

April 22, 1969

Present: F. Elliott Burch  
J. Wilmer Bowles  
George R. Aud  
W. S. Donaldson  
B. H. Sterling

Meeting convened at 9:00 A.M.

Budget

The budget review occupied most of the day.

Buchart Company Contract

The Commissioners reviewed the contract drawn by this firm for construction of the maintenance building for the proposed County Roads System project. All of the requested changes, as discussed at the meeting with representatives of this firm on March 18, 1969, have been made in the contract and initialed by their officials. The Commissioners signed the contract and initialed the changes.

Copeland Property Access Property

After discussion, the Commissioners agreed to proceed with negotiations to purchase approximately six (6) acres of land fronting the Copeland property, 5th District, along Route 235, to permit access to said property from this main artery. The Copeland property was recently purchased by the county to be used for landfill purposes.

Mr. Williams will be instructed to speak with Mr. Bowles regarding framing the required Agreement To Purchase that will be needed to begin negotiations.

Ambulance Service

Messrs. C. B. Gatton, John M. Welch, Robinson's Funeral Home; J. H. Christman, Director, St. Mary's Hospital; George C. Duke, Pres., Rescue & Ambulance Asscn.; Joseph D. Carter, Director, Dept. of Social Services; Alan D. Houser, M.P.H., County Health Officer; W. Clarke Mattingley, Mattingley Funeral Home; J. Roy Guyther, M.D., St. Mary's County Medical Asscn.

Mr. Duke stated that his association is considering amending their bylaws to discontinue any ambulance service outside of the county, as the manpower problem has become critical, and because they do not feel they can provide such services from a financial standpoint for very long distances.

There was some discussion about possible funds available for this service, and Dr. Houser said there are no funds in the Health Department budget for it at the present time. It is his feeling that if the rescue squads are going to be subsidized, we should be able to arrive at some agreement with them that would do away with the presently existing bad situation.

Mr. Duke reviewed calls for ambulance service, stating that in 1968 there were



104 calls from the hospital alone, to transfer patients to Baltimore and Washington, Alexandria, Arlington, etc. They are experiencing an acute manpower problem, as the men who drive the vehicles have regular employment, and employers do not want these men leaving their places of business for long periods of time.

Mr. Duke said he is of the opinion that the squads are not giving the people of the county the proper service when they leave the county. In the critical emergency situations, they have no choice but to take patients to the hospitals, and sometimes there are abuses in such instances. He mentioned two specific cases with which he was familiar, that were not actually emergency cases according to doctors at the out-of-county hospitals.

Mr. Christman stated that a six month survey was made by the hospital, and there was a total of 65 patients transferred from this facility, 40 by private vehicle and 25 by the rescue squads. Of the 25, there were two classes, 13 in-patients and 12 out-patients. The rescue squads should not have to carry the in-patients, as these are people in the hospital whose families would have ample time to arrange a transfer if necessary. So far as Medicaid paying for the service is concerned, this agency will not do this unless the hospital has an ambulance of its own. Mr. Duke mentioned that it is the intent of the rescue squads to stop all trips outside the county, which would mean that the immediate family would have to make such arrangements if a transfer is necessary.

Mr. Carter reviewed matter of social services aspect, stating that there are approximately 3,000 indigent people in the county, and there are no funds available in his budget for transfer cost for these people. He feels that this service should be offered by the hospital, and Mr. Mattingley agreed, the latter stating that the fee for the service could be included in the bill sent to the insurance company covering costs for a specific patient.

Mr. Christman said that the Board of Directors of the hospital have never acted on the idea of acquiring an ambulance, but may be forced into this in view of the attitude of the Rescue Squad Association. He suggested to Mr. Duke that the association not do anything until the hospital board can discuss the matter and make a decision. It is his opinion that eventually the hospital will have to have an ambulance service, but they are not in a position to provide this now.

Dr. Guyther mentioned possibility of requiring the doctors to sign a form requesting transfer of patients, and this might lessen the abuse of the service. Mr. Duke said that in the event the hospital did acquire an ambulance, he could find drivers with no problem, because his men are very willing to work the evening hours on a volunteer basis.

There was some further discussion, and Mr. Duke agreed that the Rescue Squad Association would not act until Mr. Christman could meet with the hospital board to discuss the matter.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

Approved,

*F. Elliott Burch*

F. Elliott Burch, President