers. Pleasantville deserves as much as Abbeville. The older community is not for it. He suggested population density be looked at so more people can be served. He asked about the area below Abbeville towards Bowns Mill. We would be saving gas if a station was located there.

Mrs. John Hendley stated she was for the ambulance in Abbeville.

John Hendley stated he is all for it. He is the Police Chief in Abbeville and we need it here. The EMS is doing a wonderful job. Abbeville has the nursing home, jail, prison and assisted living home. He has been to calls from all locations.

Homer Lee Conner, Jr. stated he is totally against it. He stated everyone else in the county must be healthy and not need an ambulance to hear since Abbeville is the only one that needs it.

Ronald Spires stated he is all for it. He lives on Highway 280 and the ambulances pass his house all the time. He asked about mutual aid with other counties and if they could be called in to help cover the county. Director Cocco stated we do have mutual with surrounding counties but they can only come into the county if we ask them to cover a call. We are then at their mercy on whether they can take the call or not.

Clay Henderson stated he is for it 100%. The City of Abbeville is providing the facility so it is not any additional cost to the county.

Gene Tomberlin stated no life is worth more than another. He asked the Commissioners to look at all the information and make an informed decision.

Mark from Abbeville stated he is all for it.

William Tyson from Abbeville Healthcare stated the nursing home would like to have the shortest response time possible.

Jack Chastain requested the Commissioners look at GPS locations.

Michael Estes, Mayor of Abbeville, stated the last thing he wanted to do was cause controversy. The Commissioners never had any money for the ambulance station. He went to the Doctor that was coming to Abbeville and he did not have a problem with an ambulance being there. He went to the EMS Director and he thought it was a good idea. All the Commissioners agreed it was a good idea so he moved forward with preparing the building for an ambulance crew. The City Council gave authority to proceed. He added that he had attended Commission meetings since November and he gave an update at each meeting. When the City had completed the work, the Commission wanted to know who gave him authority to proceed. When you look at the calls for the last five years, it makes sense.

There being no further comments, the hearing was adjourned.

David Brown, Chairman

Paula Jones Ball, County Manager/Clerk