

## Whitefish EMS Director's Report

### February 2026 — March 2026 Meeting

- 1) All shifts were covered by Whitefish staff. There were 12 requests for service.
- 2) Unconscious/Unresponsive Diabetic
  - 1 Altered Mental Status
  - 2 Chest Pain
  - 1 Shortness of Breath with Nausea/Vomiting
  - 1 General Illness
  - 1 General Weakness
  - 1 Snowmobile PI with broken leg
  - 1 Snowmobile PI with possible concussion
  - 1 Snowmobile PI with facial injury
  - 1 Snowmobile PI Mutual Aid for Luce Co. — No patient — transported by Newberry Fire Dept.
  - 1 Snowmobile PI - death
- 3) Luce County Intercept Agreement. The revised agreement and rate submitted by Whitefish were denied by the Luce Co EMS Board. The medical control doctor and liaison were contacted; data and information were provided and shared with everyone to establish a fair and reasonable price for intercept services. It was found that the proposed rate from Luce Co. is higher than other agencies regionally. Edson attended the Luce Co EMS Board meeting on 3/10/26 and the agreement was discussed. We were provided with a new agreement on 3/11/26. The wording has just a couple small items that Edson and I discussed. The rate is set at \$350 and will take effect on 4/1/2026. Intercepts until that time will be provided at the current rate of \$275 per.

There were also many intercept invoices in arrears due to a change in the Luce Co. EMS Billing agency. Agency Admin worked together to correct the issues. Past invoices have been submitted for payment to the Township Clerk and ALS PCR's are being obtained again. Thank you to Edson for attending this meeting on our behalf.

- 4) Whitefish Township EMS has been approached by Hulbert Township for EMS Services. At their regular Township meeting held on 3/10/2026, Hulbert Township Board voted to contract Whitefish Township for EMS services. They are aware that this is a BLS response requiring potential ALS intercept services. The contract wording was previously approved by the Whitefish Township board, and the Supervisor has a copy. It is revised for \$13,500.00 annually. Hulbert Township's agreement with Luce Co EMS ends on May 31, 2026. Once an agreement is signed by both parties, Central Dispatch will be contacted and advised on the service change as well as MDHHS for a request to add Hulbert Township to the Whitefish Township EMS service area. We will also work with their Fire Department to potentially establish first response when available.
- 5) Policies turned in for review and acceptance at the February meeting: (State Inspection Docs)
  - a. Driving Emergency Vehicles
  - b. Equal Employment Opportunity
  - c. General Safety
  - d. Blood Glucose Monitoring
  - e. Hazardous Materials
  - f. Medical Waste
  - g. Infection Control Plan
  - h. Respiratory ProtectionRrecord Retention and Disposal

(FYI — the inspection process begins now with the electronic submission of documents to the MDHHS)

- 5) The WTCS tractor — Apparently the Whitefish School tractor/blower is for sale as they purchased a new bobcat for their snow removal needs. This year's snow removal for the Township has been a bit of a nightmare. The EMS staff was shoveling in front of all the doors by hand for a month until we asked for the township snowblower to be brought to the station for our use since it did not seem to be very useful at the community center. Then there was the issue of timely snow removal. At times we were not getting plowed until the afternoon so all the doors would have to be shoveled by hand again. Then there

were issues with the plow truck being stuck or broken half the time. My personal plow truck was used twice, we got Dick Gratopp once or twice, and we had Loren Degler plowing for a while as well. I have discussed this with the Supervisor several times over the past couple Of months. He can not be the "do all" for everyone all the time. We are a sizable township with many areas to clear of snow, not to mention possibly sidewalks soon. I suggested we look at purchasing a tractor/blower. When I found out the school was selling the tractor, I again suggested we investigate purchasing it. They were going to sell the tractor to Rudyard Schools for \$22,000. I hope they will do the same for us as we are a local entity in need. If not, then I suggested they sell the items on government deals so that local taxpayers have opportunity to bid. I would like to encourage the Township Board appoint someone to speak with the school superintendent, set up a government deals site account, and seriously consider this purchase. We also need to look at hiring an additional person to plow and blow.

- 6) I would like to request an EMS budget report provided to me at every township meeting.
- 7) EMS Paging —To begin, our current VHF paging system is outdated and Whitefish EMS is the last EMS agency in Chippewa, Mackinac, and Luce counties to move to the 800 paging system. This project began over a year ago when Trustee Gomery received some 800 radios from the State for EMS to utilize. It took a long time, but we finally got those programmed and ready to use. Just prior to that, Central Dispatch worked with the Forestry Department, who was awarded a grant for 800 pagers. I informed the Whitefish Fire Chief, and I put him on the list to receive 12 of them. Whitefish Fire received the pagers — I do not know how many — but none of them were issued to EMS. That is when Fire and EMS were no longer paged on the same frequency and communication problems developed. EMS then bought six 800 pagers and got those programmed locally to the Fire tones. No cost to us for the programming. Then I was finally able to meet with the fire chief, and he expressed that he did not want to be paged on the same tones because the fire personnel should not be woke by EMS medical calls. Edson also stated to the board that he thought we should remain on separate tones as that is what the fire department wished. I disagree with this for several reasons.
  - a. Our Fire Dept personnel have no issue with being woken to fire calls including automatic mutual aid for Trout Lake and Hulbert that includes fires and rescue operations. Yet — they don't want to have situational awareness for our own EMS department?
  - b. The amount of times that the fire personnel will actually be woken in the middle of the night is minimal. Maybe half a dozen times a year. It's not like we have hundreds of calls in the middle of the night. That is why we implemented the DST program. A lot of times those same people roll over and go back to sleep when the fire tones go off so what's the difference?
  - c. If someone does not want to be disturbed at work — turn off the pager.
  - d. A lot of the time people keep their pagers on an open frequency because they want to know what's going on around the county.
  - e. Pagers have coverage issues because the signal comes from McNearny Tower. The 800 pagers are much clearer and have a closer opportunity at two towers. 24 towers light up at once instead of 3 when using 800.
  - f. We still use Active 911 App for a back up it is 75% accurate.

The issue: We have attempted to hold ES subcommittee meetings but they have not been very productive in bringing the two departments closer together. We will be revamping that committee and working on another building structure and public presentations instead. If we stay on the same frequency with the fire department, we will know when each other is paged, there will be minimal costs, and EMS can be up and running on the 800 paging system within a couple of weeks. We can then sell our old radios on the government deals site. If we separate and go to our own frequency, we will continue not knowing when each other is paged, the costs will be a few thousand dollars, and the time to implement will be 8-12 months to set up our own template and have them programmed.

I would like to request that the board make this decision tonight. Do you want your Fire and EMS departments to be aware of each other, work closely together, and be able to communicate in the future no matter who is managing the departments? Or do you want them to separate and each be on their own frequency which could lead to additional communication problems in the future? Please make this decision by a motion indicating which direction you would like EMS to go with implementation of the 800 paging system. option the board chooses we will still need to buy about 4-6 more 800 pagers.

Respectfully Submitted By, Renee Gray, Paramedic IC, CADS, CAC — Whitefish EMS Director