

# Rescue service concept still a divisive issue

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FARMINGTON HILLS residents are served by a private ambulance company which services surrounding municipalities. In the last year the quality and effectiveness of private service has been questioned by some residents and firefighters.

Whether the EMS service should be run by the city or contracted to private companies has divided city residents for a decade. The question, a political hot potato, never has been resolved.

Recently, acting Fire Chief Tom Johnson resigned after endorsing the concept of a city-run EMS service. The majority of the council is opposed to it on the basis of cost.

The \$1.5 million figure would mean the inclusion of 21 more full-time firefighters, something the paid volunteers are reluctant to see, fearing extinction of their ranks.

Historically the Hills firefighting ranks were populated by volunteers who were paid on the basis of response to each call. But in recent years a hybrid system has been established with eight full-time firefighters added to the ranks to maintain fire stations during daylight hours.

The mix has caused friction between some members of the two groups.

IN ITS STUDY the league made eight specific recommendations:

- Farmington Hills residents be provided with the most complete EMS system available by the most cost-effective means.
  - Farmington Hills make a concerted effort to provide emergency medical phone stickers to keep residents informed of the 477-0911 number.
  - Residents be encouraged to take CPR training.
  - Instruction cards with address, emergency number, how to report both medical and other emergencies be posted at homes in every public building and outside public places.
  - EMS personnel be taught through actual tours of schools, YMCA and Mercy Center to become familiar with the best entrance of the buildings to assist in emergency.
  - Police receive crash management course.
  - Dispatchers receive more schooling.
  - Rate be made available for charges for transportation to hospitals in emergencies.
- Whether the EMS service should be run by the city or contracted to private companies has divided city residents for a decade. The question never has been resolved.

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