

October 29, 2007

Jim Kalb, Mayor  
728 Second Street  
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

**Re: City of Portsmouth 911 Emergency Service**

On October 10, 2007, a constituent's confidence in our 911 Emergency Service was shattered. This occurred as a result of a desperate need for assistance to transport her husband to the emergency room for medical treatment. The anxiety began to grow exponentially as more time lapsed between the 911 call and the lack of emergency response. Due to our constituents' proximity to emergency transport services questions began to arise due to the length of time it was taking for the transport service to arrive. It was being perceived the arrival of the emergency squad to the residence had taken too long when minutes are most important. I am advancing their concern after heartfelt testimony was given and follow-up documentation was requested in hopes of encouraging communication and appropriate actions to regain their confidence.

At 8:41am (per 911 recording) a resident on Albert Street called the City of Portsmouth 911 Emergency Service and requested an emergency squad to transport her ill husband to the emergency room. The 911 dispatcher asked if it mattered which ambulance company was summoned. The resident stated she just needed somebody to transport her husband to the emergency room. Within seconds the 911 dispatcher transferred the call to the Abele Medical Transport (AMT) dispatcher. The resident calmly and purposely answered the AMT dispatcher's questions to prepare the responders for arrival.

At 8:49am (per 911 recording) the resident contacted the 911 dispatcher again to report the ambulance had not yet arrived. Again the resident's call was transferred to the AMT dispatcher within seconds. The AMT dispatcher stated their ambulance was on its way. The resident expressed anxiety and distress that the ambulance had not yet arrived. The resident calmly answered the AMT dispatcher's questions to assist the responders upon arrival.

At this time, neighbors, relatives, and friends impatiently gathered at the Albert Street address to consider ways to expedite the short journey to the emergency room. Her husband was not able to walk to a vehicle so a friend of the family drove to the Life Ambulance Service (LAS) to summons a squad, which is located near their residence. LAS informed the friend of the family that their service had not been contacted but they would respond. LAS arrived as AMT was removing their stretcher from the back of their squad. LAS supported the emergency run but the resident believed LAS had actually completed the transport to the emergency room.

I contacted Abele Medical Transport to express concerns and gather information relevant to this event. AMT was interested and responsive. AMT appreciated the feedback and the opportunity to respond to the questions. AMT assured me their crew had transported the resident (#071010010) to the SOMC Emergency Room. AMT reported a run time of 9:09am and arrival time of 9:12am at SOMC Emergency Room. AMT felt their response to the emergency was adequate. I later attempted twice to confirm the AMT call time, arrival time, run time, and SOMC arrival time but was not able to obtain the information and the dispatcher was not sure when I would be contacted.

The emergency response to the 911 call on October 10<sup>th</sup> had taken over twenty (20) minutes to arrive at the Albert Street residence. In an effort to better appreciate our 911 Emergency Service response time within our City I contacted several ambulance services to identify an estimated arrival time after a 911 call. My belief and based on the informal discussions I conducted, an estimated five (5) minute timeframe should be expected.

Based on the audio recording of the 911 calls I believe the City's response time for transferring the calls to an emergency service was handled in a timely fashion. Also, I believe the transfer of information between the 911 caller and the emergency service was satisfactory.

Prior to this event the 911 caller was not aware choosing an emergency service was an option or that choosing a provider may reduce the arrival time. The 911 caller was not aware the City has strived to establish a fair and equitable system to allow the rotation of the five (5) emergency service providers to share customers if the 911 caller does not chose a specific service provider; the rotation is not based on location to caller. The 911 caller was not aware the 911 dispatcher did not automatically contact the closest emergency service. The resident called 911 because her goal was to get her husband the needed medical attention as soon as possible. The 911 caller did not realize she could call the emergency service direct.

I am requesting a review of this event with the appropriate departments and service providers to identify ways to maintain user confidence of our 911 Emergency Service. I appreciate the feedback from constituents because it provides the opportunity to better understand any shortfalls in the service from the user perspective. Utilizing the media to inform and educate the public would provide for a better service where the users receive expected responses. I also discovered through informal conversations that a 911 call made on a cellular telephone in the City of Portsmouth will go to the 911 area where your cellular tower is located, which includes the County and State of Kentucky.

I appreciate the concern, passion, hard work, and knowledge of all our local emergency service providers. I also appreciate the need for competition for those services because it creates a dynamic environment to provide the best service.

If you should have any questions or require further assistance contact me.

Respectfully,



Bob Mollette, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Advocate and Representative on City Council

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cc: Albert Street Constituents  
Honorable Council Members (5)  
Charles Horner, Police Chief  
Abele Medical Transport @ 8039 Chester Street Wheelersburg, Ohio 45694  
American Ambulance Service, LLC @ 1032 Kinneys Lane Portsmouth, Ohio 45662  
Life Ambulance Service @ 613 Chillicothe Street Portsmouth, Ohio 45662  
Portsmouth Ambulance Service @ 2796 Gallia Street Portsmouth, Ohio 45662  
Urgent Care Ambulance Service @ 2796 Gallia Street Portsmouth, Ohio 45662  
Jo Ann Aeh, Clerk (Record)