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What is a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN)?

It is a certificate that the County controls by State law. The County when issuing a COPCN allows a city to provide Advanced Life Support and Paramedic services to its residents. Cities are not allowed to provide paramedic or advanced life support service to their residents without County approval. There are two types of COPCNs, one for non-transport paramedic services and the second is for transport services.

Does the City of Marco Island have a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN)?

No. The City submitted the application to obtain one and is currently going through the process with Collier County.

Is there anyone else in Collier County that has or has had a COPCN?

Marco Island is not unique in requesting a COPCN in Collier County. The County has granted North Collier Fire District a non-transport COPCN which allows their personnel to provide paramedic service from their fire department vehicles but does not allow them to transport to the hospital. The County also recently gave the Seminole Tribe a COPCN Certificate giving the Tribe the ability to transport to the hospital in addition to allowing their paramedics to provide service from fire vehicles. In the past, the County also gave Naples Community Hospital a COPCN to transport patients between hospitals in Collier County.

Does the City only need a COPCN to operate a paramedic service?

No, the City also needs a license from The State of Florida.

What happens if Collier County does not approve Marco Island's COPCN application? Can Marco Island still get a COPCN?

Marco Island has been given an exemption for the need to obtain a COPCN from Collier County by the State Legislature (House Bill 1395). If the city's COPCN application is denied by the County, the City can directly apply to the State of Florida for a two-year license allowing the City to provide paramedic transport services.

How does Marco Island operate currently?

The City of Marco currently operates through an interlocal agreement. This agreement with Collier County allows City personnel to operate under the County's COPCN and State A.L.S. license. Currently, the County has complete control over paramedic services delivered by the City and its personnel.

What is Marco Island trying to do?

The City of Marco Island is attempting to obtain local control of emergency medical services within City limits. There is a lot of uncertainty with the future of emergency medical service within Collier County. The City of Marco Island is attempting to improve service and obtain a COPCN as the Seminole Tribe has for the benefit of their residents. The City hired a consultant, Fitch & Associates, to do an analysis of the

current service, and the benefits of obtaining a COPCN. The consultant's report clearly indicates that an increased service level to our residents will be achieved. In addition, the City Fire Department will be able to transport residents and visitors to the hospitals. This will also recoup revenue for transportation of our residents that is currently being collected by Collier County.

Where do our tax dollars go?

The County is concerned with Countywide services. Part of the tax dollars provided to Collier County go to pay for services in other areas of the County and part of that is returned to the City of Marco Island. The County provides 1.2 EMS Ambulances per year. A major issue facing the future of Marco Island taxpayers is the tremendous growth and needs taking place off island.

- *The County Off Island Projection growth shows that Marco taxpayers will have to pay for additional EMS service and other infrastructure needs in other areas of the County. This diverts taxpayer dollars and provides no immediate or needed direct improvement to Marco Island residents.*
 - *Rural Land West – 10,000 residential units on Immokalee Rd*
 - *Within 5 Miles of 951 – SR 41 - over 12,000 new residents*
 - *No additional EMS units on Marco Island - 1 unit in 1996 -1.2 now*

The City of Marco Island became a City to provide local control and desired local services. Marco Island tax dollars are utilized to provide Fire, Police, parks & recreation, and all city services determined by the City government. The new tax dollars you pay to The City of Marco for EMS services will be utilized to provide this local service on Marco.

What are some of the reasons and goals for a COPCN?

The current level of service is determined by the board of Collier County Commission and not by the City government. Having EMS under our local control will provide a greater flexibility in the type of care that one will receive when dialing 911 because the City will have its own Medical Director that can customize our system to meet the City's specific needs. The City wishes to ensure residents the maximum utilization of both existing and future paramedic resources so that all individuals have the same capability when delivering care from whatever vehicle they arrive. The City wishes to hire a doctor who will oversee all emergency care, paramedic skills and capabilities and the types of services that our residents will receive based upon our needs not the County's needs. Another issue is that due to the fact service level is controlled by the County, the County determines the number of ambulances.

In twenty years as a City, despite County tax increases and additional requests for more ambulances, Marco Island has only seen an increase from one ambulance on Marco Island to one full time and one-part time (1.2).

Marco Island is at the end of the line for County resources. The County must send ambulances to the City because unlike other areas of the County the City does not have a hospital and their ambulances do not drive through Marco Island to go to the hospital. The City is off the beaten path and is nine miles off the closest thoroughfare for EMS units.

There is uncertainty in the County about EMS. Collier County has contracted out its Fire Department to a special taxing district. There was a County straw ballot vote by the County Commission in 2016 whereby 63% of all residents not living in Marco Island or the City of Naples, voted to turn EMS over to an independent taxing fire district. The City needs to prepare for this event.

