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To: Summit County Council

From: Ryan P.C. Stack, Deputy County Attorney

Date: October 5, 2022

Re: EMS Service in Summit County

Introduction

Since 2020, County staff has worked with the chiefs of the three fire districts and eastern Summit County mayors on resolving concerns about the provision of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), particularly in eastern Summit County. This issue was originally brought to the County Council and Council of Governments (COG) by mayors who believed that: 1) Summit County's rural areas were not receiving equitable service, 2) response times were inadequate, 3) ambulances were being pulled out of the area, and 4) shifts were not filled with qualified personnel.

The County Manager tasked Janna Young, as Deputy County Manager, to work with the fire chiefs and mayors on developing a baseline report so decision-makers could better understand current system performance based on real data. That report was presented to the EMS Board, COG, and County Council at the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021, respectively.

From there, a subcommittee of the EMS Board was formed to further study the system and bring forward recommendations to the EMS Board (and subsequently the County Council) on where to take the system into the future in terms of governance, operations, and finance. During that course of work, the subcommittee decided the best course of action would be to retain an outside, third-party consultant to conduct an independent assessment of EMS in Summit County. The consultant, and not the subcommittee, would provide short-, mid-, and long-term recommendations (as the subcommittee members were aware of their personal blind spots and biases). This recommendation was provided to the COG and County Council who both agreed to proceed with the study. The goal was to equip everyone with the same data-based, unbiased information provided by a neutral entity with expertise in the area of rural EMS.

The subcommittee developed a scope of work and issued a Request for Proposals for the consultant, which resulted in the hiring of SafeTech Solutions ("SafeTech"), who has significant experience with these assessments for rural EMS systems and with entities in Utah. That

assessment kicked off in August 2022 and is expected to complete in May 2023 at a cost of \$136,000, which Summit County is funding.

SafeTech's timeline for its work is attached hereto as Exhibit A. SafeTech is also commencing its community outreach, with public presentations scheduled in all three fire districts during mid-late October 2022. During this time SafeTech will also meet and interview dozens of community stakeholders from the geographic areas encompassed by each of the three fire districts. SafeTech's community engagement during October is now scheduled as follows:

- Thursday, October 20 – individual meetings with South Summit stakeholders in Kamas from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; public informational meeting from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Friday, October 21 – individual meetings with North Summit stakeholders in Coalville from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Saturday, October 22 – individual meetings with Park City/Snyderville Basin area stakeholders in Kimball Junction from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Thursday, October 27 – additional North Summit meetings from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; NS public informational meeting from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Friday, October 28 – additional Park City/Snyderville Basin area meetings from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; PC public informational meeting from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Saturday, October 29, additional South Summit meetings from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Today is a work session with the County Council to present and review: the myriad issues surrounding the provision of EMS (outlined in this staff report), what has occurred since the last time staff presented on this issue to the Council, and to request direction on where the Council would like both staff and the Park City and North Summit fire districts to go in the short and long-term.

Where are we today?

Park City Fire District (“PCFD” or the “District”) recently came before the Summit County Council to propose an overhaul to the structure and provision of Emergency Medical Services (“EMS”) within Summit County (the “County”). PCFD articulated multiple reasons for this, including: 1) its desire to independently provide service¹ within its district boundaries and do so under its own license, 2) its desire to bring collections in-house, and 3) its desire to transition away from providing EMS services outside its own district boundaries so its taxpayers no longer subsidize the provision of EMS service to the east side of the County.

PCFD presently provides EMS on a countywide basis under three separate Interlocal Agreements, which all expire at the end of February, 2023 (the “ILAs” or “ILA”): 1) one with Summit County for the provision of EMS in the South Summit area (which is outside the District’s boundaries), 2) one with Summit County for the provision of EMS in the North Summit area (also outside the District’s boundaries), and 3) one with Summit County for the provision of EMS in PCFD’s district boundaries, whereby the County funds and owns ambulances and also provides dispatch and communications service. PCFD is presently the only operator/provider of EMS within Summit County. But because PCFD provides EMS

¹ To the extent possible as one of the County’s Special Service Districts.

countywide, including to areas outside its district boundaries, its license is co-owned, or jointly held, with Summit County. Without further Council action these three ILAs will expire as of 11:59 p.m. on February 28, 2023. In light of PCFD's recent requests and the short remaining lifespan of the three ILAs, staff now seeks Council guidance and action.

PCFD recently brought a proposed amended ILA before the Council. This ILA would amend the existing ILA between the County and PCFD for Park City area ambulance service:

- Under the existing ILA, the County has been responsible for purchasing and owning all ambulances for PCFD's use. Under the amended ILA, certain of these ambulances would remain owned by the County for PCFD to provide EMS to North Summit and South Summit. All other ambulances would be transferred from the County to PCFD. PCFD's proposal is to pay the County \$1 per ambulance at the time of transfer, then remit full sale proceeds back to the County at the time of asset disposition. If the Council elects to pursue this option, it must decide which ambulances will be sold to PCFD and which will remain in service of the east side.
- The ILA would further be amended so most terms expire December 31, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. Effective January 1, 2023, the ILA will continue for a new term of ten (10) years solely for the County to continue providing dispatch and communications services to PCFD.
- The County would agree to turnover collections to PCFD for all billables occurring inside District boundaries.
- The County could also extend the other two ILA's with PCFD to allow PCFD to continue to provide EMS to the County's east side.

