TRI-TOWN AMBULANCE
West Tisbury • Chilmark • Aquinnah

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Tri-Town Ambulance Committee
September 23rd, 2026 Meeting Minutes
Approved by the Committee on-October 21st, 2026

- **Call to Order**

Committee Chair Jim Newman called the Committee Meeting of September 23rd, 2026, to order at 12:03 p.m.

In attendance

Committee Chair Jim Newman, Committee Member Matt Poole, Chief Ben Retmier, Town Administrator Timothy Carroll, Town Accountant Sarah Smith, and Administrative assistant Samantha Bunker.

Absent:

Committee Member Cindy Mitchell

- **Review and Discussion of FY26 Budget Overage and Proposed Corrective Action**

Town Administrator Timothy Carroll informed the Committee that Tri-Town Ambulance ended FY26 with a budget shortfall of approximately $82,330.27. Contributing factors included approximately $22,000 in unbudgeted building insurance costs, increased vehicle and facilities maintenance expenses, overtime and holiday pay, and uncollected special event revenue.

Mr. Carroll also explained that differences in seasonal and off-season EMT payroll coding resulted in offsetting budget variances. Mr. Carroll reviewed prior fiscal year surpluses that have not yet been returned to the three towns due to delays in completing financial audits. He reported that the Town is working to bring its audits current and proposed using available surplus assessment funds to cover the FY26 shortfall.

The Committee discussed the existing agreement requiring surplus funds to be returned to the three towns and the possibility of revising the agreement to retain funds for future operational or capital needs. Members also reviewed the current revenue allocation of 75% toward operating expenses and 25% toward capital expenditures, including ambulance replacement. Any proposed changes to these arrangements would require further discussion and coordination with the participating towns.

Committee Member Matt Poole motioned to approve the use of $82,330.20 in surplus assessment funds to cover the FY26 budget shortfall, and Committee Chair Jim Newman seconded the motion.

1. **Matt Poole-aye**
2. **Jim Newman–aye**

Mr. Carroll stated that the proposal would be communicated to the Select Boards and Finance Committees of Chilmark, West Tisbury, and Aquinnah.

Following the vote, the Committee discussed measures to prevent future budget shortfalls. Chief Retmier reported that the department is implementing improved expenditure monitoring through VADAR accounting software and an internal Excel budget tracking system. These tools will provide more detailed monthly expenditure reports, identify potential budget overages, and assist with financial planning.

Chief Retmier noted that vehicle maintenance expenditures are already approaching budget limitations due to ongoing mechanical issues with the aging fleet and the newer ambulance. He stated that additional funding may need to be requested if expenditures continue to increase. Improvements to special event billing procedures have also been implemented to ensure timely invoicing and revenue collection.

Mr. Carroll emphasized the importance of monitoring expenditures throughout the fiscal year and making necessary adjustments within existing budget appropriations. He also discussed plans to improve the formatting of VADAR financial reports to provide clearer monthly comparisons of budgeted and actual expenditures.

The Committee further discussed the increasing cost of ambulance replacements and the limitations of existing capital funding arrangements. Members considered potential changes to surplus fund allocations and the impact on future town assessments. No additional action was taken.

- **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

Prepared by: _____

Samantha Bunker, Administrative Assistant