Florida Ambulance Association

Meeting Minutes | December 15, 2015 | Largo, Florida

# Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the previous meeting were distributed and approved.

# President’s Update

* $7200 in bank account as of October.
* Membership invoices have been emailed to AMR, Sunstar, Miami-Dade, and American for $10,000 each.

# 2016 Budget Review

* The proposed budget represented a significant increase in dues ($85,000 vs 2015’s $41,000) to ensure the organization’s ability to restore lobbying activities, build reserves, use professional management.
  + This requires a significant increase in dues across the board for at least 2016.
  + Thanks to American, AMR, Miami-Dade, and Sunstar for agreeing to $10,000 2016 dues.
* The estimated lobbying budget of $60,000 can be spread across the entire year ($5,000 monthly for 12 months), or paid out at a higher monthly rate for fewer months during busier times of year.
* The 2016 budget recommends the addition of an educational workshop held in conjunction with ClinCon or another existing event.
  + Hosted by a member ambulance service to avoid hotel meeting space fees.
  + Suggest identifying sponsors to offset costs. Previous workshops were sponsored by Black Inc (now known as [Solutions Group](http://www.solutionsgroup.net/) under new ownership).
  + Reimbursement was identified as the most likely topic.
* Budget suggests the use of the affordable and robust Wild Apricot system for website, customer relationship management, and email deployment.
  + Work-in-progress site is at [www.faa.wildapricot.org](http://www.faa.wildapricot.org). The true [www.the-faa.org](http://www.the-faa.org) URL will be repointed to the Wild Apricot site upon its completion.
* The FAA voted to retain the American Ambulance Association for the management and administration of the association.
  + AAA’s initial quote was reduced from $27,000 annually to $25,000 for 2016. This represents a $5,000 transition fee, then ~1666.66 monthly through the end of the year.
  + The AAA will also pay costs associated with the Wild Apricot association management system, website, and email platform.
  + This contract can be ratified upon the approval of the AAA board.

# 2016 Membership Dues & Structure

* A new membership model for 2016 was approved based on AAA recommendations and budget necessity.
  + Active Members (for-profit providers): $5000, voting
    - American, AMR, Miami-Dade, and Sunstar at $10,000 for 2016
  + Associate Members (government and fire providers): $1500, non-voting
  + Affiliate Members (vendors): $1500, non-voting
* The membership cycle will continue to run January–December.
* Leadership transitions will continue to take place in July.
* Bylaws will be updated to reflect the new structure.
* Outreach ideas from the membership as there are only ~19 remaining private providers in the state:
  + Educate/engage fire chiefs on revenue issues as many don’t presently track revenue.
  + We may want to market to hospital transport companies.
  + Alachua and Volusia Counties have expressed interest.
  + All Children’s Transport has expressed interest.

# Advocacy Search Update

* Thanks to Charlie Maymon, Walt Eismann, and Alan Skavroneck for vetting potential lobbying firms.
* Overall notes:
  + COPCN and Balance Billing were discussed with potential firms as the present issues, with AHCA reimbursement problems as a potential future project if they cannot be solved through the current dialogue.
  + The FAA received across-the-board feedback from potential lobbyists that our political fundraising efforts will need to be ramped up.
  + The legislative session is 60 days, so FAA will need at least 5–6 months of representation to cover committee work, etc.
  + All firms interviewed seemed capable of representing FAA effectively, however of course there will be an industry-education process with any firm selected.
  + Some candidates were lawyers themselves, others were non-lawyers with attorneys.
  + All but one of the candidates requested to work on a month-to-month basis. Contracts should be written to have a 30-day out on both sides.
  + FAA is looking to build a long-term, collaborative relationship.
  + Former FAA lobbyist Terry Meek may be willing to be compensated in order to transition the FAA to the new firm.
* Candidates interviewed included:
  + Dean, Mead, & Dunbar (Cari Roth)
    - $1500/month introductory rate for January 1–May 31, 2016
    - Introductory rate does not include reimbursement issues, but is very much below their regular rates
    - Very interested in building a long-term relationship with FAA
    - All-attorney firm with great access (ex: one attorney represented the former governor during an ethics case)
  + Liberty Partners (Jennifer Green)
    - 12 month contract $5k/month
    - recommended by Mike Grant
    - represents several other associations.
  + Buigas & Associates (Pete Buigas)
    - $6500/month
    - solo practitioner (no admin support)
    - Formerly with Neighborhood Health, was undersecretary at AHCA for 2 years
  + Southern Strategy Group (Monte Stevens)
    - $6000/month
    - young lobbyist in giant firm, go-getter looking for new clients
    - firm may have a conflict due to their representation of Humana
  + Greenberg, Traurig LLP (Leslie Dughi)
    - Conflict of interest, so unavailable.
* **The FAA voted to contract with Dean, Mead, & Dunbar for advocacy.**
  + This decision was based on their commitment to build a long-term relationship with AAA (as evidenced by the reduced introductory fees), as well as their excellent access and high level of skill.
  + The lobbyist search team will reach out to DM&D to obtain an updated estimate that includes the reimbursement issue, as well as for a sense of the post-introductory general rate.

# Next Meeting

The next face-to-face FAA meeting was tentatively set for Daytona, Florida on or about January 22, 2016. This will be held in conjunction with the Florida EMS Advisory Council’s program. FAA leadership noted that more than the typical hour timeslot will be needed.

# Adjourn

***Note: This FAA meeting immediately preceded a meeting between the Florida Ambulance Association, The Florida Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA), and many Florida Managed Medical Assistance programs (MMAS).***