

Dillsboro Council Special Meeting

July 15, 2024

The special meeting of the Dillsboro Town Council was opened by President, Doug Baker, with the pledge to the flag on July 15, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Council members present: Doug Baker, Becky Fryman, Tim Benning, Charlie Caldwell and Jerri Jackson. Town Manager present: Derek Walker, Clerk-Treasurer present: Rita Stevens. Attorney present: John Watson.

CM Baker, the purpose of the meeting is to consider issues related to the emergency services in the Dillsboro area. The Town Council has prepared a statement and will vote on it after the reading.

Attorney Watson read the "Dillsboro Town Council Statement Regarding the Dillsboro Emergency Ambulance Unity July 15, 2024." (attached). CM Baker made a motion to approve this statement and release it. Seconded by CM Jackson. All in favor. Motion carried.

CM Baker opened the meeting up to public comments.

Sandy Schnebelt, 11854 Old US Highway 50, Dillsboro, stated that he attended the commissioners meeting and spoke there. S. Schnebelt desires to have the Dillsboro ambulance service back and has filled out an application to get involved. He is willing to help in the community wherever is needed. Mr. Schnebelt stated that he overheard at the Reservation to not bother going to this meeting because the Town is only going to propose that the Fire Department take over the service and the Commissioners are going to vote on it on Tuesday. S. Schnebelt further stated that if the board of directors has done something wrong then investigate them but if they're reaching out for help, then fill out an application.

Steve Gemmer, 8245 Arlington Road, Dillsboro / President of the DEU Board. S. Gemmer stated that on March 12 he went to a Commissioners Meeting to see how they were run when he found out that the commissioners were trying to shut down Dillsboro EMS. S. Gemmer spoke to Commissioner Allen Goodman, County Dispatch Jarred Teaney and Sherrif Shane McHenry after the meeting and made a deal for DEU to run month to month to prove themselves. DEAU Captain Harry Witteride has not been captain for 10 years. There are some criminal investigations going on of some people that took money, but by March 17 Commissioner Jim Thatcher instructed dispatch to quit calling Dillsboro EMS. It took 68 more days for the commissioners to offer a contract. S. Gemmer claimed that the Commissioners are trying to merge Dillsboro with Aurora, stating he doesn't have time for all of this and is only trying to help. S. Gemmer claims that the DEAU board offered to provide the Town with a member on their board but was told the Town refused because the DEAU was toxic. Some council members replied they didn't know that. S. Gemmer stated that the DEAU is working on Plan B and that hopefully the county will come back so we can make this work. For nothing right now we have nothing else to do.

Christina Stewart, resident of Adams Street, Dillsboro of 7-8 years. C. Stewart claims it has been years since she seen the DEAU being used for anything other than washing vehicles. C. Stewart wants Dillsboro to remain Dillsboro EMS, but at this point Aurora EMS is taking care of the town.

She would like to see a new board in place of Dillsboro EMS. C. Stewart asks who was on the old board.

S. Gemmer said he didn't know and didn't intend to be involved in this and offered to help after they saw criminal activity, stating that he's finding out that this started happening in 2010.

C. Stewart, stated that as a citizen of Dillsboro I know this has been going on but what is changing? Noting that Dillsboro doesn't even get called anymore.

S. Gimmer, stated that since March 17th the County won't let them run. In November they had an illegal a coup and took over.

C. Stewart, stated that two years ago she called for emergency services and was told to wait for an ambulance and explained that she would be in an emergency room before an ambulance came. C. Stewart asked when the next DEAU meeting would be held so we can vote for a new board in?

S. Gimmer stated that it does not work that way, explaining that it is a corporation, and it is not run like it was before. You must be on the board and to be on the board you must fill out an application and go through a background check.

Steve Barger, 12847 Lenover Street, asked if you are willing to turn the keys over right now.

S. Gemmer stated that's not what I said, if you want it, we will sell it to you. When it's sold the money will be given to charity.

