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## *Uncharted Waters*

It was a simple motion made by a member of the Board of Directors to approve the annual budget for 2019 as presented.

“Seconded.”

“Any discussion?”

“There being none: all in favor of the motion.”

A show of hands...Unanimous.

**Really?** No discussion on something so important?

The reason was that the Finance, Development, and Personnel Committees, working periodically with the full board had labored for nearly a year to refine the process and the numbers. A balanced budget was the final product...at least on paper. Everyone on the board was a participant in its development. There had already been a **lot** of discussion.

Three things remained to achieve a complete success:

1. To convince seven towns to approve at seven Town Meetings a substantial increase in their annual financial support of PAC.
2. To achieve our goal in fundraising from the community at large.
3. Given 1 and 2, to make it happen with astute management from the board and the operations manager.

We ended the year with a balanced budget...by a hair's breadth.

That achievement took a lot of hard work from our manager, our staff, and the board to create a new dynamic that enhanced the availability and efficiency of service with more strongly focused business practices.

Achieving this elusive goal is not like crossing the finish line in a 10k race or even a marathon. It's more like a dream where the finish line is tantalizingly close: you can feel your body yearning for the end, the cool down, the opportunity to just relax. But the finish line becomes the starting line for another year with all the same challenges...like *Groundhog Day* without Bill Murray or Pennsylvania.

But Bill Murray didn't know anything about COVID-19. We had barely begun this year when the rules changed...and are constantly changing. Suddenly it's not just our budget at risk, it is also the health and well-being of our staff who are at

the forefront of the battle with this novel Coronavirus. To a much lesser degree, we as ordinary citizens face the same risks.

The great irony of this new landscape is that, right now, call volume is down. No one wants to be in an ambulance or a hospital if there is any way to avoid it. We have increased our staffing to cover predicted volume based on past years. Revenues are down, but we cannot lay off staff and then expect to have them back when volume increases as COVID-19 approaches its peak. The greater irony is that when the higher call volume comes it may well be extreme, especially for a small service like ours. Revenues will increase but will be eclipsed by overtime costs. It's lose/lose.

We are in uncharted waters with COVID-19. One thing is certain: **We will need your help.**

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Dear Friend,

Never have we seen times like these, but do not fear. We are up to the challenge. Reflect on these words from America's past: 1776, Thomas Paine.

*THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.*

These words capture the sense, the needs that come from the challenges of COVID-19. We as a nation have indeed been challenged before. Your challenge as a citizen is broader than responding to the financial needs of PAC, but our needs are likely to be extreme. If you are a faithful supporter, we need you to dig deeper. If you are an occasional or never-before supporter, **we really do need your help.**

This crisis will touch all in varying degrees. When PAC is called, we will be there. **Please do the same for us.**



Robert Vaughan, President  
Peninsula Ambulance Corps

To learn more about PAC, visit us at  
[www.peninsulaems.org](http://www.peninsulaems.org),  
where you can now donate online.