North Summit Fire Service District ("NSFSD") is likewise interested in pursuing a new arrangement for the provision of EMS. Chief Ben Nielson has a plan about how NSFSD can start providing ground ambulance transport service within its District. This proposal would require changes to the current license jointly held by PCFD and the County, in that NSFSD would be required to apply to the State Office of Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness ("EMSP") to obtain a license for new ambulance services. This process involves a 30-day public comment period, and could require either an informal or a formal adjudicative hearing if any objections are received within the comment period. As part of granting such a license, EMSP would necessarily amend the County's/PCFD's license to excise the territory that would then be covered by NSFSD.

South Summit Fire Protection District ("SSFPD") is not yet in the position to provide EMS within its district, and will need the Council to extend its ILA with PCFD for this purpose.

Both PCFD and NSFSD have proposals they want the Council to expeditiously entertain. Meanwhile, SafeTech has commenced its operations in earnest and is currently scheduling stakeholder interviews and public presentations to occur later this month. It remains on schedule to deliver a final recommendation to the Council in May of 2023.

Lurking behind this discussion is the topic of House Bill 303², which was passed during the 2021 General Session. HB 303 turned EMS/ground ambulance from a “you can do it if you want” general fund item into a “you must provide it”/essential service municipal fund item (Utah Code § 11-48-103(1)). It requires cities and counties to either directly provide ground ambulance or contract with another entity for its provision. The historical practice in Summit County, where the County has contracted with PCFD to provide EMS countywide, has been to pay for EMS from the general fund (where EMS is provided outside PCFD’s district boundaries). Starting in 2023, the County must fund EMS through its municipal services fund. Staff has also held several meetings with east-side mayors about the need to enter into ILA’s for the provision of EMS to those municipalities, and for those municipalities to start paying for County-provided EMS. These discussions are ongoing, and the landscape may shift yet again depending on whether and when the Council directs NSFSD to provide ground ambulance service.

The Council now faces several considerations:

- 1) PCFD’s proposed ILA,
- 2) NSFSD’s proposal to provide ground ambulance service,
- 3) SafeTech’s work on an EMS Master Plan for the County, with expected delivery of a final report in May 2023 (whereupon the County would discuss and plan its implementation strategy),
- 4) Upcoming negotiations with east-side municipalities about a formula for payment of County-funded EMS.

The ultimate question, however, is whether to allow PCFD and/or NSFSD to pursue their individual plans, or to temporarily suspend any changes to EMS in Summit County until SafeTech completes and delivers its recommended EMS master plan and the Council is able to review and discuss the same.

² <https://le.utah.gov/~2021/bills/hbillenr/HB0303.pdf>

EXHIBIT A



Proposal

To:

Summit County, Utah

For:

**Consulting Services for
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
Master Planning**

Updated Schedule

By:

SafeTech Solutions, LLP

August 12, 2022

E. Schedule

SafeTech Solutions proposes to adapt the above-described approach to Summit County's EMS master planning project. The proposed timeline is outlined below.

Phase I: Project Initiation

August 17, 2022 – September 1, 2022 SafeTech Solutions will begin the project with an introductory meeting between SafeTech Solutions and Summit County leadership. This meeting is to familiarize leadership with the consulting team, introduce the approach and start to build trust. The process, according to SafeTech Solutions' approach, begins with deep listening, curiosity and open-minded inquiry.

Following the initial introductory meeting, SafeTech Solutions proposes a larger planning meeting between the SafeTech Solutions Project Team Leader (Aarron Reinert) and stakeholders of the various fire districts, governments, providers, organizations, community members and other individuals as identified by Summit County leadership. This meeting will help establish working relationships and lines of communication that will allow SafeTech Solutions consultants to explore, inquire, dig and uncover more.

August 17, 2022 – September 30, 2022 SafeTech Solutions will begin an extensive review of the background information and data pertaining to Summit County's EMS and fire protection services. Project team members will collect and review data and documentation for the relevant entities including, but not limited to:

- Service area population and demographics
- History, formation and general description of EMS and fire agencies
- Description of current service delivery infrastructure
- Governance and lines of authority/decision-making
- Foundational policy documents and contracts
- Licensure and certifications
- Organizational/operator design
- Operating budget, funding, revenues and fees, taxation and financial information
- State and local code/ordinances

Virtual meetings will begin to gather quantitative and qualitative information from key stakeholders. This information will begin to shape our understanding of how the current system operates as well as stakeholder expectations. This information will lay the foundation for the onsite meetings to commence in October.

