



Austin-Travis County EMS Staff Recommendation Regarding Renewal of City of Austin Non-Emergency Medical Transfer Franchise for American Medical Response of Texas, Inc. (AMR)

February 20, 2008

Background

In order for a private ambulance company to provide non-emergency transfer services within the limits of the City of Austin, the provider must hold a franchise from the City. Non-emergency transfers typically occur between skilled nursing facilities and hospitals, and are usually prescheduled by medical personnel. Currently, two companies hold such franchises, American Medical Response of Texas, Inc. (AMR) and Acadian Ambulance Service.

AMR has held a franchise with the City of Austin since December 1996 when AMR purchased Gold Cross, the City's first franchise holder. This franchise was renewed in June 1998 for a five-year term. AMR's current franchise will expire on June 23, 2008. On January 24, 2008, Austin-Travis County EMS (A/TCEMS) received an application from AMR requesting a renewal of the franchise for another five-year term. All the required application elements have been submitted and the application fee has been paid in full.

Application Review

AMR has maintained their franchise in good standing since December 1996. Their headquarters, at 3601 Bluestein Drive, is well located to provide service throughout the Austin area. All ad valorem taxes on this property have been paid in full.

Bond Safeguard Insurance Company holds a current performance bond of \$10,000. Worker's compensation, general liability and automobile liability insurance are provided through Aon Risk Insurance Services West, at levels that meet or exceed those required by the franchise ordinance. The City of Austin is named on both the performance bond and the certificate of insurance.

AMR currently operates 9 ambulances for City of Austin franchise calls. Inspections by A/TCEMS revealed that all of these vehicles meet basic standards for emergency ambulances based on federal ambulance specifications, as well as general ambulance manufacturing standards. Odometer readings were all well within the limits of 250,000 miles as specified by AMR's corporate fleet policy. All of the franchise ambulances are either 2001 or newer models, within the 8 year vehicle age prescribed by AMR's corporate policy. Preventive maintenance and repair records reflect a strong preventive maintenance

program and all inspected vehicles had undergone preventive maintenance within acceptable timeframes. All of the franchise vehicles were current on their vehicle registrations, state emissions inspections and ambulance inspections. AMR and all of the franchise ambulances hold the appropriate current licenses through the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) which are valid through January 2010.

AMR currently employs 1 Medical Director, 19 Emergency Medical Technicians certified at the Basic level (EMT-B's) and 10 Paramedics for the Austin franchise. A/TCEMS independently verified the certification of these employees in February 2008. All state certifications are current and no suspensions or revocations were found for the company or its employees. A communications center is staffed 24-hours per day, 7-days per week, using dispatchers on a rotating schedule.

A/TCEMS staff conducted telephone customer surveys of 12 randomly chosen nursing facilities and 5 major hospitals in Austin. Survey results indicated acceptable to exceptional performance in the areas of quality of care, professional demeanor, patient/family satisfaction, and promptness.

Public Convenience

A/TCEMS believes that the public convenience will be served by renewing this franchise. AMR has held a City of Austin franchise in good standing since 1996. From October 2006 through January 2008 AMR handled 8,417 non-emergency medical transfers within the Austin city limits. This represents approximately 38% of the total call volume for non-emergency transfers regulated by A/TCEMS.

Conclusions

A/TCEMS recommends approval of this franchise renewal for a term of five years. AMR has proven over the past eleven years that they can provide satisfactory service to the Austin community. Call volume levels indicate that two franchise providers are necessary to handle the demand for non-emergency medical transfers. Failure to renew this franchise will result in only one franchise holder for the City of Austin.

On February 20, 2008 the Austin-Travis County EMS Advisory Board also recommended approval of AMR's franchise renewal for a five-year term.