

CS opposes 'hot rod' A&M ambulance

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voiced at that time, he said. At a second meeting, Goswick said, College Station Fire Chief Douglas Landua came and "requested that the campus ambulance not be used for emergency calls in the city of College Station. Goswick said he was surprised at the request, but agreed to honor it because he felt that service to on-campus students might be jeopardized otherwise. "They could make it difficult for us," Goswick said. "Who knows but what they might have said we couldn't run into their city at all?" Goswick said he was afraid city officials would try to prevent the uni-

versity ambulance from even running through College Station to get to Bryan hospitals. The main campus of Texas A&M is surrounded by College Station. At present, the university ambulance can travel through the city to reach calls out of the city limits or to go to Bryan hospitals. Goswick and Borron said Chief Landua told them the reason for the request was because the university ambulance would be taking away 20 percent of College Station's ambulance runs by answering on-campus calls, and if allowed to service off-campus students, another 20 percent of their calls would go to the university ambulance. Borron said they were told that

this would lead to a drop in revenue, causing them to have less justification to the city for more funds to improve services as well as a drop in morale of the firefighter/EMT's because of the decreased number of calls. Landua and several other city officials have insisted that money doesn't concern them, citing that the College Station ambulance service operates at a deficit. When asked about the 20 percent figures, Landua said, "That might have been a rough estimate." He said the on-campus calls for 1979 actually made up 12 percent of the city's total calls, and he had "no idea" how many calls were made to off-campus students. Landua said no record is made of whether patients transported from the city are students or not. Borron said he was upset that the figures presented to them were not based on real percentages since much of the university's decision to honor the fire department's request was because they did not want to

take away so much of the fire department's revenue. Bill Schaefer, ambulance coordinator for the College Station Fire Department, said the agreement consists of these provisions: ✓ the University health center is to notify the College Station Fire Department by letter when the university ambulance is ready to go into full-service operation; then, ✓ all campus calls (emergency and non-emergency) will be referred to the health center; the fire department will continue to answer all calls until the letter has been received. ✓ the University Health Center is to notify the College Station Fire Department of all off-campus emergency calls in the city and is not permitted to respond to these calls. ✓ the university ambulance will be permitted to run through the city of College Station using lights and siren to answer emergency calls in Bryan, at other university property, or at locations outside College Station city limits, provided the College Station Fire Department is notified. ✓ the university ambulance will be permitted to make non-emergency (transfer) runs to students in College Station who need a ride to the health center, doctor's office, or clinic. ✓ the university ambulance may be used for emergency transfers from the health center to Bryan hospitals. ✓ the university ambulance will serve as a back-up emergency vehicle if all College Station ambulances are in use, and the city ambulances will back up the university if necessary. Landua said he has received a letter from the health center notifying the fire department that the university ambulance is in service and he has notified the city manager of the policy change. Campus calls are now being relayed to the university ambulance service, Landua said.

College Station City Councilman James Dozier said the ordinance "was not meant to discriminate against students," and said that it was a coincidence that it was proposed and passed shortly after the university ambulance was purchased. Chief Landua, who co-authored the ordinance with Bill Schaefer, said it was just "bad timing" that the ordinance was passed when the university was ready to operate its ambulance. The new ordinance increases the training required for ambulance personnel from Red Cross First Aid certification to Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training. EMTs are required to have 120 hours of medical training for certification; 80 hours of work (ambulance) experience and 40 hours of hospital work. Ambulance coordinator Bill Schaefer said the university ambulance service would be eligible to apply for a permit if they meet all requirements of the ordinance and if the city council approved the application. Borron said the university ambulance meets all the specifications "and more" and they are looking into the possibility of getting a permit to operate as a full-service vehicle in the city of College Station. However, the prospect of actually being granted a permit does not look good since several city councilmen and the mayor are adamantly opposed to allowing the university ambulance to function for emergency calls in the city limits. Councilman Gary Halter said, "We have no control over a voluntary student organization, and we don't want them running an ambulance service." Halter later referred to the TAMECT members as students who were "running around trying to play EMT," and like the campus sailing club he sponsored, TAMECT was bound to lapse into periodic inactivity because "that's what happens to all student organizations." Councilman Larry Ringer was also opposed to the idea. "We can't have hot rodders running around," Ringer said. Steve Borron, TAMECT squad leader, said his organization was one of dedicated individuals who were interested and devoted to providing quality care to all students.

Borron said the university ambulance service is able to meet all city standards and would comply with all speed limit and safety regulations required by the ordinance. TAMECT is a volunteer organization made up of more than 80 individuals who are interested in emergency medical care, Borron said, and its members operate the university ambulance. Borron, who is a paramedic, said many of the members of the team are EMTs, many of whom have been trained through the university, and others have Emergency Care Attendant (ECA) training or first aid certification. TAMECT also has two paramedic trainees and one EMT with IV skills, Borron said. "There's always one EMT on duty, and the other will be at least ECA or first aid trained," Borron said. "The most qualified person is always in the back (with the patient)," Borron said. Borron said that since its beginning in 1976, TAMECT has grown steadily from about 15 members to more than 80. No problems with scheduling ambulance crews have arisen, "even during the first two weeks of school when no one knew what their schedule was," Borron said. Bill Schaefer, ambulance coordinator for College Station, said all of the city's firefighters are also EMTs and some had been trained through the university's program. Schaefer said the fire department had one EMT with IV skills, but no paramedics. Bryan ambulance coordinator, David Turek, said their fire department looked at the university ambulance as "a substitution of our department" and said he felt the university had a good program. College Station officials are concerned that "safety problems" will arise in cases where a city and the university ambulance respond to the same call. College Station Fire Chief Landua said his department radios calls to Bryan if an emergency is called in to the wrong city, but said relaying calls to the university would cause too much of a delay in emergency situations. Borron said the university ambulance is equipped with a "phone patch" system which allows them to communicate with anyone with a telephone, including the various departments. Landua also said the university ambulance would not be able to travel through streets and apartments as easily as the city ambulances could because the city had large maps of each section of the city and they could get lost or give directions to their drivers on their way. Bryan Fire Department officials solved this problem for the university ambulance service where the city is concerned — they gave out health center copies of their street maps. College Station officials said they are concerned that the university ambulance service might be called to answer students calls that would require too long a response time. Borron said this is not the case. He said if they received a call, they felt one of the other services would respond more quickly they would lay the call. "If we got a call out at the intersection of Highway 21 — say if someone was bleeding to death — we would hesitate to call Bryan because they're 15 minutes closer," Borron said. College Station Fire Chief Landua said one reason for his decision to allow the university ambulance service to answer off-campus emergency calls was to provide a "response" runs — having two ambulances answer the same call. Borron said dual response would not be a problem with radio phone-patch communication systems operating. David Turek, Bryan ambulance coordinator, said, "The overall purpose of the service is to provide best emergency medical service possible, and if their ambulance can get there quicker than ours, then our patient is getting better service. "If we respond to a call and find that the university ambulance is already there, we'll just turn around and go home — we're not bothered who picks up the patient, we're concerned with quality service. Turek later added that if a policy was used, then they would be playing politics with someone's life."

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