




# MEMORANDUM

## City of Venice

### Fire Department

TO: Edward Lavallee, City Manager

FROM: Shawn Carvey, Fire Chief 

DATE: April 17, 2019

COUNCIL APPROVAL: Yes

MEETING DATE: April 23, 2019

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL: Provide Efficient, Responsive Government with High Quality Services

SUBJECT: Approve Initiating Advance Life Support (ALS) Service Transition

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#### Background: Request Council Approval

Venice Fire Department has completed a full feasibility study to take on the EMS services currently provided by Sarasota County within the City of Venice. Over the last year, staff has provided substantial data that shows a locally managed and operated EMS service would be beneficial to the City both fiscally and operationally. Our #1 commitment is to provide the top level of service to our community to preserve their quality of life.

Staff is confident in the accuracy of the numbers provided to Council. The numbers illustrate how the service currently operates and the revenue collection method used by the County. The Venice Fire Department study conducted by The Holdsworth Group was initiated to assess the level of service, anticipated expenses and revenues. It was first to determine, if the City controlled the service, could the City maintain the same level or enhance it. We have reported that we can enhance service from staffing three (3) paramedics to six (6) paramedics on-duty at all times in the City. Secondly, the study was to determine if the potential revenue generated covered the costs of the operation. The conclusion was that it does cover operating costs. Below you will see information that we have provided over the duration of this study to support our recommendation. We ask that Council consider the recommended action below.

#### Supporting Evidence

The following are questions that have been posed or of concern to Council and our community.

1. *What are current response time for Venice and Sarasota county rescue calls?*
  - Average response time
    - Sarasota County Fire Department – 7 minutes, 22 seconds
    - Venice – 4 minutes, 15 seconds average response time
  - Difference 3 minutes, 7 seconds per call

## ALS Initiative Transition

2. *What elements impact response time?*
  - Jurisdictional areas to cover (geographical, square miles)
  - Personnel staffing, scheduled training, other scheduled events not available
  - Predictability of rescue apparatus being in the station when call is received
3. *If city takes over EMS service, would response times change?*
  - Yes, the average response should improve due to having six (6) units staffed with paramedics vs only three (3).
4. *Will response times change if County continues to provide EMS service?*
  - No, not unless the elements in Question #2 change
5. *Define the term "Level of Service".*
  - Quality/capability to render aid at a specific professionally trained level
  - Response time to arrive at scene of call
  - Quality of service provided by uniform training, crew familiarity and knowledge of service area
6. *Define current service quality/personnel capacity.*
  - Sarasota County Fire Department: 1 paramedic and 1 EMT per rescue unit (ambulance)
  - Venice: 2 EMTs per engine company
7. *What is the optimal time standard for rescue response; American Heart Association guideline:*
  - 4 minutes - Heart attack or cardiac arrest
  - 8 minutes - Basic life support
  - 12 minutes - Advanced life support
8. *How much in tax revenues are generated for EMS in the City of Venice?*
  - \$2.4 million for 2018, Ad valorem tax at .66 mil rate
  - \$2.5 million for 2019, Projected Venice ad valorem revenue
9. *How often does Venice Fire Department receive dispatch rescue calls for service?*
  - 2017- 42.7%
  - 2018 (through June) - 43.7%
10. *What are the operational changes for Venice taking over EMS services?*
  - Single leadership, continuity of command
  - Responsiveness to local authority
  - Response time increase at no additional cost
  - Paramedic on scene, first arriving 100 % of time
  - Uniform training/crew familiarity
  - Cross training/flexible scheduling
  - Coordination of training time
  - Integration of all fire service functions with other COV core service (EOC, Police, Utilities, Public Works)
  - Community integration, neighborhood level education and training

## ALS Initiative Transition

11. *What are the fiscal benefits of the Venice taking over EMS service?*
  - City defines cost of service locally (millage rate “ad valorem tax” and impact fees)
  - City can control and project future cost
  - City can control level of service
  
