

County Chairman Says Several ALS Workshops May Be Needed

By Terry Witt
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Levy County Commission Chairman Ryan Bell says it may take several joint workshops between his board and the Chiefland City Commission to answer all questions the city and county might have about adding a city Advanced Life Support non-transport truck.

“I bet Chief (David) Knowles has 50 questions for the city and the city has 50 questions for Chief Knowles,” Bell said.

Bell said the county already operates two roving Silverado pickups that have ALS equipment and serve as ALS non-transport trucks for the entire county. Neither is stationed in Chiefland. The city says it wants an ALS unit permanently stationed in Chiefland to serve city residents and perhaps residents in the immediate area around the city with ALS service before the ambulance arrives.

One of the many questions from the county concerns how the city ALS unit would intersect with county Emergency Medical Services if the city operated under the county’s medical director.

Bell said the Department of Public Safety believes if the city’s ALS unit is part of the county’s ambulance service the unit could be re-staged to other parts of the county if need be.

The city wants to operate under the county medical director at Shands Hospital and use the county’s medical protocols to treat patients before the ambulance arrives. The city also wants to be able to stock its ALS non-transport unit with ALS drugs. When it treats a patient at the scene, it would transfer authority for the patient to the county ambulance paramedic and give the county a written list of the medicines used to treat the patient. Under Fire Chief James Harris’s plan, the county would reimburse the city for those medicines.

But the devil is in the details.

Exactly how everything would work is still an open question, or series of questions. The city indicated Monday night that its liability insurer said there would not be additional costs associated with adding an ALS unit.

City Fire Chief James Harris said the ALS unit won’t cost the city or the county additional dollars. The county is concerned that the city may be posturing for an ALS unit to get more county dollars. The city says that isn’t true.

Bell’s request that the city make a formal request for a joint workshop with the county commission was honored at Monday’s city commission meeting. Bell wanted the city commission to approve the letter and Mayor Teal Pomeroy to sign it. The city commission approved the letter 4-1 with Pomeroy dissenting.

Bell said he would like to see all five county commissioners and all five city commissioners at the joint workshop, whenever it is held. He doubts the two boards can get much done if only a couple of commissioners show up on each side. The county commission has yet to formally approve the joint workshop.