October 1, 2022 – October 31, 2022 Two members of the SafeTech Solutions team will conduct site visits in each geographical area of Summit County. The team will spend two days per location conducting in-depth qualitative and quantitative research. The team will interview key stakeholders such as elected and appointed officials, fire and EMS managers and staff, and other personnel who may contribute to the project. The interviews, plus review of the data and documentation listed above, will provide SafeTech Solutions an informed perspective from which further analysis and understanding can occur.

Phase II: Evaluation of Current Conditions

November 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022 From the subjective and objective data collected in the previous phase, the SafeTech Solutions team will begin to analyze Summit County's strengths and weaknesses, sustainability and need for change. SafeTech Solutions will assess the current capabilities, strengths, weaknesses, coverage gaps and workforce shortages using common

quality and performance improvement benchmarks, indicators and scoring formats. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess EMS and fire operations in comparison to industry standards and best practices, as well as to create benchmarks for future measurements.

SafeTech Solutions will develop an overview of the provision of EMS and fire services encompassing all three geographical areas of Summit County. The overview report will discuss items such as: service area population and demographics; historical development; infrastructure; governance; organizational design; operating budget, funding and other financial information; and relevant state and local code/ordinances.

SafeTech Solutions will review Summit County's EMS and fire protection services' capital assets, staffing levels and certifications, and service levels and performance. These will be evaluated for viability, sustainability and projected future needs. SafeTech Solutions will conduct a budget and financial analysis in this phase of the project. Observations pertaining to supporting programs such as training, communications and oversight will also be made and reviewed at this time.

Phase III: Future System Demand Projections

January 1, 2023 – February 28, 2023 SafeTech Solutions will help guide Summit County leadership in understanding its probable future EMS needs, challenges and opportunities based on the evaluation and interpretation of a range of data, including population growth projections, service demand projections, community development information and community risk analysis.

The work in this phase will be centered around helping Summit County leadership envision and identify the big, guiding vision; mission; beliefs and behaviors; and strategic priorities for meeting its probable future EMS needs and challenges. SafeTech Solutions will facilitate visioning and planning conversations that are rooted in clear-eyed analysis of existing data and that aspire to motivate stakeholder and community buy-in. In Phase III, these conversations will take place remotely, via Zoom or conference call. These conversations set the stage, however, for continued visioning and in-depth planning meetings held in Phase IV.

Phase III will also see SafeTech Solutions begin a public engagement and outreach effort in the three geographical areas of the County. This effort will include the development and delivery of educational materials about the cost of providing EMS and the history of and issues related to funding EMS not only in Summit County but nationwide. The public outreach efforts will be held via Zoom and will seek to begin a dialog about expectations, needs and desires for the present and future.

Phase IV: Future Delivery System Models

March 1, 2023 – April 30, 2023 SafeTech Solutions will continue to facilitate the master planning process for Summit County. Development and analysis of various operational models will be discussed. SafeTech Solutions will provide recommendations identifying the best long-term strategy for service delivery while also guiding Summit County in identifying the next, concrete steps. All recommendations will be informed by compliance/ regulatory costs and applicable federal, state and local statutory requirements.

In this phase, SafeTech Solutions' guidance and facilitation will be conducted in-person with Summit County's project team and other key stakeholders as agreed upon. The work in this phase will be to facilitate discussion and buy-in of the long-term strategy while identifying and making clear short- and mid-term steps. Crucial to this phase is the facilitated development

of a draft playbook, the simple document that makes available in clear, straightforward language the long-term vision as well as next concrete strategies for moving the process forward. The draft of the playbook will involve deep engagement and participation by Summit County's project team. Discussion, clarification, ownership and the building of enthusiasm are all part of this phase.

SafeTech Solutions understands that depending on the various operational models discussed along the planning path, the playbook may necessitate the development of additional supporting documents. The focus will be as much upon the people and the process, however, as it is upon the documentation. The playbook is the simple, modifiable tool that reminds, inspires and motivates forward-moving progress. It keeps the short- and mid-term strategies agile while the long-term vision is kept alive.

After the playbook has been co-drafted by SafeTech Solutions and the Summit County project team, but before delivery of the final report, SafeTech Solutions will develop a public presentation to translate the vision and playbook (the master plan) to the wider public, for the purpose of providing information and soliciting feedback. SafeTech Solutions will facilitate a community public input meeting in each geographical area of the County to assess public sentiment toward potential future system changes. Feedback and any data collected from these meetings will be summarized and presented in the final report.

Phase V: Delivery and Presentation of Final Report

May 1, 2023 – May 31, 2023 SafeTech Solutions will provide Summit County leadership a final report of the work done along with the final version of the playbook. SafeTech Solutions will return to Summit County to present the work and engage in a robust conversation of observations, key findings and recommendations.