

A Special meeting held with the Northampton Ambulance Service and the Town of Northampton Town Board was opened at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7, 2019 in the Municipal town hall Building at 412 S. Main St., Northville, NY.

PRESENT: Supervisor James Groff
Councilmen: Art Simmons, Darryl Roosa, William Gritsavage
Absent: Councilman Ivar Anderson

ALSO PRESENT: Tom Pasquarelli-GAVAC, Jack Farquhar- Northampton Ambulance Coordinator, David Briscoe, Susan Sheeran, Frank Sheeran, Heidi Darling, Molly Zullo, Jon VanAlstyne, Tom Fifield, Janine Jackson, Jerry Wildermuth, Holly Downing, Lori Driscoll, Terance Driscoll, Willem Monster, Joy Allen, Peter Allen, Steve Collins, Gail Collins, Jane Ferguson, Don Ferguson, Walt Fitzgerald, Lynn Jacquard, Georgia Jacquard, David Dicky, Norman Richardson, Linda Goodrich, Keith Goodrich, Susan Martinez, Richard Martinez, William Dievendorf, Sharon Spencer, James Lewek, Gordon Mosher, Linda Mosher, Kayla Milnyczuk, Denise Milnyczuk, Lynn Barnett and a gentleman from the news media.

The reason we are here is because we are having a problem with our Ambulance Service response stated Supervisor Groff. We are trying to resolve the problem with response, one of the suggestions was to hire people and before we can do any hiring, we need to do research. There are some things that are on Facebook saying that we are trying to shut down the ambulance and that we are not in favor of the ambulance. None of that is true stated Supervisor Groff. We wouldn't be here tonight if it were true. This is to tell you where we are going, what we are trying to do, what's happening, to get suggestions from anybody of what we can do and how do you feel about possibly paying somebody. I (Groff) have been traveling with the County for the last two months to different areas of New York and talking to people and finding out what they are doing. It is not a local problem; it is all over the Northeast. There are just not enough volunteers' or young people, everybody is having a problem. We are trying to corroborate thru the County as to what the County is going to do. We are not sure where they are going with this either. Right now, we are in the experimental or research stage trying to find what we can do. We have a lot of EMT's that are on the roster but they are not responding. Why we do not know. We have Paramedics and 3 Critical Care Techs and the rest are EMTs. We currently are hoping to have three more EMTs that are in training class reported Mr. Farquhar. One of the options would be to hire people, that is going to cost us some money stated the Supervisor. That is not cheap. I have heard some figures and I do not agree with them all stated the Supervisor. We have gone over some figures at the County level and it is expensive. I (Groff) know that in Hamilton County three towns have hired a fly car with a paramedic in it for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. That is costing them \$150,000 roughly \$50,000 apiece and that is not going to give you 24-hour coverage. Our current budget for the Town Ambulance is \$21,000.00 stated Supervisor Groff and that is not going to give 24/7 coverage. GAVAC has to fill in if someone is not available.

GAVAC would send a full ambulance to the location stated Tom Pasquarelli.

Tom Pasquarelli explained how GAVAC is operating now. In Fulton County there were several ambulance services over one point in time. Over the course of the years they have started to dwindle due to the fact of the lack of volunteers and then even some of the services that charge for the service have recently gone bankrupt and out of business. Most recently, JVAC and Ambulance Service of Fulton, the Ambulance Service of Fulton County is to cover all of Fulton County. In their absence somebody had to pick up the slack so we have stepped in. We are working with Fulton County the Legislators as well as the Emergency Management to look at the permanent solution. The current system of EMS is broke, it has been broke for years and it cannot stay alive in the current system. The fee for service is broke and we know in Fulton County and in Montgomery County and Hamilton County some of our toughest things are our pair mixes. We have another repopulation and we have a poor population. Those two things all come into play with any sort of business. When Ambulance Service of Fulton County went out of business, approximately 76% of the population pays less than what it actually cost for the ambulance to roll out of the door. To start up the ambulance and roll out the door for us is approximately \$410. If we get reimbursed \$220.00 that is literally the max we are going to get for some of those patients. 10% of the patients we don't get a dime from. It is not sustaining financially and the fact is you have been fortunate with the amount of volunteers but obviously everybody is getting older. Everybody has less time. People are working more than one job. It creates a twofold problem. Getting people on the ambulance and how are you going to fund that ambulance?

