

Holdsworth Report Recommendations
(Page references are to the final version of the report.)

p. 7 - RECOMMENDATION:

Consider the possibility of creating a scholarship program for volunteer members of the service to enhance their training from the basic level to Paramedic. One such process would be to have the recipients of Paramedic Program scholarships agree to volunteer/work for TEMS for 1 year after graduation or repay the scholarship.

p. 8 - A recommendation that is not listed as NOT RECOMMENDATION:

We do not recommend any changes to this number of vehicles at this time. Your current fleet of 2 primary ambulances and 1 spare meets the national standards for ready reserve.

p. 9 - RECOMMENDATION:

Our recommendation revolves around recruitment of new members. One best practice is to work with the Trumbull School District to host EMR and/or EMT certification classes at the high school as part of the educational curriculum. This is a process of attracting new volunteer members, a 'grow-your-own' program. Once accepted into the organization and throughout their tenure with TEMS, members need to be mentored and they need to know very clearly that they volunteered to join, the rest of their activities are mandatory.

p. 10 - RECOMMENDATION:

Create a Leadership Team email group that copies all. Anytime there is a discipline issue, system failure issue, vehicle accident, staff injury, staff complaint all are copied immediately. This takes discipline to turn a phone call into an email for all to see...the time it takes to do this is shorter than the time that will be spent dealing with the confusion. Assure that emails and phone messages will be checked and answered no less than every 24 hours unless a leader is on vacation.

p. 10 - RECOMMENDATION:

Reinforce that the chain of command will be adhered to and when a staff member approaches someone outside of the logical chain of command, this includes EMS Commission members with an issue. Rather than dealing with it, inquire if (appropriate Leadership Team Member) has been notified of the issue.

p. 11 - RECOMMENDATION:

During both our interviews and survey responses, the issue of a clear conflict of interest was raised around the fact that members of the TEMS leadership team are related to members of the EMS Commission. We would agree that this situation can create a hostile environment for many of the field staff who believe that their service level leaders are not being held responsible for their actions. There is deep-seated sentiment that people are being treated differently, that there is favoritism and potential disrespect, especially toward the volunteer staff. This kind of treatment, or the perception of this situation, causes members to resign or limit availability further adding to the staffing shortages.

The Town should further clarify the roles of each of the three groups involved in TEMS.

- *TEMS Chief of Service*
- *Deputy Chief of Service*
- *Administrative Assistant (Full-time paid position funded by the Town)**

**We recommend that Barbara Crandall be retained in her current position with the Town and remain assigned to TEMS to fill this position based on her knowledge of this system and its operation.*

Primary responsibility of these positions is to oversee the daily operating functions of TEMS. This also includes the responsibility to evaluate and compile an ongoing review of the squad's operating systems and help plan for the needs of the agencies and public it serves. The Chief must report directly to the First Selectman or his designee.

Detail of responsibilities (not limited to the below):

- *Problem resolution and supervision of TEMS personnel*

- *Involvement in hiring, disciplining and termination of personnel*
- *Staff scheduling and overtime cost containment*
- *Performing annual personnel reviews*
- *Leading in fostering positive relationships between paid and volunteer staff*
- *Assist in establishing with the Commission updated operating protocols for both internal and external EMS services*
- *Liaison to area hospitals and healthcare facilities for establishing proper agreements and operating protocols*
- *Ensure Medical Care Quality Assurance program*
- *Working with and attending Commission meetings*
- *Assure compliance with SOP and employee manuals*
- *Preparation of monthly operating report to the EMS Commission*
- *Working with Finance Department to ensure proper revenue collection and spending practices.*
- *Participating in development and delivery of community health initiatives.*
- *Participating in the billing and QA process*
- *Responding to calls as back up when necessary to ensure service coverage*

p. 12 - EMS Commission

We recommend updating the authority of the EMS Commission to be as follows;

*Have the power and duty to **monitor** the delivery of EMS to the Town of Trumbull. This includes the authority to recruit for an interview a full time Director of Operations and approval of recommendations which come from the TEMS Chief for appointment of these positions;*

- *Deputy Chief (Volunteer position)*
- *Training Director (Volunteer position)*
- *Administrative Support/Human Resources (Full-time paid position funded by the Town)*

Review of monthly EMS system performance including response times and passed calls to mutual aid.

Review and approval of annual budgets

Review and approval of Capital Improvement purchases

Shall have all other powers and duties conferred or imposed by the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut or ordinances of the Town of Trumbull.

Trumbull EMS Association

The Association can continue to serve as the philanthropic arm of TEMS to provide for fundraising for training efforts and social events as well as support of the community marketing efforts of TEMS. TEMSA members have no authority for the daily operations of the service. Regardless of the length of service to TEMS Association, members must not interfere in operational or personnel matters.

