



An Open Letter to the Citizens of Oxford regarding Oxford EMS *from* Emergency Medical Billing, LLC LaFayette, Alabama

Citizens of Oxford:

I am a partner in the billing company for Oxford EMS (OxfEMS). Our work for you spans the dates May 2016 - August 2019, and March 2020 - Sept 2020. EMS Directors are getting off tractors in rural areas responding to 911 calls throughout AL and GA. These people manage ambulance services that do not today have to close down their EMS services. People both within and without OxfEMS have been trying to get the City Council’s attention since spring 2017. Some have even filed lawsuits to do it. All with little result.
It is my view that Oxford EMS was one of the most viable Ambulance Services in the State of Alabama.
Regarding OxfEMS, I ask you, the citizens of Oxford:

MONEY

With an approx. annualized billing revenue above \$2.1 million between Jan 2017 and Aug 2019, an annual budgeted appropriation, and multiple emergency appropriations amounting to many hundreds of thousands from the City, why is OxfEMS now so short of funds that it is forced to close?
Is the city bankrupting OxfEMS or just closing it to open it under a new name for appearance purposes? If it’s just being closed, is the city still on the hook for the same amount of money?
Are all of the ambulances accounted for? If they are not in Oxford, where are they? Did OxfEMS or the city receive proceeds from any sale transaction or insurance loss?
Prior to 2020, have employees or officers of OxfEMS been paid personally via invoices with extremely similar names to OxfEMS for services such as CPR training or ambulance presence at high school football games? Was payment for those invoices deposited to accounts not under the control of OxfEMS?
Why was EMS given \$167,677 by the city in an emergency meeting Monday morning Oct 28, 2019? What happened on Tuesday, Oct 29th that may have required that disbursement?
What % of emergency appropriation money from the city has actually gone for legal fees? If EMS and the City Council is happy to pay legal fees and debt service, why can’t they pay their EMTs the money they are owed?
Was collateral for loans represented accurately to banks for loans to OxfEMS?
Was there a line of credit? Have disbursements from it been audited?
Prior to 2020, what was the EMS Director’s salary and specifically benefits? How does that compare to other EMS Director’s salaries in the State of Alabama? Did benefits include a vehicle for personal use?
Spanning 2016 - 2020, were any board members doing business with EMS? If so, is that a conflict of interest?
How do the salaries, benefits, and overtime of officers’ employed family members compare to those of other EMS employees?
Where are the minutes from the Board Meetings?
Did OxfEMS rent a van with OxfEMS money to take nurses from RMC to see the musical ‘Wicked’ at the BJCC in Birmingham at the same time that they were desperately begging the City Council for money? (See supporting documents for Case No. CV-2018-900420.80, Calhoun County Circuit Court.)
Did OxfEMS have a line item for ‘entertainment’ on its budget?
For the years 2018 -2020, have cash refunds due to patients of OxfEMS actually been paid to them?
Have the Social Security taxes for OxfEMS employees been paid? If not, why not and at whose direction were they withheld?
See Anniston Star article, “OxfEMS employees and families endure insurance lapses” Dec 22, 2019 here:
https://www.annistonstar.com/news/oxford/oxford-ems-employees-and-families-endure-insurance-lapses/article_2007a3de-244b-11ea-b2e4-e30ca90886e2.html
and “OxfEMS Director family members no longer employed at ambulance service” here:
https://www.annistonstar.com/the_daily_home/oxford-ems-director-family-members-no-longer-employed-at-ambulance-service/article_52dbfaee-3e5e-11ea-bb5e-b37bb528a1cd.html
Is it a criminal act not to pay Social Security Taxes, health insurance premiums and retirement funds while you are also withholding them? Does the District Attorney, the Ethics Commission, the Attorney General’s Office and the Department of Labor know about this?
Between 2017 and now has the contribution of any payroll deductions been in arrears to Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA)? If so, why, how much, and at whose direction?