Supervisor James Groff

When Fulton County Ambulance Service went out of business there were five of us that were meeting down at the Coordinator's office, that actually got Tom on board to come in to set up the GAVAC responding for the rest of the County because we had nothing. Town of Northampton is the only volunteer Ambulance Service left in Fulton County. We are trying figure out a solution and we are open to suggestions, discussion, and questions, anything that anybody wants to ask us that we can answer or one of us can answer. That is why we are here tonight.

Councilman Art Simmons

To those of you who are not ambulance people from the public interested. The Town Board and the ambulance are trying to be as open and transparent with you as much as possible. The Town has spent approximately \$500 on advertising. We have put flyers up all over the place and I am glad to see the turn out here. We are trying to be open and let you know that there is a problem and we are open to suggestions.

Willem Monster

I have two thoughts, I grew up in a small town the only position was an emergency service. We had in this village a medical office. Why can't we look into that? The way I understood it was that many of the EMTs have jobs elsewhere so they are not available during the day. So the biggest problem is daytime emergency coverage. During the day this medical office would have people available in it.

There is not always a doctor there explained Heidi Darling.
There is no one who is capable to step in if there is an emergency asked Mr. Monster?
They would all have to be trained the way the EMS people are stated Heidi Darling.

Steven Collins

Under the current State Health Department rules we are obligated to have either, an EMT, a Critical Care Tech or a paramedic on board the ambulance as the medical provider. There is no provision in the current State Department of Health rules and Medical Services System or other providers on a regular basis...certainly a doctor at a highway accident, a nurse at an emergency on the street downtown, awesome. But the system that we operator under currently does not have the space for other health care providers.

Is our problem in the Town of Northampton man-power, person power asked Mr. Dicky?
Yes, responded Supervisor Groff.

If 50 people come forward tomorrow saying that they want to be a Critical Care Tech, an EMT, or a paramedic does that make the problems go away asked Mr. Dicky?

It depends if they can get trained and if they pass the course and getting them to respond explained Supervisor Groff. We have EMT's that are just not responding and we do not know why. Mr. Farquhar did approximately 106 calls last year. I think he has paid his dues. People need to start stepping up and helping and doing something. Yes, if someone wants to go to the school we will pay for their training stated Supervisor Groff. We always have.

Norman Richardson

If this is a problem for all of the counties, towns and villages let this be a state matter. Let the State handle it and have them State Ambulances, State money. Every taxpayer pays for it. This is the problem stated Supervisor Groff. New York State does not consider EMS a vital service as they do fire and police.

Mr. Richardson suggested getting all the towns, villages and County boards together and fight and say, "yes it is a problem", change the rules, and change the codes. Go to them and fight for this. This is not going to work in the village because you won't get volunteers. Those days are gone.

Right now we do not have the time for that battle explained Supervisor Groff. We have to start somewhere. Right now we are looking at it at the county level as possibly doing something.

Mr. Richardson asked, what happens if you start charging now? Charge \$400. Let the patient pay whatever for it.

Supervisor Groff stated that it is very hard to collect that charge. That's the problem. If the people don't pay there is no way to recover the money. You're insurance company will pay a decent fee, Medicaid doesn't pay enough, Medicare doesn't pay enough. It doesn't pay enough to pay for ambulance runs. If the ambulance shows up at your house and you decide you don't want to be taken to the hospital they get nothing. I don't think there is any ambulance that runs with a profit.

I would try to push it on the state suggested Mr. Richardson.

Do you think that they listen to us upstate asked Supervisor Groff?

I (Groff) have been to County meetings upstate and one of the suggestions that we discussed was that we need to form an Upstate Association of Counties. We all belong to the NYS Association of Counties and they do nothing for upstate. They are pretty much controlled by the Governor. Almost everyone on the board is from the Hudson Valley Region.

We do not have time right now to address and fight this with the State. We need to move ahead with something. Either our EMT's have to step up or we are going to have to try and hire somebody or maybe work with the surrounding three towns we can come up with a plan to do something.

Basically that is why you are here. To let you know that we are trying. We are looking at this and all of the options. Up north they have three towns working together and they have a fly car and they pay him.

Maybe you can put it in our taxes suggested Mr. Richardson.

That is a sore subject explained Supervisor Groff. It's a burden on everybody to do it that way and we are trying not to do that.

