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Email Only

Danielle A. Farr Ewing
Clerk of the Council
Council of the City of Shreveport
505 Travis Street
Shreveport, Louisiana 71101

RE: Balentine Ambulance Services, Inc.'s
Appeal to the Shreveport City Council
from Decision to Issue Certificate
of Public Convenience and Necessity
(Our File No. 21-130)

Dear Ms. Ewing:

Our firm represents Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport Academic Medical Center. We understand that the appeal filed by Balentine Ambulance Services, Inc., of the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for nonemergency medical transportation will be heard by the City Council at its meeting on Tuesday, October 12. Pursuant to the Council's Rules and the City Ordinances, these written comments, summarizing the position of our client, are submitted for the Council's consideration and to become part of the record.

Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport Academic Medical Center ("Ochsner") is the only Level One Trauma Center in this area. As such, there is a crucial public need to maintain available beds for trauma patients requiring Level One services. For some time now, Ochsner has had no surplus beds available to treat Level One trauma patients. Obviously, this great public need benefits all persons in the area who might call upon Ochsner to provide this care. When medical care is delayed, people get sicker, it becomes more emergent, further strains all of our resources, and ultimately not only diminishes quality of life for our citizens but creates an unproductive, sick society-affecting our entire community.

When patients at Ochsner can be effectively treated in step-down facilities, the speed at which they could be transported to such facilities determines when that bed can become available for Level One patients. The nonemergency transportation of patients is therefore critical to Ochsner's mission and to the care that the public can receive. This also frees up our Shreveport EMS to focus on 911 calls. The transportation has in the past been provided by Balentine Ambulance Services. However, the services provided by Balentine has been unreliable, slow,

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sporadic, and generally undependable. To attempt to improve Balentine's performance, Ochsner discussed the issue with Balentine's owner and attempted to enter into a contract which outlined the performance requirements necessary to meet the public's needs. When Balentine was offered the opportunity to enter in a contract which outlined the services to be provided by nonemergency transportation provider, Balentine (a) refused, then later, (b) failed to provide a proposal and (c) informed Ochsner that it was unable to formulate a written proposal.

Ochsner made it very clear that it was giving Balentine who had been providing these services the first opportunity to submit a proposal. Through several meetings Ochsner made it clear what its requirements were for the transportation of nonemergency patients. Notwithstanding this clarity in these meetings, no proposal was ever received by Ochsner and the problems with Balentine's services continued and continue to this day.

As a result, Ochsner solicited a proposal from Acadian Ambulance to provide non-emergency medical transportation of patients from Ochsner to other area hospitals and from assisted living and elder care facilities to Ochsner and to return them. This information about the needs of the public was provided to the CAO and, Ochsner believes, was the basis of his decision to issue the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

The certificate was issued based on Balentine's performance and Ochsner's experience with Balentine and based upon Balentine's unwillingness or inability to provide a proposal for these services, as well as the lack of any alternative available to Ochsner. The public will be best served by the Council upholding the decision of the CAO in its issuance of the certificate. The summary of Ochsner's position outlined above will be supported by documents and affidavits which will be introduced at the Council Meeting on Balentine's appeal.

We look forward to presenting this to the Council and satisfying the Council's questions about this matter. In the meanwhile, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours very truly,

Glenn L. Langley

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