

Bob Mollette

3rd Ward Councilman

1705 Franklin Blvd.
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

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Correspondence#: 09-021

September 9, 2009

Jim Kalb, Mayor
Honorable Council Members
728 Second Street
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

Re: City of Portsmouth 911 Emergency Service

On August 20, 2009, an Albert Street resident faced a critical medical emergency and called 911. The caller's husband was unresponsive and needed emergency medical attention. She feared the worst and hoped a speedy response would ensure her life-long companion received timely attention. After hearing the residents' heartfelt testimony and reviewing the enclosed letter dated August 20, 2009, I contacted the City for additional information. In my opinion the response time is not acceptable.

I am perplexed and frustrated because this is a repeat incident; I have enclosed my previous correspondence dated October 29, 2007. I place great value on feedback and the opportunity to improve our services when shortfalls are reported. Critical thinking on this incident is needed to better understand this event and avoid further incidents. The 911 Emergency Service must provide *emergency* service.

I appreciate the knowledge, passion, and hard work our local emergency service provides to our community. I look forward to open dialogue on this reported safety issue at the September 14th City Council Work Conference Session.

If you should have any questions contact me.

Respectfully,



Bob Mollette, 3rd Ward Advocate and Representative on City Council

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Enclosure

cc: Clemmy & Maxine Womack @ 1227 Albert Street Portsmouth, Ohio 45662
Eugene Collins @ 1423 Findlay Street Portsmouth, Ohio 45662
Bill Raison, Fire Chief
Charles Horner, Police Chief
Michael Jones, Solicitor
Able Medical Transport @ 8039 Chester Street Wheelersburg, Ohio 45694
Life Ambulance Service @ 613 Chillicothe Street Portsmouth, Ohio 45662
Community Ambulance/ Kings Daughter Medical Transport (KDMT)
@ 952 Linden Avenue, Zanesville, Ohio 43701
Jo Ann Aeh, Clerk (Record)

1423 Findlay Street
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662
August 20, 2009

Scioto County Commissioners
602 7th Street, Room 1
7th and Court Streets
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

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Dear Sirs,

To the County Commissioners, I Eugene Collins Sr., a Scioto County resident, have a lot of respect for all your concerns for the citizens of Scioto County's safety.

I felt that it was necessary to bring this issue to your attention. I want to first start off by saying that I have the highest respect for all of the employees of the ambulance services. I feel that the procedure that is being utilized by the 911 operators needs to be evaluated. My reason for saying this is on Thursday, August 20, 2009, about 11:15 a.m, I was contacted and told that Mr. Clemmy L. Womack, my uncle by marriage, was not responding. I immediately drove up to his house on Albert Street. When I arrived there, his wife and a friend of Mr. Womack was trying to get him to respond. I asked if they had called 911 and his wife said yes. After working with them for a few minutes we got Mr. Womack to respond a little bit by putting a cold towel on his forehead. By this time, 15 minutes had passed and we still hadn't heard from the emergency response. After about another ten minutes of waiting, I proceeded to call 911 to ask what was the problem. I am now going to try and give you, as best I can, the information that the operator gave me.

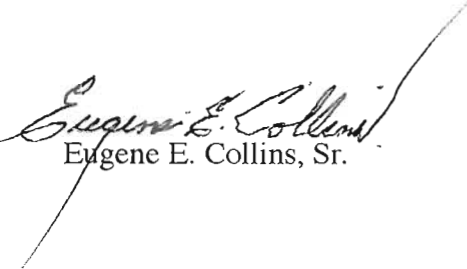
I feel that the emergency service that is provided to the patient, who is in need of their service should be the number one priority, but from listening to them, it sounds like, they want to make sure, if all possible, to share the business as equally as possible to all of the different ambulance service. My reason for saying that is information that I received from the operator and one of the EMT's of the ambulance service. The following information that I am about to give you is from the operator and one of the EMT's the day that this took place.

1. She told me that when you call concerning a patient they respond to your call accordingly.
 - a. If you have a specific ambulance service that you would like to have transport the patient, you must ask for that ambulance service.
 - b. If you don't ask for that service, they will make the determination according to which was the last company that they gave the business too and they will go to the next company and give them the opportunity to get the business. I see that as a rotation system and also putting the patient's life at stake.

- c. My reason for saying this is the ambulance service, that they contact, might not be the closest one to the patient and that could be life threatening. (I think it is crucial that the closest ambulance service get to the patient!)
- d. I feel that the system they are presently using is not in the best interest of the patient.

2. As a recommendation, to be considered, I would like to see the emergency 911 procedure, that they currently, follow be publicized so all citizens would have an opportunity to know what their process is. My reason for saying this, is that my understanding is when you call 911 they do not automatically call the closest ambulance service to assist you unless you ask for that service. Most citizens are under the impression that when you call 911 they would automatically contact the closest ambulance service to the location where the patient is. Because the person that is making the call in many cases do not know the severity of the problem that the patient might have or whether it is a life threatening, so they see it as an emergency problem.

Sincerely,



Eugene E. Collins, Sr.

Bob Mollette

3rd Ward Councilman

1705 Franklin Blvd.
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

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Correspondence#: 07-054

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 10th 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.

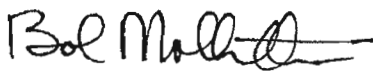
Prior to this event the 911 caller was not aware choosing an emergency service was an option or that choosing a provider may reduce the arrival time. The 911 caller was not aware the City has strived to establish a fair and equitable system to allow the rotation of the five (5) emergency service providers 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, 3rd Ward Advocate and Representative on City Council

rwm

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)