Fire Service, with the exception of Marco Island and the City of Naples, is provided for by Independent Fire Taxing Districts. These districts have a taxing authority in order to provide their fire service. Their residents pay rates of .95 to 4.5 mils for Fire Districts. The Independent Fire Taxing District Boards have moved in a direction to potentially place on the March 2020 ballot a vote to consolidate all of the fire departments with the exception of the cities of Marco Island and Naples. With this pending vote, the citizens need to be concerned with the turning over of EMS highlighted in the March 2016 ballot.

What do we currently pay for EMS?

According to the Fitch Report which can be found online at www.CityofMarcoIsland.com. The citizens of Marco contribute over \$2,000,000 in ad valorem tax. Additionally, those who are transported from Marco Island pay an over \$1,000,000 in transport fees annually. The County ultimately determines service and tax levels As Collier County grows in building and population, the County needs to provide service to the new areas and Marco Island residents continue to pay for the growth. The County also keeps all insurance money from ambulance transport. Marco Island is a donor community.

Will Marco Island fragment the EMS System?

The County has already demonstrated that the issuance of a COPCN to North Collier, N.C.H and the Seminole Tribe is not fragmenting the system. In fact, the City will enhance the County system by providing additional EMS resources and allow them to relocate the current County resources to growth areas within the County. As stated in the consultant's report, many other counties within Florida grant COPCNs to departments without fragmenting the service. Marco Island and the County will continue to cooperate.

How are Marco Island Paramedics Trained?

The City of Marco Island Fire Rescue personnel meet or exceed County training requirements as well as all State recertification requirements. The City has an intense training program for paramedics. There are personnel specifically trained on each shift who coordinate and train department personnel to the highest standards. In addition, department personnel attend the Collier County Medical Director's training. The majority of the training is done on-duty utilizing existing resources that are already paid for. The department is very proud of its training activities and personnel stay current with National, State and County standards,

Will we need our own 911 system and call takers?

No. The Citizens of Marco already pay the County Sheriff and the County for the Countywide 911 system. The system is a state of the art system. Nothing will change on how calls are processed if Marco Island obtains a COPCN and no additional costs will be borne by City residents for the 911 call center.

Why doesn't the City let Collier County just do it?

It is all about service and control of the service the City can provide. The County like Marco Island faces tremendous growth and the need to improve their system. The Fire Rescue wishes to take care of its residents in a similar fashion as the Fire and Police Department. The department is customer service oriented with many citizen-based programs. The City has a diverse and elderly population, offering local CPR courses, crowd management courses, fall prevention programs, foster animal programs and has the capability to give that extra to residents especially as community paramedicine standards develop. The County must be concerned with the entire County system and specialty care as given by Seminole Tribe to their residents cannot be accomplished on a Countywide basis.

Will Marco getting a COPCN mean that County units will not respond to Marco or Marco units will not respond off island?

Collier County issued a COPCN to Seminole Tribe. When their units are busy, the County responds to assist. There will be no difference with the City of Marco Island. In fact, because Marco has its own ambulances the County system will be improved through the reallocation of current county units to other areas of the county and areas should see shorter response times. The interlocal agreement between Collier County and Marco Island will address the issue of County units responding to Marco.

Why should Marco Island pursue a COPCN now?

With the tremendous growth, directly off-island and throughout Collier County inclusive of their rural areas, Collier County needs to assign more units in other areas. Additionally, based upon the voters of Collier County's turning EMS over to a Fire Taxing District, the City of Marco Island needs to put a plan in place to protect its citizens. By implementing the approach recommended by the consultant, it provides Marco Island residents assurance that they will control their EMS service. The residents pay \$3,000,000 a year for their current service. Currently, as the County expands its services, City residents are obligated to pay for those off island services through tax increases by the County. The residents also pay for transport and the City receives little or no revenue to put back into the City's system.

Will the City obtain transport fees?

That question should be up to the citizens. The question is whether residents who pay taxes they need should pay extra for the transporting by ambulance. The County has built their system that way, but under local control City taxpayers have that choice. Currently the City provides 1/2 or 2/3 of the personnel the Collier County ambulance that transport those in need of the service. The County collects approximately \$1,000,000 in transport fees and the City receives no revenue from over 1,800 transports

If the City obtains a COPCN and hires personnel what will they do?

The new personnel will be paramedics and are also certified firefighters. These individuals will staff two ambulances and have the capabilities to assist at fire scenes if needed.

Can the City apply for a COPCN and hold onto it?

The City in applying for a COPCN is setting the timetable for implementation. The COPCN is a commitment to improving the system. Under the County ordinance, the City is obligated to follow through unless denied at the state level.

Will the City use the County Medical Director protocols, etc.?

The City currently uses the County Medical Director and protocols. In fact, the City would hope to create specific programs and carry equipment and drugs with the assistance of the Medical Director for the senior and population of Marco Island. Because of the uniqueness of location, Marco Island could be a medical director test site for the evaluation of potential services before being implemented Countywide.

How can one find out more information?

Please contact the Fire Rescue Department at 239-389-5040 to find out more information or to schedule a group meeting with department personnel to explain the COPCN issue in greater detail.