

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
GENERAL DISCUSSION**

**June 22, 2021**

**9:00 A.M.**

Present: Johnny Buckley, Ben Bridges, Ceis Nyegaard and L.W. Nolan. Absent: None. Also present were Nathan Pilgreen, Brenda Abercrombie, representatives from Pafford Ambulance Service, Sheriff Dusty Gates, Mayor John Crow, Mike Walsworth, Eddie Albritton, Billy Jung, Mayor Danny Smith, Mayor Mildred Ferguson, Connie Ginn and David Caston.

**Mr. Buckley called the meeting to order. Mr. Bridges led the group in prayer.**

**Motion Mr. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Bridges and declared adopted by unanimous vote to approve the agenda as written.**

**Motion Mr. Bridges, seconded by Mr. Nyegaard to approve the minutes of the October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the ambulance service in Union Parish. The Secretary/Treasurer reported that currently there is no Franchise Agreement with any ambulance company nor has the Parish ever had one that she can find. The Town of Farmerville had an agreement in 2005 with D'Arbonne Ambulance Service. The agreement stated that D'Arbonne Ambulance Service would provide Advanced Life Support Ambulance Service to the City of Farmerville. The Secretary/Treasurer checked with surrounding parishes and most of the parishes do not have agreements in place. Concordia, Claiborne, Morehouse, LaSalle, Winn, Franklin and Lincoln all stated that they have no ambulance contract. Jackson Parish has an Ambulance Service District which is funded by a property tax. Caldwell Parish has a contract, but they do not pay anything. Tensas has a contract and they pay \$29,875 a year. St. James has a contract with Acadian and their contract price is \$656,187.48 a year.

Sheriff Gates addressed the committee and Pafford Ambulance Service. Sheriff Gates stated that no one is trying to run Pafford out of the parish. Sheriff Gates stated that as an elected official and public servant he has an obligation to do what is best for the Parish. Sheriff Gates said he has had numerous complaints concerning response time and professionalism. Sheriff Gates further stated that the complaints are coming from citizens, other first responders and hospital officials.

Greg Pafford, Owner of Pafford Ambulance, addressed the Committee. Mr. Pafford stated that Pafford Ambulance has been servicing Union Parish since 2007. Mr. Pafford stated that he has been unaware of any issues. Mr. Pafford addressed the number of ambulances in the parish, the recent accident and issues they have experienced with COVID. Mr. Pafford suggested an ambulance committee that meets quarterly to discuss and review any issues that may arise. Mr. Pafford said all he is asking for is an opportunity to address the concerns that have been voiced.

Eddie Albritton addressed the Committee regarding an accident that occurred on Highway 33. Mr. Albritton stated that Pafford has some great EMTs. Mr. Albritton had issues with the time it

took to remove the individual from the vehicle. Mr. Albritton had to assist with the removal of the individual from the vehicle due to the length of time it took to extract him. The accident victim was in shock, but the EMTs were asking where he would like his IV put in. Mr. Albritton said the lack of response and the lack of caring is a big issue for him. Mr. Albritton said the best alternative would be for Pafford and Acadian to submit proposals to the jury. Mr. Albritton said money should be taken out of the equation. Mr. Albritton further stated that the ambulance service we have now is not working for the people of Union Parish and it needs to be fixed.

Billy Jung, Town of Farmerville Fire Chief, addressed the Committee and stated that the Farmerville Fire Department met with Pafford in April and expressed their concerns with issues that the fire department felt needed addressing.

- Lack of a sense of urgency
- EMTs not aggressive and do not tend to the patients
- Lack of ambulances in the parish
- Not being able to bandage patients and having to get fire department personnel to bandage the patients

Connie Ginn, RN at Union General Hospital, addressed the Committee as a patient advocate. Her concern is response time and making sure the EMTs can tend to the patients. Mrs. Ginn stated that Pafford has some wonderful EMTs. Mrs. Ginn understands that Union Parish is a large area, but if Pafford is going to staff our area then they should not pull their resources out of the Parish to handle calls in surrounding Parishes. Mrs. Ginn stated that Pafford recently provided a contract to Union General, but the hospital is not going to sign the contract because there are some items in there that have not been in their previous agreements. Mrs. Ginn further stated that the Pafford aircrew is phenomenal and she would trust them with her life, but in every profession there are bad apples. Mrs. Ginn stated that if a contract were initiated between the Parish and an ambulance service it should specify how many ambulances, how many advanced ambulances and that the EMTs should be able to start IVs and give medicine. Mrs. Ginn further stated that we are dealing with people's lives and cost should not be an issue.

Mr. Bridges thanked everyone for their candid comments. He said a scope of work is definitely needed to make sure everyone is comparing the same thing. Mr. Bridges stated that a response time can be very subjective. A quick response time may be needed for one thing, but not needed for another. Mr. Bridges further stated that the more ambulances that are demanded the more it will come at a cost to the Parish. That cost will have to be determined as well as how the franchise agreement would be funded.

Mr. Buckley said a committee is needed with members from various entities such as the Sheriff's Office, Union General Hospital, Reeves Memorial Hospital, the Police Jury and area municipalities. The Secretary/Treasurer was asked to read a statement from the Rocky Branch Crossroads Fire District. "Just for the record, no one speaks for RBCFD unless it is an officer or board member of RBCFD. We work extremely well with Pafford and have had recent first-hand experience when our Fire Chief had a stroke just a week ago. We couldn't have been more pleased. We make more EMS calls annually than fire related calls and probably more than any other Fire

Department in Union Parish, save for Bernice. Our opinion is this – only those Fire Departments that work directly with Pafford would be an excellent source of information.”

David Caston, CEO of Reeves Memorial Hospital, addressed the Committee. Mr. Caston said that Reeves Memorial has had a great relationship with Pafford over the years. Mr. Caston said that the hospital has called Acadian a few times and their response time is no different than Pafford. Acadian also has some of the same issues. Mr. Caston said that switching to another ambulance service may not be the answer. Mr. Caston suggested having stipulations and an agreement as to what we want for the Parish.

**Motion Mr. Bridges, seconded by Mr. Nolan to recommend to the full jury to form an adhoc committee to oversee the ambulance service in Union Parish. Motion carried unanimously.**

**There being no further business to come before the committee, Mr. Buckley declared the meeting adjourned upon motion by Mr. Bridges and duly seconded by Mr. Nolan on this the 21<sup>st</sup> day of June, 2021.**

**Johnny Buckley, Chairman  
Paula Strickland, Secretary-Treasurer**