



Chief Thomas Mosier

October 1, 2021

When you call 911 for a medical emergency, you need to know that an ambulance is on its way. Prompt and reliable – that’s what all Piscataway families need and deserve. As you know in an emergency, every minute counts.

Laudable people, many of them Rutgers students, have served with our local rescue squads. Sadly though, since this past January, there were 338 times when a call for an ambulance was made to Police Dispatch and not enough volunteers were on duty at a rescue squad, so instead our Police Department would call for a professional ambulance.

For a long time our Township relied on a mix of ambulance services, both professional and volunteer. Historically this has been RWJ Barnabas during the day. Our three rescue squads – Arbor, North Stelton and River Road – provided basic life support at night when they were in service and professional ambulances would provide advanced life support.

Recently, the Arbor Rescue Squad disbanded, and that increased the number of neighborhoods needing coverage by North Stelton and River Road. In addition, the River Road Rescue Squad transitioned from a volunteer group to a paid employee outfit. So, with hundreds of calls, more neighborhoods to serve, and changes made by rescue squads, the Township had to act to protect the health and safety of our community.

That is why the Township Council issued a request for proposals for a five-year contract ambulance service providing 24-hour, 7 days-a-week, 365 days-a-year coverage to the entire Township. We got three responses: Hackensack Meridian Health JFK for just over \$1 million, RWJ Barnabas for more than \$3.5 million and the River Road Rescue Squad for over \$4.2 million. That’s quite a difference!

The Township made the right choice and entered into a contract with HMM JFK for its great professional team and far less expensive price tag.

Lots of great benefits with HMM JFK:

- As always, patients and their families decide which medical facility that they want to be transported.
- There is never an out of pocket charge. No one can be billed directly for medical EMS services provided by HMM JFK. Only their insurance company can be charged.
- Three ambulances are stationed within the Township at all times.

In addition, this upgrade of services better aligns all of our first responders into one team that communicates seamlessly and serves capably. Should there be a need for more ambulances at any given time, HMM JFK will supply them from other resources.

We certainly understand how Rutgers students, many of them wanting to pursue medical degrees, could gain experience from being a part of rescue squads. Unfortunately though, since the HMM JFK contract was signed, the River Road Rescue Squad has taken some distressing actions. Its leadership balked at helping at high school football games and claimed it would not do rehab work for our volunteer firefighters on fire calls. Most disturbing, its leadership called other rescue squads in surrounding towns asking them not to help Piscataway for our Labor Day Weekend fireworks show.

So again, it is admirable that any young person would want to volunteer on a rescue squad but Piscataway families need dependable and professional service – and that's what we now have all throughout the day and night with HMM JFK.