Lynn Barnett asked if the hospital gets involved at all. They are only that they are involved in is the inter-facility transports. Supervisor Groff responded, we have a local ambulance and if they don't give it to our local ambulance they are hurting us. Because that is where they can make most of their money because most the insurance pays for and that is a problem. We are working at the county to see if we can get something done at the county level.

It was asked by Linda Goodrich, has anyone approached the 2 or 3 EMT's that show up? Are they on the roster that they are supposed to be available?

Jack Farquhar: we tried to do a roster and the roster is hard to commit to. We have 8 EMT's presently and we have 3 more that are going to test out next week, assuming that they are all going to pass.

Are the 8 EMT's all active or are they like other clubs where they have 8 and only 4 show up to the meeting?

The answer is yes, stated Mr. Farquhar. Just like any organization that I have ever seen not everyone wants to tell you what to do and there's a handful a doing. I do have a list of what we have done this year. It's tough getting to the patient because of everybody working and having the hours that they've got. I don't know if having another dozen EMT's or not. Not if they are all working and they still can't come in. I don't care if have to take two hours, four hours, or six hours. It doesn't have to be a twelve hour shift. I will take whatever we can get just to get a response.

Molly Zullo explained that she is an EMT and that she responds. I work full time and I have a second job and I have a child at home. I can be at home and there are no calls. I can have a babysitter but when I get there I don't have a driver. If there is a paid person around with fly car in the building then I will get a babysitter. I am not going to get a babysitter to maybe go on a call.

So you have an issue with drivers as well someone asked. The response was "yes" especially daytimes.

It was asked, do you use your Fire Department for driver's?

Jack Farquhar: Not presently because we do not have any driver's that are trained in EMS is part of it. So they can help get the patient ready to go.

Denise Milnyczuk noted that Edinburg does. If they can get regular driver we have 4 or 5 Firemen that we call that do drive for them. It does help.

Art Simmons noted that there were some Edinburg people from the Edinburg Ambulance. Are you having the same kind of problems that we are?

Not really, we have a good bunch of people that answer 98.9% of our calls explained Denise Milnyczuk. We have approximately 120 calls a year.

Can we all work together? We are very close.

That is exactly what needs to happen, stated Tom Pasquarelli. The boundaries have to come down. The EMS and Fire Department has been very territorially for years and years and years. That is exactly what has to happen. If you have three ambulance services that answer 50% and you put them all into one service and you are able answer 80% or 85% you are steps ahead. We have a great working relationship with the Hope and Edinburgh Fire Department and it is working very well together for us stated Supervisor Groff, because we are all short man power. They need to put their egos aside.

What are your percentages of your calls that are BLS asked Mr. Farquhar?

Not very many stated Denise Milnyczuk, not anymore. Not when the State you have to haul them in for everything.

Richard Martinez mentioned that where he lived in a rural area in CA. It was sponsored by the American Legion. If you wanted to donate a \$100.00 a year for the service you be surprised how many paid. If you joined the American Legion you become part of their services. Some of that money goes back into the ambulance service. I never heard of a financial problem the 17 years that we were there.

It's not county subsidized asked Supervisor Groff?

Mr. Martinez was not sure.

Our ambulance does well in their fund raisers but it is not enough to pay somebody stated Supervisor Groff.

New York State used to allow that, it was called the subscription plan stated Tom Pasquarelli. Unfortunately several years back they made it illegal and we cannot do that anymore. That is exactly what the Ambulances used to do because we were able to send out a letter and you could pay \$100 a year and it entitled you to wave the co-pays.

Frank Sheeran noted that he is a paramedic in town. I work 24 hour shifts and unfortunately it is not the same day every week. So it is hard to commit. I try to make as many calls that I can. I worked with two agencies that ran into the same kind of situation. They are now paying two paramedics and they have volunteers. In Greenwich they have three ambulances and they staff one all the time. Even with paid people they still get volunteers that come on the call. Indiana Lake is a different story. They have a budget for their people.

Both those areas are tax funded as well stated Tom Pasquarelli. You people have the voices who vote all these folks in. What are the expectations when you pick up the phone and dial in for an ambulance? Do you want an ambulance in 2 minutes or do you care if you wait 10 minutes or do you care if you wait 20 minutes? Obviously everybody wants 2 minutes. In Fulton County we have a lot of area. It's the same thing in Hamilton County. If you move to Northville or you

moved to Speculator or you move to Stratford. Do expect those same services you would receive when you lived in a City? Probably not, until you need them. Then when you dial 911 you need them. That is where we really have to start. What are the expectations of the resident's?

