Hempstead Village has entered into an agreement with North Shore University Hospital for emergency ambulance and medical transportation services during a six-month trial period starting in June.

The village board unanimously approved the agreement last week after complaints from Mayor Wayne J. Hall.

When village police call for Nassau police department EMT services, only one EMT responds. That means a village police officer has to drive the ambulance to the hospital because the EMT must assist the patient, Hall said. The village receives about 4,500 to 5,000 calls for help a year, he said.

"This was a decision on our part to stop that," Hall said last week, adding county EMT services are provided through tax dollars. "Having a police officer become an ambulance driver is nonsense . . . This is a quality-of-life issue because we are keeping cops here in the village."

Nassau Police First Deputy Commissioner Thomas C. Krumpter said the department's ambulance staffing policy is "very efficient" and has been in place since the 1970s. The Emergency Ambulance Bureau -- which Krumpter said answers more than 60,000 calls per year -- has 28 ambulances during the day and 20 overnight, according to police spokesman Det. Vincent Garcia.

"We believe that we provide services that are second to none," Krumpter said Thursday, adding it would cost an additional $17 million to $20 million per year to staff ambulances with two people. "Hempstead is not getting any service that is different from anywhere else."

Hall said the trial period was offered by North Shore at no cost and will start June 1 to coincide with the fiscal 2012-13 budget. After the trial ends, North Shore would bill a patient's insurance company $400 to $600, depending on the services provided in the ambulance and the distance traveled to the hospital, Hall said.

"If you can't pay, then they are not going to pursue it. They would just write it off," Hall said. "It is not going to cost the village anything."

A dedicated ambulance would be available from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and would be stationed in the village near the fire department headquarters, Hall said. The trial period would help
determine if more ambulances are needed, and if so, on what days and times. He expects the response time to be less than five minutes.

"After the six months, if both of us are satisfied, we would continue for another year," Hall said. "If we are not happy with this ambulance company, we would fall back to Nassau County."