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Audit faults East Rochester over ambulance relationship

Alan Morrell
Staff writer

The village of East Rochester failed to establish effective controls over its ambulance service, costing the village thousands of dollars, according to an audit performed by the office of state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

The audit, covering the period from June 1, 2007, through March 26, 2009, also showed that the East Rochester Volunteer Ambulance Corp. lost \$89,000 in revenue because ambulance crews responded to only 56 percent of calls within the village.

The problems were because the ambulance corps switched from being a village department to an independent nonprofit agency, but the village still treated the corps as a department, said village administrator Marty D'Ambrose.

That included paying for training and other services.

"We can't give things away (and) let people use village services at no cost," D'Ambrose said.

The audit also noted that as an independent contractor, the ambulance service is responsible for staffing its two ambulances.

Because it did not, it only responded to 56 percent of calls, below the minimum 70 percent called for in a 2008 agreement.

That resulted in the \$89,000 in lost revenue, the audit claimed.

Nicole Hanks of the comptroller's office said the audit was "not damning," but it revealed concerns that need to be addressed.

"Their past relationship is what caused these issues," she said.

D'Ambrose said ambulance crews throughout the county rely on mutual aid, or helping nearby municipalities as needed, which he said the East Rochester corps has done. He also said the audit did not specify a dollar amount for the service-provider expenses.

The village will complete a "corrective-action plan" within 45 days to deal with the concerns, he said.

AMORRELL@DemocratandChronicle.com
