

Carroll County Ambulance District Town Hall Meeting Recap

Thank you to everyone who attended our October 13 Town Hall meeting. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss District operations, finances, and the proposed use tax on the November 3, 2026, ballot.

The meeting began with introductions of District Chief/Administrator and Paramedic Robert Donnell, Business Manager Jennifer Hall, Board President Karen Miller, Board members Stacia Cowherd, Wanita Edlow, James Maberry, Phil Henderson, and Chris Woodward, and the EMTs and paramedics in attendance.

Providing service around the clock

Carroll County Ambulance District staffs two ambulances 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Full-time EMTs and paramedics generally work one continuous 48-hour shift each week, followed by five days off. Part-time staff provide additional coverage through 24- to 48-hour shifts as needed. Chief Donnell also works a scheduled 48-hour ambulance shift each week in addition to his administrative responsibilities.

In 2025, the District responded to **1,560 calls**, including 911 emergencies and interfacility transfers from Carroll County Memorial Hospital. Call volume has increased approximately **21.5% since 2020**, and we are on pace to exceed last year's total.

The cost of maintaining ambulance service

The District's 2025 operating expenses totaled **\$2,166,804.60**, an increase of approximately **22.5% since 2020**. Dividing those expenses by our call volume produces an average operating cost of approximately **\$1,389 per call**.

This figure includes the cost of maintaining staffed ambulances and readiness around the clock. It is not the amount each patient is charged or the additional expense of one individual response.

Fuel, medical supplies, ambulances, equipment, and staffing have become more expensive, while reimbursement has not kept pace with those costs.

For 2023–2025, our annual averages were:

- Sales tax revenue: **\$415,071**
- Property tax revenue: **\$599,827**
- Patient billing collections: **\$838,204**
- Combined revenue from these sources: **\$1,853,102**
- Operating expenses: **\$1,894,247**

Average operating expenses exceeded these revenue sources by **\$41,145 annually**. These figures demonstrate the challenge of funding daily operations while also preparing for ambulance replacements, equipment needs, maintenance, and competitive employee compensation.

The District's existing tax structure includes a **0.5% sales tax** and a voter-approved property tax levy of **\$0.30 per \$100 of assessed valuation**, subject to the applicable annual rollback. Sales tax collections are used in calculating that rollback.

Financial oversight and transparency

Residents asked whether the Board of Directors reviews expenditures and financial statements. The Board meets on the **second Tuesday of each month** and receives expenditures, profit-and-loss reports, and bank statements for review.

Missouri law requires ambulance districts to obtain an independent financial audit at least every three years and make the results freely available electronically. Carroll County Ambulance District obtains an independent audit **every year**.

Our 2024 and 2025 independent audit reports are available on our website. The District also underwent a state audit in 2022 and a follow-up review in 2025.

We will begin posting approved budgets and monthly budget updates online as well. We want residents to understand how District funds are used.

Using grants to meet equipment needs

The District has secured substantial grant funding for essential equipment:

- **\$151,873 from the Patterson Family Foundation in 2024** for three cardiac monitors.
- **\$63,977.55 through the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services** for three ventilators.
- **Approximately \$115,000 through a Patterson Family Foundation-supported bi-state Mobile Integrated Healthcare initiative** for the District's SUV, an additional cardiac monitor, a Toughbook, and other program equipment.

The SUV and associated equipment were purchased with grant funds. Our Mobile Integrated Healthcare program provides services in patients' homes outside of emergency responses, helping address health needs and reduce avoidable 911 calls and hospitalizations. The vehicle also supports command responsibilities and District business.

Grants have helped us obtain needed equipment, but they are not a dependable source of funding for ongoing operations.

Understanding the proposed use tax

The proposed use tax is a companion to the District's existing sales tax. It generally applies to taxable goods purchased from out-of-state sellers and brought into or delivered within the District for use, including many online purchases.

For any one taxable purchase, you pay either the applicable sales tax or the applicable use tax—never both. Sales tax generally applies when the seller is required to collect tax on the sale. Use tax generally applies when sales tax was not collected on a taxable purchase from an out-of-state seller. The same purchase is not subject to both taxes.

Seeing "tax" on an online receipt does not necessarily mean sales tax was collected. Many online sellers already collect Missouri state and applicable local **use taxes** at checkout. If approved, the District's use tax would become part of the applicable use tax rate on qualifying purchases, but it would not be added on top of sales tax for the same purchase.

The proposed District rate is **0.5%**, matching our existing sales tax rate. The District's portion would equal:

- **\$0.50 on a \$100 taxable purchase**
- **\$5.00 on a \$1,000 taxable purchase**

Examples of potentially taxable purchases include furniture, equipment, supplies, and other goods ordered from out-of-state sellers. Whether tax applies depends on the transaction and any applicable exemptions.

The proposal would not increase the District's existing sales tax rate or property tax levy. It would establish the District's use tax on qualifying purchases.

How much revenue could it provide?

We do not yet have a reliable forecast of annual use tax collections. To illustrate possible amounts, we compared several percentages with our average annual sales tax revenue:

- An amount equal to **5%** would provide approximately **\$20,754 annually**.
- An amount equal to **10%** would provide approximately **\$41,507 annually**.
- An amount equal to **15%** would provide approximately **\$62,261 annually**.

These percentages are examples—not additional tax rates or guaranteed revenue projections.

Additional revenue could help replace equipment, maintain ambulances, and support the compensation needed to recruit and retain qualified EMTs and paramedics.

Preparing for the future

The District has made significant progress, and we want to preserve that progress. Planning responsibly means addressing today's needs while preparing for future costs, equipment replacements, and staffing demands.

Our goal is to keep dependable ambulance service, lifesaving equipment, and highly trained EMTs and paramedics available for the foreseeable future.

Please review our **Understanding the Use Tax** informational flyer for additional information.

Questions are welcome. Contact the District at **660-542-1808** or email Chief Robert Donnell at **chiefccad@sbcglobal.net**. You can also visit www.carrollcountyambulance.com.

Thank you for your time, your questions, and your continued support of Carroll County Ambulance District. We remain committed to being there when you need us.