AUDITS

What were the findings of the 2016 audit?
Was the 2017 audit stopped before completion? If so why? At whose direction? Were the Police and Fire Departments audited in 2017?
Has a 2018 audit ever been completed? If not, why? Who is responsible for this? Were the Police and Fire Departments audited in 2018?
Has a 2019 audit ever been completed? If not, why? Who is responsible for this? Were the Police and Fire Departments audited in 2019?
Has the City Clerk or any member of the City Council ever seen OxfEMS’s books? If not, why not?
Since the City Council appointed the board, is OxfEMS an entity of the city just as the fire and police departments as Alabama law suggests?
Are their books now public? If not, why not?
Has any member of the current board, the City Council, or Tom Dixon contacted the Office of the Examiner of Public Accounts for the State of Alabama to review OxfEMS’s books and bank accounts? If not, why not?

OWNERSHIP

Has the management of OxfEMS and Oxford City Council been holding OxfEMS out to be a private entity despite frequently receiving money in appropriations and loans from the city and the City Council appointing its board? (See Anniston Star Articles “Oxford council approves \$175k loan for EMS,” Jan 28, 2020 here:
https://www.annistonstar.com/news/oxford/oxford-council-approves-175k-loan-for-ems/article_e1e28746-423f-11ea-92fe-f70e944b0264.html
and “Oxford gives more money to private ems service” here:
https://www.annistonstar.com/news/oxford/oxford-gives-more-money-to-private-ems-service/article_1d9344e0-f9cc-11e9-9700-af5070aaa15f.html
If OxfEMS is a private entity as the City Council likes to claim, how is OxfEMS participating in RSA?
Prior to 2020, has the former Oxford City Auditor directly stated in writing that OxfEMS is an entity of the City Of Oxford?
If it is a private entity, who are its shareholders?
If it is not a private entity, why would the City Council want to claim that it is?
If the city doesn’t own EMS, why did the City Council adjourn its meeting Sept 22, 2020 ‘to discuss the sale of assets?’
Were the employees of OxfEMS ever given City of Oxford Employee Handbooks?
If it is a private entity, why is maintenance on the ambulances performed at the city garage?
Why has the City Council given your tax dollars to support OxfEMS opening an office in the City of Anniston and to transport people who are not residents, citizens or taxpayers of the City of Oxford?

HEALTHCARE AUTHORITY

Is the purpose of the Healthcare Authority different than stated?
Is a bond issue being considered for the Healthcare Authority?
Do the finances of the Healthcare Authority connect in any way to the resolution of OxfEMS? Does it have authority over OxfEMS as a closed entity?

CRUX OF THE MATTER

Disregarding questions about the Healthcare Authority, WHO IS THE ONE PERSON THAT CREATED THE CHAOS at OxfEMS that now costs the City of Oxford millions?
What supporting actors stood by while all of this happened?
Why did the Mayor and City Council not stop this long ago? (ALL it would have taken was a demand for an audit before any emergency funds were disbursed.)
Are you, the citizens of Oxford, content that the City Council refuses to pay your EMTs’ benefits and taxes withheld from their pay while they worked to save your lives?
You deserve better, your EMTs deserve better, and your partners dragged into this debacle deserve better!

This was the leadership of Oxford EMS during 2019:
Ricky Howell, EMS Director
Randall Beshears, Board Member
Gregory Skinner, Board Member
Patrick Miller, Board Member
Marty Carter, Board Member
Shannon Stephens, Board Member

This is your City Council:
Phil Gardner
Charlotte Hubbard
Mike Henderson
Chris Spurlin
Steven Waits

For full disclosure: We have a suit pending against Oxford EMS, its Board named above, and the City of Oxford. We will be amending that suit. We are suing for payment of an agreement that we entered into in good faith and are proud of our work for OxfEMS. They are in arrears to us for payments going back to May 2019. We suspended our fees for the months of March – May 2020 to help them work through their problems.

Joel Gregory
Managing Partner
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