What do you folks want? If you want an ambulance to respond in 2 minutes that gives the board direction on which way they need to start looking. Again, there is going to be price tags to those things. They need guidance as to which way you would like to see them to go.

David Briscoe spoke of when Albany County went to fly cars. It was county run. The county paid for the paramedics. They backed up the ambulance. We all worked mutual aid with the Fire Departments. It was just Basic Life Support on the ambulance and if we needed the medic they would go with the ambulance. It's run by the Sheriff' Department now. This is one of the options that Fulton County is looking at right now stated Supervisor Groff.

Tom Pasquarelli stated that is the one thing that those systems have in place is that they have a volunteer ambulance services. They have services that can answer the calls. The question becomes that you can put a paramedic to do first response and you can do a paramedic to assist the BLS crews. But if you only have that ambulance 50% of the time, the one paramedic can't really do anything. If we provide the fly car system to Hamilton County and that is certainly one of my concerns when the ambulance doesn't show up what happens? I have a paramedic on the scene and my next ambulance is coming from Gloversville or Mayfield. That is a thirty minute delay in transport time. So those are the things that we need to look at. Fulton County is unique there is no other services around that have that ability to supplement volunteer squads.

Molly Zullo asked, what if your paramedic was here and our volunteers have signed up and we know when we go out the door we have a paramedic up here?

Someone mentioned that they pay them big money to have them up here.

Lori Driscoll stated that she volunteer when she can regardless if someone is there. I go to the door. I don't think that will honestly change. It's not going to. If you are not showing up now, you are probably not going to be able to show up later. There are drivers a lot of days that you don't see EMT's on you know you are going to go out that door because that is part of being a volunteer. I don't think that is going to be a fair balance and say that is going to happen when you say a driver is going to show up because the paramedic is there. The paramedic could just sit there in that building with no driver. They are not showing up now there is not going to be a difference.

What is going to make you show up if you pay somebody and you do not show up now asked Mr. Farquhar? What is going to be the difference? What is going to be the deciding factor?

I am one of the most EMT's that shows up stated Molly Zullo.

Lori Driscoll stated that I'm not saying this personally. I am saying that I don't see it changing.

We have problems getting drivers now; we are still going to have problems getting drivers. If we have problems getting EMT's now, we are going to have problems getting EMT's later.

Supervisor Groff mentioned that we had an accident the other day. There were three drivers that showed up and nobody said anything and we didn't even know you were dispatched. We had an EMT and a nurse on the scene.

Someone mentioned-It's called a lack of communication. Discussion ensued.

If we have an EMT that is on the scene that is willing to treat the patient and go with the ambulance that is fine stated Mr. Farquhar. We can't go without an EMT. Mr. Farquhar mentioned that he had a list of the volunteers and who responded this year and previous years. Just is the case of response we have to take accountability and if we have anytime to donate, let's donate it. Not just blow it off.

Supervisor Groff: I think part of this too, we have to take responsibility suck up the egos and sit down and talk with our neighbors and see if we can't work something out. We are only four miles from Edinburg and there is no reason we can't start working together. That is something that needs to be done.

Norman Richardson mentioned that his insurance has a number he can call if he was debating on whether to call an ambulance or not. They have a Physician's Assistant which I can talk with and ask questions. If I feel I have to go in an ambulance and I call 911 would they know if they are busy and they don't feel they could get anyone to be here for at least an hour and then I could make a decision to have my wife drive me directly to the hospital?

They will not know that explained Supervisor Groff. They will just dispatch us and GAVAC at the same time and assume someone is going to respond. If they are busy they may tell you there will be a wait. They are going to dispatch someone from that area and hope someone responds.

Councilman Simmons feels it is going to take a year or maybe longer for the County to come up with something. Our problem is now. The summer is coming.

The summer is coming at the County too and they realize it stated Supervisor Groff. It is between Caroga Lake and the Great Sacandaga Lake they are busy. Why do you think we are meeting? This not something we can do over night.

Heidi Darling asked if this had anything to do with Edinburg and remat not having the same policies?

It's the same now. Protocols are the same explained Tom Pasquarelli. In a mutual aid it doesn't make a difference. We go into a different medical region every day and we still follow our protocols. Mutual aid is mutual aid.

