

Vote YES for EMS

The 324 registered voters of St. James Township will go to the polls in November *not* to decide how BIEMS will be organized going forward, *nor* to vote on whether or not we need ALS service on Beaver Island—***they will decide whether we will continue to have ANY ambulance service on Beaver Island.*** Without the proposed additional funding, ALS certification will be lost, and with it local air ambulance service and about half of the entire BIEMS budget. ***Make no mistake: a “No” vote on the proposed millage will not result in the continuation of EMS the way it has always been—it will instead make it impossible to continue to provide Advanced Life Support services, while at the same time stripping away much of the funding that makes providing even Basic Life Support possible on Beaver Island, leaving us with NO AMBULANCE SERVICE at all!***

The future of emergency medical services on Beaver Island hangs in the balance. Without qualified paramedics, Advanced Life Support (ALS) certification will be lost and island-based Air Ambulance service will no longer be possible. *Nearly half* of current EMS funding comes from air ambulance evacuations. Losing ALS certification would result in that funding being lost, putting the future of even Basic Life Support (BLS) services in grave jeopardy.

Beaver Island EMS has historically been reliant on fully-certified but part-time paramedics working largely as volunteers. Now there is *only one active paramedic left on the island*. Since this spring, paramedic staffing gaps have had to be filled by recruiting off-island paramedics for rotations at market rates, which are about three times as high as what island-based paramedics have been paid . We no longer benefit from paramedics being available who are willing to provide services for 1/3 of what they would receive elsewhere, and the current funding model for BIEMS is insufficient to cover the new costs of operation.

Chances are you know someone who has been positively affected by the timely intervention of Beaver Island’s excellent Emergency Medical Services. As November 8th approaches, take a moment to ***think what might have happened*** if no such services had been available. When you mark your ballot, remember that this isn’t a question of whether or not we should pay more for the outstanding service we’ve come to expect, but ***whether or not we will even have those services at all.***

Voting “Yes” on the EMS millage is ***a vote to preserve the future*** of Emergency Medical Services on Beaver Island.

Bob Anderson
President, Beaver Island Association