TO: Williston Selectboard

FROM: Kenneth N. Morton, Jr. Fire Chief

DATE: June 13, 2019

RE: Ambulance Fee Increase

The Department seeks approval to increase the rates charged for ambulance service to help cover the Fiscal Year 2020 cost of delivering the service to the community. Additionally, an increase is being sought for the rates of standby coverage, which is the fee charged for ambulance and/or EMT rates hired by groups for event coverage.

Ambulance Rates:

The Department last increased ambulance rates in 2018. It should be noted that these increases will not affect those patients covered by either Medicare or Medicaid. Patients who have either of these insurance providers have limitations on transport rates. For Medicaid patients, the excess balance must be written off by the Town. For Medicare patients, the amount up to the capped rate can be collected. Ultimately, these proposed rate increases affect approximately 20 percent of those we transport with commercial insurance, and a small percentage of self-paying customers.

The chart below are the Medicare and Medicaid limits currently in place.

Charge Description	Medicare	Medicaid
BLS – Emergency	$379.15	290.17
ALS 1 – Emergency	$450.24	$344.58
ALS 2 – Emergency	$651.67	$268.54
Mileage	$7.55	$5.82

The following charts are based on ambulance transports that occurred in Fiscal Year 2018.

Charge Type	Count	Percent of Total
BLS – Non Emergency	35	4.32 %
BLS – Emergency	130	11.17 %
ALS 1 – Non Emergency	10	1.24 %
ALS 1 – Emergency	625	77.03 %
ALS 2 – Emergency	10	1.24 %
Total	810	100 %

Payer Type	Count	Percentage of Total
Commercial	195	24.00 %
Medicare	388	48.00 %
Medicaid	162	20.00 %
Self-Pay	65	8.00 %
Total	810	100 %

The proposed fee schedule was created by comparing our rates to other ambulance service providers in the region (see Attachment 1 – Ambulance Billing Rate Survey 2019 for details). The increase, as provided in the schedule below, will be effective July 1, 2019 upon passage by the Selectboard. The Department is recommending the following changes to the fee schedule (a description of charge types is in Appendix A);

Charge Description	Current Charge	Proposed Increase	New Charge
BLS – Non-Emergency	$575.00		$575.00
BLS – Emergency	$625.00	$75.00	$700.00
ALS 1 – Non-Emergency	$725.00		$725.00
ALS 1 – Emergency	$850.00	$50.00	$900.00
ALS 2 – Emergency	$1,295.00		$1,295.00
Mileage	$17.00	$1.00	$18.00
AEMT Intercept	$175.00	$75.00	$250.00
Paramedic Intercept	$250.00		$250.00

Please note that a number of neighboring agencies charge additional amounts for ancillary services and supplies, including oxygen, EKGs, IVs, etc. (see last page of rate survey). We do not charge for these items, rather we include them within the transport rate.

Event Standby Rates:

Several events are held in Williston that require the presence of an EMT or a fully staffed ambulance (includes two EMTs). We charge these groups an hourly rate for EMT-only coverage, and an hourly rate for a staffed ambulance (includes two EMTs). These fees help cover the cost of labor, supplies, gas, etc. These increases are driven by the new contract between the Town and the Local 4611 union. The Town has agreed to pay a minimum of $40 per hour (plus benefits) for event standby coverage, we need to increase our rates to cover these costs. Even with the rate increase, our rates are comparable to the median of what other agencies are charging for the same service:

Charge Description	Current Charge	Proposed Increase	New Charge
Hourly rate per EMT	$25.00	$25.00	$50.00
Hourly rate for staffed ambulance	$90.00	$40.00	$130.00
Per day rate for UTV w/ truck & trailer	$90.00		$90.00

Requests:

The Fire Department respectfully requests the Selectboard approve the following motion:

To approve and authorize the increased fee structure for ambulance services and standby rates as described in the memo by Chief Morton dated June 13, 2019, effective upon passage of the motion.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Appendix A
Description of Transport Types

Basic Life Support (BLS) – Includes the provision of medically necessary supplies and services and BLS ambulance transportation as defined by the State where you provide the transport. An emergency response is one that, at the time you are called, you respond immediately. A BLS emergency is an immediate emergency response in which you begin as quickly as possible to take the steps necessary to respond to the call.

Advanced Life Support, Level 1 (ALS1) – Includes the provision of medically necessary supplies and services and the provision of an ALS assessment or at least one ALS intervention. An ALS assessment is performed by an ALS crew as part of an emergency response that is necessary because the beneficiary's reported condition at the time of dispatch indicates only an ALS crew is qualified to perform the assessment. An ALS assessment does not necessarily result in a determination that the beneficiary requires an ALS level of transport. In the case of an appropriately dispatched ALS emergency service, if the ALS crew completes an ALS assessment, the services provided by the ambulance transportation service provider or supplier shall be covered at the ALS emergency level. This is regardless of whether the beneficiary required ALS intervention services during the transport, provided the ambulance transportation itself was medically reasonable and necessary and all other coverage requirements are met. An ALS intervention is a procedure that must be performed by an emergency medical technician-intermediate (EMT-Intermediate) or an EMT-Paramedic in accordance with State and local laws. An ALS1 emergency is an immediate emergency response in which you begin as quickly as possible to take the steps necessary to respond to the call.

Advanced Life Support, Level 2 (ALS2) – Includes the provision of medically necessary supplies and services, involving: At least three separate administrations of one or more medications by intravenous push/bolus or by continuous infusion (excluding crystalloid fluids) or at least one of these ALS2 procedures:

- Manual defibrillation/cardioversion
- Endotracheal intubation
- Central venous line
- Cardiac pacing
- Chest decompression
- Surgical airway or
- Intraosseous line