For the past 50 years we have had volunteers and we responded and if we needed back-up ambulance service Fulton County was always our back-up stated Mr. Farquhar. If we weren't available or we needed additional help, that hasn't changed. GAVAC is our back-up. Right now if we do not have a crew they keep responding. If we do have a crew and we do not need any further assistance we will cancel them so they can stay in business where ever they might be. I do not know of anybody here that has failed to have an ambulance come to a call. If there is I would like to hear about it because I have not heard about it yet.

Supervisor Groff: Tom has an ambulance in Broadalbin, 2 in the City of Gloversville and 1 in Mayfield during the day. Gloversville gets tide up which is very busy Tom will move one of the ambulances to Gloversville. So you might be waiting for an ambulance to come from Broadalbin. He has to cover quite a lot of territory right now with 4 ambulances.

Janine Jackson mentioned working in the 911 center and the map system. Summer is coming and we may be waiting longer than 20 minute, hopefully not. I wish out EMT's could answer many of those calls.

If we get more recruits along with working with Edinburg and different things. Maybe we can cover the calls better stated Mr. Farquhar. Basic Life Support (BLS) wise let's face it a lot of these calls are BLS. You can call ALS off if you do not need them. 80% of the calls can be taken care of by BLS. They have done studies on that.

We have gotten into a situation where we missed ALS because where the GPS takes them somewhere else and we've gone over Gould Hill. I am not going to set on the side of the road waiting for them when I'm only 10 minutes from the hospital explained Denise Milnyczuk. Again it depends on the call stated Mr. Farquhar. After a few minutes you know what you've got and you are going to know if you are going to need Advanced Life Support (ALS) or you are not going to need (ALS).

We send the closest ambulance to a scene stated Tom Pasquarelli. If it's coming from Broadalbin it is probably coming from the other direction.

Denise Milnyczuk: We used to say which way we are traveling and try to explain which direction we are taking to get to the nearest hospital.

Molly Zullo mentioned when she went on her first call and she was new to all this. Me as an EMT took a class and passed. The teacher was a great teacher but I am not 100% confident because I don't use my skills a lot. Discussion ensued.

We do have training skills and if I schedule one we will see how many people come to them explained Mr. Farquhar. After you taken the training you can let us know what you need for training.

Jon VanAlstyne stated that he thinks the problem with a lot of the EMT's is with the experience they do not have enough to run by themselves. It is unfortunately 50% of our calls they don't have the experience to get them through that. As Mr. Farquhar says, "you learn by doing it in the field". You learn on the calls and you don't get the experience unless you run the call.

If you are uncomfortable call for help stated Mr. Farquhar.

That is something that we need to look at suggested Supervisor Groff.

The more you ride the more you learn. Discussion ensued.

Sharon Spencer noted that she is not an EMT and commended everyone saying she is glad you are there when there is a call. But obviously this is not the whole Village and I think that maybe you need to put a questionnaire out to the taxpayers. Give them the logistic of this is what it cost to run the ambulance, this is the amount that we get back, this is what we lack, this is what we need. What happens when you want us to go? Do you want us to partner up with the people in area, other towns? Do you want us to do this all on our own and keep our own and raise taxes? Do you want us to do anything? I think you need to ask more than just us who are here tonight.

Councilman William Gritsavage: One of the things that we have not touched on is the financial aspect because we really have to think about that. I have been on the ambulance committee six or seven years now and I am beginning to wonder I think we need to have a study and we do need to know. I don't know if the public cover this and I do not know where we could get a

study. But we really have to know if it would be worth our while to do some billing. At this point I think we ought to think about going to billing.

Someone in the public mentioned that it is called a volunteer ambulance service

Councilman William Gritsavage: That is true stated Councilman Gritsavage and you still need to have volunteers even though you are billing. I am not talking about making it an entirely billing. The Town has budgeted \$21,000.00. A lot of money is raised by donations. People of this community have been generous, they have given a lot of money and they continue to. That is why we survived. But maybe the model we have right now is the one with which we should continue with. Maybe we need to move on to whatever that might be. I have made some notes and have been to a couple other meetings. Maybe billing might be something that would be good. What are we going to do about recruiting? Do we need some paid staff? I don't know. But maybe we might need to get somebody in to check into Greenwich and Indiana Lake and see what they are doing. I am wondering about using the Fire Department and if somehow we can get them together. There are a lot of communities that have the Ambulance Service and the Fire Department in the same building. We currently have the rickety old building for our ambulance and we are talking about building a new fire house. Maybe we ought to be thinking about something along those lines, if it would be more economically feasible. We have talked about people if they can drive a fire truck they certainly can drive an ambulance. Whatever needs to be done? Fine, let's get it done.

