

Item Title: Public Hearing and Approval of a request from North State Medical Transport for a Non-Emergency Ambulance Franchise Renewal (First Reading)

Specific Action Requested:

The Board of Commissioners holds a public hearing to grant a non-emergency ambulance franchise to North State Medical Transport for the operation of a medical transportation service in Wake County, effective March 2, 2026, for a five-year period.

Item Summary:

Purpose: Per County Ordinance 111.04, the Board of County Commissioners may grant a Non-emergency Franchise upon finding that the public will be served by granting the applicant a franchise, consistent with the policy outlined in 111.01.

Background: Private vendors provide non-emergency ambulance transport for patients and medical facilities. This involves transporting patients to and from medical facilities, doctors' appointments, or their homes. These services involve no emergency care.

North State Medical Transport requests issuance of this franchise, subject to the Department of Emergency Medical Services Director's finding of "on-the-ground" compliance of North State Medical Transport with Chapter 111 of the Wake County Code of Ordinances, and all applicable state statutes and regulations.

EMS staff have reviewed North State Medical Transport's application for a non-emergency franchise and have determined that North State Medical Transport's representations are consistent with the requirements of Wake County's ambulance franchise ordinance.

Strategic Plan: This action supports routine County operations.

Fiscal Impact: Award of a non-emergency ambulance franchise represents permission to deliver non-emergency ambulance transportation services and does not involve county subsidies or payments. The County received \$1,680 in FY25 for a one-time application fee to be deposited in the County's General Fund.

Additional Information:

The operation of a non-emergency ambulance service in Wake County requires a franchise to be issued by the Wake County Board of Commissioners. Individual franchises must also comply with the North Carolina Office of EMS, other state, and federal statutes/rules governing ambulance service.

Non-emergency ambulance services provided by ambulance franchises provide a reliable method of serving patients who require scheduled ambulance transport. For example; discharges from hospital to skilled nursing facilities or transport to doctors' appointments.

Once an application is received, it is reviewed within the EMS Department for completeness and compliance with the ordinance. The North State application met all local and state requirements and was appropriately completed.

For more than 20 years, Wake County has chosen to utilize non-emergent ambulance franchises to manage the transportation needs of patients who require an ambulance outside the 911 system. This allows Wake County EMS the ability to focus on the unscheduled emergent needs of our residents.

There are currently seven franchised non-emergency ambulance providers in Wake County, including North State Medical Transport.

Because a franchise ordinance requires two readings, if the Board approves this request at the Commissioners' meeting on February 16, 2026, a second reading and approval will be needed for the Board's March 2, 2026, meeting.

Attachments:

1. Presentation
2. Ordinance Granting Franchise Renewal to North State Medical Transport
3. Wake County, NC Code of Ordinances Chapter 111: Emergency Medical Services and Ambulance Services
4. North State Medical Transport's Schedule of Fees