



BISHOP POLICE DEPARTMENT

207 W. Line St.
Bishop, CA 93514
760-873-5866

Chris Carter, Chief of Police

BISHOP POLICE DEPARTEMENT PRESS RELEASE

Date : November 27, 2013

Subject: City Council to Consider Termination of Dispatch Service to Symons
Emergency Specialties (Ambulance)

At the regularly scheduled City Council Meeting of December 9, 2013, Chief Chris Carter of the Bishop Police Department will ask the Bishop City Council to consider discontinuing providing dispatch service to Symons Emergency Specialties (Ambulance), effective January 1, 2014. This request from Chief Carter comes after several months of negotiations with Symons in an attempt to renew an existing contract.

In July of 2012, Symons Ambulance and the City of Bishop entered into a contract whereby the Police Department would dispatch Symons ambulances throughout the greater Bishop area. That contract expired in July of 2013 and the Police Department has continued to provide dispatching of ambulances while attempts to renegotiate the contract were ongoing. During the negotiations process Symons Emergency Specialties, which is based out of San Bernardino, had made a request for the City to reduce their charges, citing low reimbursement rates and financial difficulties. Chief Carter brought this request along with other proposed changes to the contract before the Bishop City Council in October. At that time the City Council was willing to consider the requested changes, however also asked that Symons produce a financial statement verifying the need to reduce the amount the City charges Symons for providing this service.

As of today, Symons Emergency Specialties has not responded to the City's request to provide documentation of financial hardship. Additionally, Symons owes the City approximately \$13,000 and has not remitted payment for services to the City of Bishop since February of 2013, despite repeated requests that they attempt to bring their account into balance.

When the contract was originally constructed, a representative of Symons met with Chief Carter and City Administrator Keith Caldwell. The terms and conditions of the contract were determined to be reasonable and fair and thereafter agreed to by all parties. While the City of Bishop recognizes and appreciates the valuable service to the public that Symons provides, we cannot ignore the fact that Symons is a private, for-profit business. As such, they are not entitled to have their operation funded with tax payer monies. Even where one Government Agency is providing similar service to another, the costs for those services must be covered. Currently the Town of Mammoth Lakes Police Department contracts with Mono County for law enforcement dispatching services. The Town of Mammoth Lakes is contractually obligated to pay Mono County for this service.

This does not mean that Symons will cease operations and there will be no ambulance service, it only means that the Bishop Police Department will not be responsible for dispatching ambulances to where they are needed. This responsibility will now fall back upon Symons and they will determine how best to accomplish this task.

Chief Carter and the City of Bishop have gone to extraordinary measures in attempts to work with Symons in order to settle the matter and continue to assist Symons in providing service to our citizens. Unfortunately, it appears that an agreement will not be forthcoming. Should the Bishop City Council agree to Chief Carter's request, the Police Department will discontinue service effective January 1, 2014.