David Dickey: When the siren goes off we can hear it at the Marina. A minute later the big red trucks are flying down the road. So why is it that every time that the siren sounds the big red trucks fly down the road but when the siren sounds the ambulance may not necessarily leave the building?

Part of that is because they tried to have a roster and they didn't have it set up so that they don't get twenty people showing up explained Supervisor Groff. When the siren goes off we all just respond. The Fire Department has always been very much in favor in helping out anytime that they need us for lifting assistance. Anytime that they need a driver we always said we would help but you can only tell them what you need.

I had someone mentioned to me the possibility having paid employees that are EMT and they also might know something about fire fighters. That might be economically viable. I like what is being said about the Edinburg Fire Department. I really think that we can help each other and I think that we should be talking.

Janine Jackson noted that many Fire Departments are never allowed to leave there employment. These are details and I don't know these things stated Councilman Gritsavage.

There aren't any Fire Departments in Fulton County that run an ambulance stated Supervisor Groff. They are short Firemen. They only have 2 firemen on duty once that ambulance leaves the building. Just like in Amsterdam when they tell you they make xx amount of dollars they don't tell you how much it is costing them. Most of them are running at a loss.

Some do and some don't stated Supervisor Groff.

But that is why the fire trucks are able to go but the ambulance aren't able to respond because we are all stuck at work explained Janine Jackson.

Councilman William Gritsavage: I was wondering if maybe there was some savings by thinking about the Fire Department and the Ambulance at the same time particular since because of the position that we are in. We would be building a new fire house. I don't know what the status of that is and I know it is not as simple as it sounds. Maybe we should be thinking outside of the box with some of this stuff. When we talk with the public maybe we should talk about an ambulance tax suggested Councilman Gritsavage. We have a library tax. These are some of the thoughts that I am having. I think it is great that the County has fly cars. We're not talking about fly cars. We have to keep moving on.

Richard Martinez: Would it be a problem if the Fire Department if they can within the Fire Department having an EMT Unit? That is very common.

Supervisor Groff: If you talk with the Fire Departments that are doing EMS now they have a high burn out rate with people explained Supervisor Groff. They end up losing people and some have got stipulations that if you don't make a certain amount of calls they throw you out. A lot of them do not come to the EMT's calls because they are just not EMT's. Most of the people join to be a Fireman want to be a fireman. A lot of the people in our Fire Department do not want to be an EMT. They are willing to help anytime they can help but they do not want to be EMT's. It is a lot of training and they do enough training through the Fire Department. The State of New York keeps requiring more and more training for firemen. A lot of the EMT's don't want to work in the fire service. They don't want to be firemen. It's a tough sell.

Richard Martinez asked what triggers the need for an ALS or BLS.

It's the severity of the injuries they can tell if an ALS or BLS is needed explained Supervisor Groff. A lot of times it's a sign off and the police want them to check somebody out. They sign off and they don't get paid.

Janine Jackson: Our policy is ALS for all calls whether it comes from Northampton or EMS. From Northampton we call them both Northampton and GAVAC so there is an ALS there too. They have always dispatched both that has always been the policy since they started 911.

Jerry Wildermuth: I am not opposed to the Fire Department responding but we need drivers. The problem is if I go as a driver and I have been with the Ambulance Service for a long time and I know a lot of stuff on that rig. But if you go as a driver from the Fire Department once that EMT makes contact with the patient they are not supposed to leave them. If I send me out to get something out of the truck and they need it now you don't have a clue what you are looking for. That is why they have to have some training before they can drive.

Holly Downing: When we had a recall with the ambulance they all scheduled for different times for three different months to have training.

We have asked in the past too stated Supervisor Groff.

Walt Fitzgerald: The truth is that the firemen that drive our ambulance they get us on the scene and now they have an ambulance and an EMT on the scene and the driver doesn't know the answers because of somebody else. We now have an EMT and the ambulance is there on scene and they are tremendous help. Many of them can find stuff for us and they do know where it is.

