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SWEETWATER
C.O.U.N.T.Y

80 WEST FLAMING GORGE WAY, SUITE 109
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15 December 2020

To the Residents of Sweetwater County,

As all of you are keenly aware, the pandemic caused by COVID-19 is causing financial hardship across the country, our state and at home here in Sweetwater county. I know you are feeling the strain in your business and personal lives.

As a county we feel the same strain and as commissioners, elected by you, we have the responsibility to deal with the effects of that financial strain. Unlike the federal government, we must, by statute, approve a balanced budget each year, no matter the circumstances we are dealing with. This year, even with a pandemic, is no exception.

Effective March 31, 2021, Sweetwater County is terminating its contract with Sweetwater Medics and Castle Rock Hospital District to provide ambulance service and the funding associated with that contract.

I, along with a number of others forming a workgroup, have spent a year and a half working on a solution to the ever-increasing expense of providing ambulance service with no good answers. The proposals the group received to continue providing ambulance service ranged from \$1.2 million to \$1.7 million each year with no financial promise of anything but increasing expenses in the future which is unsustainable. This is just the latest attempt to find answers to this challenge. Many others in past commissions have conducted similar work, all resulting in the same answer – pay more money.

In the financial climate we face today and going forward, expending more and more money on services that are not a part of core government is a decision we cannot accept. We are required by law to fund certain aspects of the county and ambulance service, while very much needed, is not one of them.

This is not a statement of dissatisfaction with Sweetwater Medics nor with Castle Rock Hospital District. Both have provided excellent and compassionate service to county residents and many traveling in our county for years. I see their work quite often and am always appreciative and impressed. Rather, it is a statement regarding the financial position of the county and our responsibility as commissioners to deal with our current financial shortfall.

As a commission we understand the vital importance of ambulance service and want it to continue. We ask our elected partners in Rock Springs, Green River and the smaller



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communities throughout our county to join us in shouldering the financial burden and finding solutions to continue this life-saving service. As a county, we cannot do it alone.

We are required by contract to give a 30-day notice of intent to terminate. We hope this notice of more than 90 days provides time to work with partners on a solution to continue providing this much needed service.

Thank you for your support and understanding as we work through the first of what will surely be many difficult decisions.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Smith
Sweetwater County Commissioner