12. *If Venice takes over EMS, which elements would remain the same and which elements would change?*
  - Transport time to Sarasota Memorial
    - Remains: No change, dependent on traffic and availability at hospital
    - Change: Coverage protocol in the City during transport times
  - Engine Companies:
    - Remains: Engine company stationed in each of the three fire stations
    - Change: All engine companies would be staffed with a paramedic
  
13. *If Venice takes over EMS, what decision making authority does Sarasota County have?*
  - County may agree or disagree to a phased in transition plan
  - County may agree or disagree to a modified ad valorem rate charge during transition
  - County may agree or disagree to sell or lease its rescue units to the City
  - County may retain their employees

The following information was provided by the Sarasota County Master Plan with Standard of Cover and Strategic Plan 2017, page 73.

### “Sustainable Status Quo Forecast

Based upon the discussion above, if the County were to continue providing service in the current manner, neither the Fire Fund nor the EMS Fund are financially viable beyond FY 2019 without a significant increase in revenue and/or reduction in expenditures. A reduction in expenditures of the magnitude required to maintain a sustainable fund balance would necessitate a reduction in service level. Therefore, to sustain current operations an increase in revenue for both funds will be needed. In the case of the Fire Fund, this means that the non-ad valorem assessment revenue stream will need to increase beyond the two (2) percent forecast in the 217 GSG Study and used in the projection above. Further, the EMS Fund ad valorem revenue stream will need to increase beyond the forecast 6.3 percent historical growth rate.” This quote also references a memo from the Government Services Group, Inc. May 2017, “Sarasota County, Florida Fire Assessment Memorandum,” Revised Draft.

Also from page 73 of the County’s Master Plan with Standard of Cover and Strategic Plan 2017 is table Figure 50 titled as Assessment/Property Tax Revenue Increases Needed to Sustain Fire/EMS Status Quo Forecast.

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Figure 50: Assessment/Property Tax Revenue increases Needed to Sustain Fire/EMS Status Quo Forecast

Financial Resources By Type	2019 Forecast	2020 Forecast	2021 Forecast	2022 Forecast	2023 Forecast
	Special Assessments				
Growth	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Rate Increase	19.1%	6.6%	4.1%	2.1%	2.1%
<b>Total Annual Increase</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
	Property Tax Revenue				
Growth	6.3%	6.3%	6.3%	6.3%	6.3%
Rate Increase	10.0%	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total Annual Increase</b>	<b>16.30%</b>	<b>16.30%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>

The following table is from the VFD – ALS Development Plan Comparison Full Start 10-01-19 vs 3-Year Plan that was presented to Council on February 26, 2019. These figures are the anticipated revenue based on the current revenue model used by County. As one can see, Venice Fire shows a net revenue in years 2020 through 2024 without any anticipated millage increase.

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	5 Year Total
Full Start							
Potential Gross Revenue	0	4,356,960	4,545,147	4,738,087	4,935,959	5,138,949	
Anticipated Expenses	833,789	3,055,056	3,332,660	3,544,912	3,705,166	3,964,106	
Potential Net Revenue	(833,789)	1,301,904	1,212,487	1,193,175	1,230,792	1,174,843	<b>5,279,412</b>

Requested Action: Council to execute a letter to Sarasota County terminating the Interlocal agreement for EMS Services. Per the termination of the Interlocal agreement, the effective date for Venice Fire to take over full EMS transport responsibilities for the City of Venice will October 1, 2020. It is also recommended that the City and County staff negotiate a phase-in memo of understanding agreement prior to complete take over that may ease the transition with staffing for both Departments.

City Attorney Review/Approved: N/A

Risk Management Review: N/A

Finance Department Review/Approved: Yes

Funds Availability (account number): Click or tap here to enter text.

**ORIGINAL(S) ATTACHED:** Click or tap here to enter text.

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