Sharon Spencer noted that the list that Councilman Gritsavage brought up is exactly what I meant. We have to ask the taxpayers the options. The ideas to what they want.

The only problem I have with that is a lot of them do not know what they are reading stated Supervisor Groff. If they were here they would hear some of the discussion and hear what is going on and understand it.

You are not going to get them here was the response.

Councilman William Gritsavage stated that they need to hear the arguments that are going to be made here. They are not going to understand. All they are going to say is, "I don't want to pay the extra money" if it is going to cost them some money.

With the area getting more and more senior we are thinking more on the lines of not, I don't want to pay that but I need it when I need it.

One on the list I did not talk about is, what do we need for public relations explained Councilman Gritsavage? We need better public relations from the Ambulance Corps and from the Town Board.

Jon VanAlstyne: Unfortunately, we have come to a time where EMS has to be tax funded.

JAVAC went out, Fulton County went out, they are all non-for-profits. We can't survive on just going. EMS is going to have to be taxed one way or another. Either give us an ambulance that is tax funded or you are not getting an ambulance. It will come to that at one point.

Tom Pasquarelli: Just to elaborate on that. Fulton County is approximately 700 square miles. So for 700 square miles in 911 work since we have been able to take over. We have been able to collect good data. We have enough call line item to support 2 ambulances to cover 700 square miles based off the revenue. It's almost impossible without tax money to cover that amount of area and have decent response you need at least 4 or 5 but you only have funding for 2 and doing it. That's the reality of it. So without tax money you are never going to have that. You are going to have unreal expectations. It was asked, "how can a volunteer service fail?" I have argued this point for years no one using volunteer is free. You still have a \$200,000.00 ambulance. You still have all of the training that you have to pay for, also if you have uniforms. You have workman's comp expenses, you have insurance on the vehicles, and you have diesel fuel. It is hundreds of thousands of dollars depending upon the size of your organization or millions of dollars to keep that going. Whether you're a volunteer or not almost all the volunteer services in the State of New York realistically fail for service. Unfortunately, in the Town of Northampton rough guesses are doing this every day even if you were to bill for all of your calls and you were 100% transports. In the best case scenario you are looking at like \$45,000.00 a year is what you collect. That is still not enough to fund what you need.

Linda Goodrich: If we could go with a mutual aid idea. Northville is a small community. It is a community of young families and senior citizens on a fixed income in the entire community. To

raise the taxes to run an Ambulance Service might get people down just because these people can't afford to pay more taxes.

Supervisor Groff: This is why we are here and this is why we either need to get the mutual aid system working or we need to sit down with surrounding communities and get us all in the same boat because all of us we may have enough calls to generate enough people to do this.

Gail Collins: They can't afford it until their child is choking, or their parent is having a heart attack. They need it and they want it now. Things that you want and consider a necessity cost money.

I'd don't think that is an issue stated Supervisor Groff. How many people do we have here from the public? Maybe 30 people this was sent out in the Town and in the Village and there are over 3,000 residents in the area. Wherever we could put it out we put it out. We have only 30 people here, that's the problem.

You're still saying you can't raise taxes is because we have elderly people on fixed income and young families stated Gail Collins.

Supervisor Groff: There are going to be more taxes in New York State through your county taxes because of what this Governor is doing to us stated Supervisor Groff. Example: In New York we are going to have a public defender's office with approximately 10 full-time public defenders and assistants with the new laws that they are passing. They are promising to pay for it right now. It will be just like everything else they promise 1/2 the DA salary. They don't pay but only \$75,000 out of the \$200,000.00 salary the DA gets. They just keep shoving it down on top of us and we can't keep raising taxes. Your school taxes go up, your town taxes, everything just goes up. If everyone wants to do it I have no problem with it. But I would at least put it out to a vote. I think that our total Town wide budget was \$325,000.00. That is going to double if you put on full-time people. If you put on part-time people and nobody shows up. Somebody is going to come in here and say where are they? We are paying for these people. I think that your donations are going to drop off once you start paying for that service. So now you are eliminating \$16,000.00 out of your budget for your donations. There are a lot of things to think about before we jump into this. That is why we are here. My personal feeling is we need to work with our neighbors and try to come up with a solution. We need to make more calls.