Randy Jackson, Dillsboro, previous EMT that has not been involved for a decade, stated, I know a lot of the information. What you guys have done is illegal, plain and simple, running with a board with inactive members is illegal. You should have had the nominations in October. Other people decided to have their own elections because they didn't provide adequate training, membership and required meetings. R. Jackson stated, you, Steve Gimmer, should have never been on the board. It takes a year before you can ever become a board member. That was illegal, everything you guys are doing is illegal. How can you change the constitution and by-laws when you went in active and kicked off four EMTs and driver, how stupid was that. The only ones that were here to help. Give me the keys I'll get the blue life squads running up and down the street, you guys are. What you came up with doesn't mean crap because it was done illegally. Your board members are a mother-in-law and father-in-law who moved to Milan and can't be board members. You all are trying to make something but haven't worked and done it for 3-years. Harry Witterite is not the fault of all of this.

Tom Lewis, a local resident, claims to know Steve and Harry a little bit, that Harry used to run a little bit. T. Lewis also claims to know Ron Smith and Shirley a little bit and appreciates what they are trying to do, but asked when was the last time that any of these people made a run?

S. Gemmer, stated that the board is not set up like you guys think.

T. Lewis, added, when was the last time any of them or anyone made a run. Seems like the board is arguing with the county, town council and the people. The board has lost public opinion. I haven't seen you in 10 years and now and have seen more of you on Facebook recently than in the last 10

years. EMS is all about making runs and saving people's lives, you are failing, when is this going to end?

C. Stewart, asking S. Gemmer, you say you have a plan, what is the plan now? Who is going to make the runs?

S. Gemmer stated we have people we are training, 8 people that cost us \$3,000 apiece.

Judy Caldwell, 8948 SR 262, outside of town limits, stated Steve you asked why we should live in the past, but a lot of people in this room want to know what the past is. We don't know who they are. There's all this side conversation going on with no one being identified because no one knows the past, I'm outraged to hear this has been going on since 2016, 2010 or whatever the right number is. I would like to start hearing names.

S. Gemmer, stated Jason Willoughby is the one who started a coup, and is being investigated heavily. Cory Courtshaw. We have been going back looking for documents.

J. Caldwell, how did you come to be involved, or asked to come assist.

S. Gemmer, on March 12th I went to a Council meeting because at the time I was running. They started talking about how to divide LIT money and got on Dillsboro EMS, I knew nothing about it, and it upset me. I talked to Allen Goodman, when I asked him what it was about, Allen stated that it had been screwed up for 20 years. I asked him if he's been involved for 20 years and why he hasn't fixed it. The County came up with a plan, and Harry agreed to it.

J. Caldwell, asked so it was one Dearborn County Commissioner that you spoke to?

Felicia Sullivan, resident on North Street, Dillsboro, paramedic at Lawrenceburg and EMS for 15 years for Aurora, Moores Hill and Manchester. F. Sullivan stated that she will not run for Dillsboro because of past leadership, misappropriation of funds and doesn't want her license near it. F. Sullivan also serves as secretary of the Dearborn County EMS Alliance, claims that all departments meet quarterly and discuss training, equipment, issues & etc. Dillsboro has been breaching this contract for 5-7 years. They have not attended. In our county contract you must attend at least two. In March it was about time this happened because everyone was tired of picking up the slack for Dillsboro. It creates a domino effect. You're saying all this stuff but when you ask questions about it, I don't know. You talk about this illegitimate takeover, but it was the best thing that could have happened. The reason he went through so much money was because your meds were expired, you were missing equipment, your trucks were out of service. They broke down. Giving expired epinephrine. You changed the organization to what works for you. The best thing to happen for Dillsboro EMS is to merge with the fire department and they can become EMT's and consolidate resources or become a County wide EMS.

CM Baker asked three questions to Mr. Gemmer. Who is your lawyer?

S. Gemmer: Elizabeth from Jeffersonville.

CM Baker, can I get the name of the current board of directors?

S. Gemmer: Shirley Smith, Ron Smith, Harry Witteride, Velvet Witteride and Steve Gemmer.

CM Baker, why would you not agree to an audit?

S. Gemmer, we will and are working on it. Why pay people to do this at \$100 / hour.

CM Baker stated you only answered one question of who is on the board. You don't know the name of your lawyer?

Mr. Gemmer asked why the town wouldn't accept a position on the board when it was offered.

