



# Public Information Meeting

## Unity Ambulance Funding in 2025

**Saturday March 8 | 10:00 AM**

Thorndike Town Office 125 Mt. View Road, Thorndike

**The Issue:** Thorndike is served by the Unity Ambulance Corps. In 2025, if more paid staff is not hired to replace a shrinking volunteer group, the ability to respond and the level of care will be threatened. Without additional funding, the Ambulance Service will be forced to close its doors in the next two years.

For over half a century Unity Ambulance has provided emergency response at no charge to the towns it serves because its staff was largely volunteer. COVID, and the closure of Unity College, have drastically reduced the number of volunteers available, obliging the service to start paying staff.

In 2023, it dug into reserve funds to continue to provide the highest level of coverage (Paramedic) on the highest percentage of calls of any service in the area. However, those reserve funds are quickly dwindling. Beginning in March, 2025, the two volunteers who have provided coverage on 25 to 50% of calls will retire their EMS licenses, leaving a gap in coverage.

### **The Recommended Fix:**

Unity Ambulance asked the *Friends of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for Maine*, an organization dedicated to improving Maine's EMS system, to assess the Ambulance Service and its issues. They formed a project steering group with representatives named by officials of each of the towns served. Jonny Hazard, Thorndike's Local Health Officer, was named by Thorndike.

Over three months, and aided by an EMS expert team, the steering group found that Unity Ambulance can no longer depend on volunteers to staff it. They determined that, without local funding, not only will its doors close in two years but its ability to provide Paramedic-level care will be reduced in 2025. There are already times when the Service is unable to respond at all—and this will happen even more frequently.

The steering group recommends that the towns served should fund Unity Ambulance to hire staff to address these issues. The cost to Thorndike would be \$66,187.89 in 2025. This is a per-resident expense of \$85.51 per capita which is in the mid-range of the ambulance funding rates experienced by other rural towns in Maine. Comparison services reviewed in the study were at \$96 and \$117 per capita. A broad range of per capita costs exists in central and northern Maine.

**The public information meeting is your chance to hear the details from steering group members and to ask your questions!**