Tom Pasquarelli: I agree with the Supervisor. The barriers have to come down. If the Town of Northampton were to say we want to put in a full time ambulance service 24/7 with a paramedic on it you are looking at approximately \$475,000.00 a year. That is just for the Town of Northampton. The call line in the Town of Northampton is so small that 285 calls. In order for that ambulance service to break even you would have to bill out 1,800 calls. So you want to spread that around to as many towns that you possibly can. I know that the County is working on it and realistically that is the way it probably needs to go. Because the Towns and Villages can't handle taxes with a tax increase of that much money for such a concentrated area. It needs to be spread out when have Benson and all these other towns around you that are using the Ambulance Service and help support it. You have to look at it in the big picture. The days of

the territory and I want to be my own ambulance service they have to go away and the taxpayers are going to have to fund it at some point. It's how do you lessen the burden on the taxpayers in Northampton? Where if you include the City of Gloversville and Fulton County, where you have 10,000 more residents or households that help break that tax down. It is much more tolerable.

Terance Driscoll: There are more roads that can get to the same place. I think that if we have a look at the options, that we can pay for everything. Maybe we could work with Edinburg. Maybe we could have to use an agency if we need to use an EMT on these days and present that to the public.

That is why we are here stated Supervisor Groff. To let you know what we are doing and if there are any suggestions of what we are looking for. We are doing everything we can to do the best job we can to get something moving ahead.

Norman Richardson asked, if we lost any patients because we did not get them to the hospital on time?

Supervisor Groff: We don't know unless they keep contact with them after they are dropped off at the hospital. There is the privacy law.

Someone from the public mentioned that if we were to cover the approximate 320 calls a year. That is almost 300 calls to the hospital, we can use some help.

Steven Collins: You're asking us to do more with the same staff that we currently have.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Farquhar: if you have one paramedic that is making the call. Once he is out on that call with one of the towns here. They still have to come from Broadalbin or Mayfield wherever they might be because we are out of ambulances all of a sudden.

Denise Milnyczuk: That is where you have your mutual aid plan in place.

If we're both busy then you call GAVAC.

Councilman Art Simmons mentioned that the Village of Northville in their water billing that went out this week did a mailing for us that the people in the Village got a couple of days ago. We did some advertising in the newspaper. We did not mail to people in the Town. I believe a lot of the people that are here tonight are from the Village. So if we are going to do some kind of a survey we have to make sure we do both the Town and the Village.

I am of the opinion if they are going to build the new firehouse and certainly they need it. They should make it big enough so the ambulance could be in there and the police department can be in there all together. It may not be what you want but it is just a thought.

Supervisor Groff asked, you want to spend that much money? You're talking about \$3 Million to \$5 Million dollars. It's going to currently cost about \$1 Million dollars.

We put this out to the public a long time ago and they voted it down. That is why the fireman own the building. If you want everything in there you will have to pay prevailing wage 3-1/2 Million to 4 Million dollars.

James Lewek mentioned that there is not enough room on the property that they currently own to build to house three agencies inside.

Jon VanAlstyne reiterated that we called this meeting we have these calls and we just don't have the volunteers to answer them. Our call amount is going up and our response rate is going down.

This is why we are to hear any suggests you may have.
We do have applications available here if anyone would like one.

Keith Goodrich asked, when JAVAC and Fulton County Service went bankrupt did they approach the County and say we have some problems?

No one new until they closed on a Friday afternoon stated the Supervisor.

Is there any thought that they may reestablish themselves or they merge together maybe?

Response: No.

So what happens with their equipment ask Mr. Goodrich?

It will probably be auctioned off to pay off the debt stated Supervisor Groff.

Tom Pasquarelli stated that they were using the building and they were told to vacant the building because they were turning everything over to an attorney.

What happened to the employees that they had?

Response: A lot have moved on to other places.

Supervisor Groff: It is a tough situation all over the state. They have the same problems as we do. If you talk to these people from Essex County or St. Lawrence County, they will all tell you the same thing.

The biggest problem with the State of New York is that they cookie cutter everything for what works in West Chester County and what works in Dutchess County and it will not work up here. They don't get it and they don't care.

Supervisor Groff thanked everyone for coming tonight. Don't be afraid to call anyone of the Town Board members. We are going to try and set up a couple of meetings with the surrounding towns to see if they would be interested in setting up something. We help Hope quite a lot and Edinburg nest door. We would like to meet with them before we go any further. I would like to do it within the next week, to sit down and have another discussion, to see if we can keep this thing rolling and until we can figure out something.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Mihalik, Town Clerk