Note: All three groups are separate and distinct. Members of one group have no authority to direct or mandate any other group to act. As such only the TEMS leadership staff will conduct EMS operations. Any complaints raised to other groups must be brought to the attention of the TEMS Chief. No current field providers may serve on the EMS Commission, without taking a leave of absence from field shifts.

p. 13 - RECOMMENDATION:

*By assuming more authority as TEMS, all personnel should be recruited, hired, trained, equipped and disciplined the same way. All applications should be processed through a single TEMS point of hire and then **assigned** to the schedule.*

All volunteers must commit to a minimum of 3 road shifts per month (24 hours) to remain a member in good standing. To accommodate student members and others with situational issues, leeway should be built into the system so that 72 hours per quarter also qualifies.

p. 13 - RECOMMENDATION:

We believe that through the history of TEMS its volunteer leaders have committed a great deal of their time in support of the organization. While we don't for a second believe that throwing money at people will improve their motivation, we do strongly believe that compensating those that are running the organization, dedicating significant hours above and beyond taking calls, will help increase the focus on service delivery.

To this end, we recommend that and TEMS volunteer officers be credited towards either hourly shift salary or tax incentive programs, for service while performing non-field functions such as radio and equipment upgrades or training.

p. 15 - RECOMMENDATION:

The recent move of the dispatch of TEMS units to the Southwestern Regional Communications Center(SWRCC) represents a huge leap forward in enhancing the level of EMS service to the Town. SWRCC has the regional responsibility for EMS communications for the 14 Cities and Towns in the South West EMS Region.

p. 16 - RECOMMENDATION:

Work with SWRCC to obtain weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual reports showing the following:

- *Response times:*
 - Time 911 call is received to time EMS unit is responding*
 - Out the door time to arrival on scene*
- *Total number of EMS requests*
- *Total number of EMS responses*
- *Total of calls turned over to mutual aid*
 - Including time of call and time of turnover*
 - Agency name that responded*
 - Reason TEMS was unable to respond*

These reports should be cross referenced by the Chief with emsCharts to insure that all calls are accounted for so that all potential revenue can be captured.

Request that the response time reports be provided in Fractile Time format so that you meet nationally accepted standards. This will also help you defend any legal claims.

p. 21 - RECOMMENDATION:

TEMS should work with the Town and the Police Department to definitively identify the areas of the Town which it considers Suburban and Rural. This is needed to clarify the response time expectations of the Town. It will give the Leadership of TEMS a starting point for building its system deployment strategy. This may include deploying the second ambulance during peak call times in these rural areas.

p. 21 - RECOMMENDATION:

TEMS, should initiate a relationship with third party vendor to conduct retrospective patient care quality audits of a minimum of 25% of BLS and 100 % of all ALS EMS patient care interventions, on a yearly basis. This will assure the highest level of patient care delivery to the patients being treated. Based on these reviews ongoing training programs for staff can be developed based on specific deficiencies identified, thus reducing liability for the service and the Town.

We strongly recommend Girard & Associates, LLC based in Massachusetts. www.GirardAssoc.com

Option # 3 Outsource EMS to a private staffing contractor

This option is almost always enticing to management when they are faced with either the need to justify existing spending or evaluate the potential for additional spending.

Using one of the two licensed management firms in the state is certainly an option. We have worked in many towns with the oldest of the firms, *VinTech Management Services*, and we highly recommend them.

p. 25 - RECOMMENDATION:

We are recommending this option (Option #3 above). Since you have a dedicated staff of folks working 19.5 hours staff, we would first recommend that you try other means for 3 months with your current roster and others you hire on. If you are not seeing results by the end of March 2013, and are having issues finding dedicated, responsive part-time staff, this is the next most viable option for you and we would recommend that you not hesitate to contract for staffing.

It would be better if shifts were assigned in durations of 6 hours rather than 3 hours, this will add to ease of scheduling due fewer shift needing coverage. Staff should be encouraged to sign up for pager coverage for specific hours, if a full crew is not available then relief staff can be contacted to fill open shifts.

Potentially making use of call back systems, for peak volume periods, long duration events like fire and police stand-by coverage will allow normal 9-1-1 work for be covered as well as the incident.

p. 26 – Holdsworth offers a budget assumption that TEMS moves from a 5% to a 7% billing agent fee.

p. 32 - RECOMMENDATION:

Clarify with COMSTAR that they have copies of all of the bundle billing agreements with each of the Towns mutual aid providers and assure that all intercepts are being appropriately billed. Comstar identified to us that they showed NO bundle billing contract in force, yet you provided three of them to us with the project documentation.

p. 32 - RECOMMENDATION: (This has been done.)

Cancel your Blue Cross and Blue Shield contract and recapture the 10% you are leaving on the table for no reason.

p. 32 - RECOMMENDATION:

A formal commitment from the Town to utilize tax dollars to fund any system deficits to maintain TEMS's responsibility to the citizens for excellent care. The proposed changes in this report enhance service, increase staffing, solidify leadership and supply the revenue to operate the system very close to break-even based on 2013 and 2014 revenue and call requirements. We cannot guarantee that once the full impact of healthcare changes take effect that these reimbursement levels will continue.

p. 32 - RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation using the model of the three fire districts in Town to create an EMS Enterprise Fund which can then levy a specific tax Town wide to raise additional operational revenue dedicated for EMS.

p. 37 - Revenue Savings:

#1 Renegotiate the paramedic contract