CM Baker stated he is on the Task Force that has been researching this since March 14. We've done our homework, what the DEU has done and according to our lawyer it is illegal. TM Derek Walker contacted CM Baker and said he was asked to join the board. TM Walker was advised to stay away from this until DEU is under contract. It is a toxic environment. CM Baker continued, Mr. Witteride came to TM Walker and asked him about Aurora borrowing the life squad. TM Walker was 99.9% sure that Mr. Witteride was going to call Aurora and let them use it. But Mr. Gemmer stopped it. You are the problem keeping Dillsboro from having a life squad.

S. Gemmer when we were trying to build things, and Aurora refused to talk to us. They blew up 2 of their life squads and they wouldn't talk to us about who would pay for the squad if something blew up.

F. Sullivan added you should know that we help each other when we are in need. There's a simple paper you fill out with your insurance.

Doug Kinnett asked if any of the commissioners was invited to this meeting.

CM Baker stated yes Jim Thatcher, but he is on vacation and has been the one on the Task Force and believes that Commissioner Thatcher reports back to the Commissioners much like the Town does with different tasks.

D. Kinnett, this is my third meeting and nothing is getting done. From what I picked up, the commissioners got the money, we know we are going to have to have a paid driver and paid EMT and I don't know why we don't do whatever we need to do legally to get there. I don't think people really care how it's done, but the stone just keeps rolling. The Commissioners have got to do something, they have got to do a little bit more, I think they should have the resources and the legal means to do it. It's been explained to me that you guys take care of the police and fire, and the Commissioners fund the EMS. If this is not going to change and legally, they can't change it, then they need to move on, that \$175,000 offered should pay for an EMT and a driver. If they're not going to give it up, these Commissioners are going to need their feet held to the fire.

S. Gemmer, stated we invited Commissioner Rick Probst out in a letter, and he refused to do it. People are scared to get on board because of this rhetoric.

CM Baker stated there is a County Commissioners Meeting tomorrow, July 16, at 5:00 and they will be taking the next step with the life squad there. This meeting wasn't going to fix anything but to educate and ask questions and prove the people in this town don't want what we have right now.

S. Schnebelt stated regardless of whose over there and they have plan B, what is the main issue they are having. I heard the EMS hasn't been complying for years, who was in charge then? We must take out political and personal issues. Why wasn't it brought up before Mr. Witteride. S. Schnebelt added, if we don't like the family members then do what I did, fill out an application. It's been irritating that regardless of if you like the board, we are not supporting them, but we are going to push everything on Fire Department. If EMS is the reason we are all here, then we need to do whatever we can to get them up and going.

Birgit Hawkins, from Milan, for about 4 years was in Dillsboro, stated she received her license in 1998, having been an EMT now for over 20 years, but got canned from DEAU in 2018 or 2019. Not everything was perfect, there were a lot of family ties already then and afterwards went downhill. Harry was always somewhere and his father-in-law. This issue is about not having runs, that has been going on for at least 3 years. I was a big stickler on doing runs and did billing, Harry has a very low percentage of running, including his wife. His wife did not run by herself. She did run second a few times. It went so far that she was dismissed because she was useless and nonbeneficial. While she was driving, I had to call another driver to meet me at the flashing light and could not afford for someone to make a mistake while driving. This was not received well by her husband. She doesn't know how to use the buttons on the lights and sirens, and the patient was my responsibility. Now billing had not been done, 22 runs were turned in for billing last year from 350.

J. Caldwell, I don't think the fix is to just ask people to fill out applications and be board members, it sounds to me like that's part of the problem.

Jason Sullivan, fire chief. Ask Mr. Gemmer what is Plan B?

S. Gemmer stated it's what they don't want us to do, you must look at it as a business. You must make money to pay people 24 hours a day 7 days a week, and I understand there is not enough money in the county. Nursing Homes wants them to transport patients so that would be the business plan.

J. Sullivan stated the people here pay taxes and their money went to the EMS. Tax dollars paid for the squads. You are going to take these assets that were paid by tax dollars to starting a business. The fire department is here to support the EMS and tried. We're still here. At the Commissioners meeting tomorrow we are not getting a contract to do transport, we are going to do non transport, we have done it in the past and will continue.

C. Stewart asked, if there's a medical emergency at my house the fire department will respond until an ambulance is there.

