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# Some Forks residents who have paid for emergency service from the defunct Forks EMS can still receive credit

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By **TONY NAUROTH**

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FORKS TWP. | Supervisors voted unanimously Thursday night to pay for subscriptions to Suburban EMS emergency service for township residents who had already paid the defunct Forks EMS its \$47 subscription issue.

The vote came at the conclusion of a struggle to untangle part of the complicated financial mess left behind after Forks EMS was cut as the township's basic life support provider.

Because Forks EMS officials refuse to provide a list of residents who have already paid 2008-2009 subscriptions to them, neither Suburban – the newly named provider – nor the supervisors can determine how to bill those residents.

Supervisor Erik Chuss, who chairs the township's public safety committee, said he talked to Michael Kiefer, operations director for Forks EMS, about refunding subscriptions already paid to them.

"He said they weren't going to refund any money," Chuss told the board.

"I told Mr. Kiefer that was unethical and he said, 'The supervisors created this problem; let them pay it.'"

Chuss suggested that residents who have paid Forks EMS should ask for a refund. If they do not receive it, they should contact the state attorney general's office or seek legal counsel.

Under the arrangement approved by the supervisors Thursday, township residents who have already paid Forks EMS subscriptions can get Suburban coverage if they provide proof that they paid Forks EMS.

Supervisors set a deadline for reporting of Dec. 31.

Supervisor Bonnie Nicholas asked, "Is there any way we can force Forks EMS to give us the list?"

Solicitor Karl Kline answered, "We could institute a lawsuit, but I don't know if that would do any good. I wouldn't be surprised if those records would mysteriously disappear, get shredded, burned or thrown out."

Barry Albertson Jr., executive director of Suburban, told the board, "We did not want to bill the residents."

The board put limits on those who would be covered in the event they needed emergency assistance.

Several times supervisors hesitated to pass any resolution because of the difficulty in sorting the issue out.

Supervisor Robert Egolf suggested, "It's always good when you have a complicated issue like this to have a well-crafted written motion."

In fact, they were about to hold off on any action until the issue could be further studied.

Egolf later said, "We're so close. I think if we wait another two weeks, we'll have to go over this whole thing again."

Kiefer has avoided speaking with the township and has said he will not answer questions because of a lawsuit in which Suburban is trying to recover funds owed to the organization by Forks EMS.

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