

## Highlighted Portions are the Corrections made to the Original Story

[http://www.burlingtoncountytimes.com/news/local/lumberton-still-negotiating-with-its-ems-squad-as-it-consider/article\\_d9f1b2a0-bbca-11e5-ab94-73815187b48b.html?mode=image&photo=0](http://www.burlingtoncountytimes.com/news/local/lumberton-still-negotiating-with-its-ems-squad-as-it-consider/article_d9f1b2a0-bbca-11e5-ab94-73815187b48b.html?mode=image&photo=0)

# Lumberton still negotiating with its EMS squad as it consider changes

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By Todd McHale, staff writer Burlington County Times

*Editor's note: This story, which was originally published on Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2016, has been corrected and updated.*

LUMBERTON — Some new faces may soon be responding to emergencies in the township after it laid the groundwork to put emergency medical services out to bid.

~~At the end of the month, the Township Committee plans to vote on amending the municipal code to allow private companies and nonprofits to bid for the job of providing emergency medical services to residents, visitors and the traveling public in need of assistance.~~

Currently, the nonprofit Lumberton Emergency Squad, made up of paid and volunteer members, does the work, but the municipality has expressed dissatisfaction with its response times. However, since expressing those concerns in an October letter the township continues its negotiations with the squad and has made no final decision on whether to move forward with looking for a new provider, officials said.

Renewal of the contract is still on the table.

Mayor Sean Earlen said he would rather wait to speak on the matter.

"The EMS services contract is currently in negotiations, so out of respect to that process, I am going to withhold any comments until it is complete," Earlen said.

In October, Township Solicitor George Morris sent a letter to squad President Dan Januseski to notify him of a "potential non-renewal" of the squad's contract, which expires Jan. 31, but officials said they are continuing to negotiate with the Lumberton EMS squad.

A review by the township found the squad did not meet the standard by responding within seven minutes on more than a third of the 1,383 calls in 2014. The review also found that 204 calls went unanswered "as the result of no crew being available," Morris said. Since the October letter and negotiations began between the township and the squad, improvements have been seen and the township hopes to come to a contract for EMS that best serves the safety of its residents and visitors, officials said.

While the township could ultimately renew its contract with Lumberton EMS, it was required to give the squad 90 days' notice if it plans to renegotiate or not renew the contract.

~~Under the township's current law, officials are able to pick one or more properly certified medical services providers, enter into a shared-service agreement with one or more nearby towns and bid out the services. The township has yet to exercise that right and has not gone out to bid for a new provider.~~

~~Since the letter was sent, the Township Committee has proceeded with introducing an ordinance to make a change, along with clarifying standards and billing procedures.~~

~~If adopted, the law would enable the Township to pick one or more properly certified medical services providers, enter into a shared-service agreement with one or more nearby towns and bid out the services.~~

At the end of the month, the Township Committee also plans to vote on amending the municipal code as it pertains to its emergency services. The amended ordinance would continue to allow the township to go out to bid for services, which it is allowed to do under its current ordinance, but it would also clarify standards and billing procedures. Officials have described the amendment as a cleaning up of the code. The bidding process would not change under the amended ordinance.

In related news, the committee will also consider an ordinance to create an emergency services commission that would govern the organizations responsible for public safety.

The mayor said the commission would "provide a forum for all of our emergency service providers to meet regularly to discuss issues that will improve services to the residents of Lumberton."

Regular meetings of the commission would also give members a chance to weigh in on the design and construction of a new public safety building, which will house the Fire Department, EMS and Office of Emergency Management.

There will be public hearings on both ordinances at the committee's Jan. 26 meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the municipal building.