J. Sullivan, correct.

CM Baker, this will be a short-term solution, we want better than this long term

T. Lewis, then why doesn't the fire department start accepting EMT's and shove them out and ignore them. You can get donations from Dillsboro to buy new buses. Maybe in 3 or 5 years we can have Dillsboro Fire and EMS and get donations and move on.

F. Sullivan, I could see the Commissioners allotting money in next year's budget or the year after for equipment.

C. Stewart, can the Town ask the Commissioners for that? As a member of Dillsboro, I drive myself because I know I can get myself or my children there faster. I have pulse point and can hear the ambulance coming 20 to 25 minutes later. I know someone whose father died because Dillsboro did not have a bus, it's ridiculous. Can we just move on and walk away from this and rebuild it.

CM Baker stated that it would be a shame, look at all those tax dollars that are sitting over there, and the fundraisers that have gone on through the years and there's a stubborn bunch of people over there that don't want to work for the community. All they want to do is argue.

R. Jackson added, a lot of what happened is not all Harry's fault, he's inherited a lot of this. Out constitute our SOP's and by-laws is a governing contract by Roberts rules. They have broken the contract and by that contract everything is supposed to go to the community. They don't go to the individuals or something like that. There was supposed to be a reading in October November, new elections, they breached the contract. It's all inactive. I'm sure he's read the constitution and the by-laws and SOPs and what they are doing is illegal. I will only help if I have the backing of a lot of people, and I do. I just hope that they realize that what they're doing is not going to work and it hasn't worked in years. A lot of money has gone to people just sitting around at their house not making runs. Just do the right thing and what you are trying to do is not the right thing. You can see the support that the Town Council has.

F. Sullivan, part of the alliance's funds has gone to a gentleman to survey the county, our call volume, the severity of the calls, and determine needs and decide how do we do this. This report has not been completed yet. We hope it comes next month. It's not just here, there's gaps in Greendale, closed at weekends. I end up in Ohio County sometimes, somebody will come but sometimes you're left waiting a long time. If anyone local wants to become an EMR or first responder, get with Jason. We have some classes now, just reach out, we'll get you trained and responding.

T. Heitmeyer, lifelong resident of Dillsboro, fire department for 44 years of which the last 12 were fire chief. A lot of the friction going on was not the board members' fault originally, this has been going on for years. We discussed a merger but were told by members of their organization over their dead bodies. We have drove for them on some runs but there was friction, and it never happened. A long-term solution might be to approach the County to buy an ambulance and the LIT money. I'm not suggesting that the Fire Department would do that, but it is a possible solution.

S. Gimmer, Indiana EMS are in trouble for the whole state, it's not just here. There's not enough people to do it. You cannot run a business to show up to pay them. New rule, they must be on site when it's their shift and then they get paid. We have made changes to make this thing work. The building is, we're trying to make it run like a business. I got this from talking to people and learning what others are doing in Lawrenceburg and Aurora. We have made drastic changes with our members, we are taking members in. As we get EMT's trained, and we'll take people if they call us, these nursing homes are wanting this.

C. Stewart, when is the DEAU's next meeting? Can we come to it?

S. Gimmer, it's this coming Friday at 6:00, at the squad building.

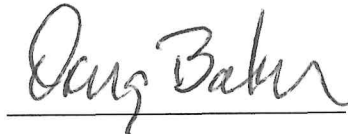
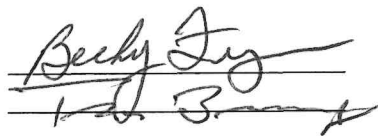
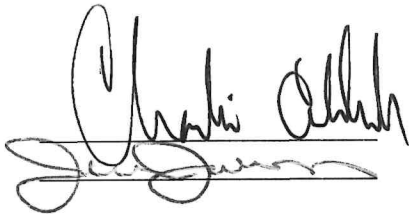
S. Schnebelt, regardless of your views, if you don't like the current situation, everybody is willing to fight for a contract, for the LIT money for the fire department. Let's take the time and effort to try and get our ambulances running, if it doesn't work, let's go to the fire department. The easiest route is to try and help get it going.

CM Baker, I encourage everyone to reach out to your commissioners and let them know that you want your life squad in Dillsboro. I don't have personal feelings one way or another to them people, all I know is that they failed so we have to go elsewhere. Contact your commissioners thank you all for coming.

Being no further business. CM Baker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Seconded by CM Benning. All in favor. Motion carried.



Rita Stevens, Clerk-Treasurer





Dillsboro, Indiana

13030 Executive Drive PO box 127 Dillsboro, IN 47018
(812) 432-9002 www.dillsboro.in

DILLSBORO TOWN COUNCIL STATEMENT REGARDING THE DILLSBORO EMERGENCY AMBULANCE UNIT JULY 15, 2024

The Dillsboro Town Council has been working with the Dearborn County Board of Commissioners since the beginning of this year to establish a reliable, working emergency response service for Dillsboro and the surrounding areas. In past years, the county has contracted with the Dillsboro Emergency Ambulance Unit, Inc., also known as the DEAU, to provide this service. The DEAU is not a part of, or under the authority of, the Town of Dillsboro in any way. Instead, it is a public, not-for-profit corporation, supposedly dedicated to providing “a Life Squad serving the Town of Dillsboro and surrounding areas.”

For the years 2021 through 2023, the County paid DEAU over \$60,000.00 in public funds each year to provide the necessary emergency medical response service to the Dillsboro area. But DEAU did not meet its responsibilities. In 2021, DEAU made only 30.82% of its calls. In 2022, the response rate sank to 20.79% of its calls. Last year, the response rate hit rock bottom, with DEAU responding to only 12.30% of its calls. While all of this was going on, there was also significant turmoil at the DEAU, as members have alleged that theft of DEAU property or funds have occurred. Finally, tax forms filed by DEAU, which are available to the public, show a decrease in net assets or fund balances of DEAU of approximately \$1,084,692.00, between 2016 and 2021.

For all of these reasons, the County Commission voted to terminate its contract with DEAU on January 16, 2024. Since that time, the County has provided supplemental funds to the ambulance services from Aurora and Moores Hill in an attempt to cover the Dillsboro area. Emergency service is spread paper thin in the southern part of the county because of DEAU’s failure.

The County Commission made every effort, with the full support of this Board, to get DEAU back in service. In June, the county extended an offer to restore county funding to the ambulance unit in return for DEAU’s agreement that the unit would hit reasonable, regular benchmarks for better response rates, that it would agree to an audit of the service, and that it would allow representatives of the county and the Town of Dillsboro to serve on the Ambulance Unit board.

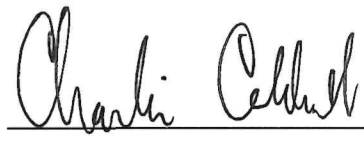
DEAU treated that offer with arrogance and contempt. Their response was an offer to essentially run the service on the old deal, with no contractual obligation to increase the response rate. The Commissioners refused to agree on this basis and were right to do so. DEAU has wasted vast sums of public money and exposed the public to potentially serious danger.

The Commissioners could not and cannot deal with the DEAU on that basis. The Dillsboro Town Board supports the County Commission in this decision, and desires swift effort and collaboration from the Commissioners to restore reliable emergency medical service and transport service serving the Town of Dillsboro and the surrounding area.

We need to start over when it comes to emergency services in the Dillsboro area. The entire DEAU Board of Directors should resign, effective immediately. DEAU's equipment and assets should be used to form the basis of a new emergency ambulance unit to serve the Dillsboro area. There is no way forward with the DEAU. It's time for a change.

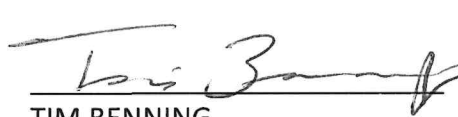
DILLSBORO, INDIANA

TOWN COUNCIL



CHARLIE CALDWELL

- Aye
- Nay
- Abstain



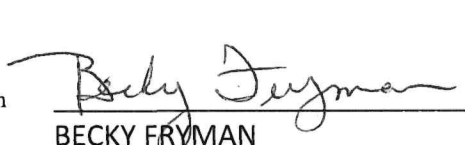
TIM BENNING

- Aye
- Nay
- Abstain




DOUG BAKER

- Aye
- Nay
- Abstain



BECKY FRYMAN


- Aye
- Nay
- Abstain



JERRI JACKSON

- Aye
- Nay
- Abstain

ATTEST:



RITA STEVENS
Clerk-Treasurer
Town Council, Town of Dillsboro