

**OFFICE OF SELECTMEN
6 HOLLAND STREET
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MOULTONBOROUGH, NH 03254**

Selectmen's Work Session, 4 P.M.

January 23, 2014

MINUTES

Selectmen: Joel R. Mudgett, Chair, Jonathan W. Tolman, Edward J. Charest, Christopher P. Shipp, Russell C. Wakefield; Town Administrator, Carter Terenzini.

1. Joel called the meeting to Order at 4:04 p.m.
2. Code of Conduct - Section 9: Carter reviewed some changes from the draft of 01/14 as discussed on 01/17. Various means of how to deal with a complaint about a BoS member ranging from having the BoS do it, having an independent counsel do it, and having the Town Moderator do it with the advice and guidance of Town Counsel. The consensus was to have an independent counsel appointed by Town Counsel undertake the review and prepare a set of recommendations for the BoS to accept or reject in their entirety.
3. Firefighter Vacancy: In filling the vacancy (which currently requires an EMT-Basic) Chris expressed his belief that we should respond with the highest level of service which would call for a paramedic. Chief David Bengtson said it was the consensus of the officers that they also would prefer the highest level possible last. He said the hire was an EMT-Intermediate and thought the position could be advertised as now established giving preference to higher levels of certification. The department's schedule, Monday through Friday (8 hours/day) is different from other departments (4 days on 2 off or 24 hour shifts) and there is no opportunity for advancement or overtime. The Chief said that between the coverage we have with Stewarts' Ambulance and in-house, he was comfortable with the levels of service we have now. He felt strongly that we would have trouble with retention, as paramedics are a valued commodity. It is his rational to stay with what we have which does not preclude those with higher certifications from applying. He foresaw attraction and retention issues if we move the certification levels up. Chris agreed with the Chief on the attraction and retention issues at our current pay/benefits and thought they might have to be revisited. He thought that if we are going to have staff, then they should have them function at the highest level. Chris went on to say that we are building an apparatus plan around back to back EMS calls and we should use the same philosophy with our staff. Chief Bengtson thought that there is a higher likelihood of having 2 ambulances available now that Stewarts has the Tuftonboro contract. The occurrence of "gaps" in coverage that used to happen are far fewer with the Tuftonboro contract. Chris agreed, but said that the purpose of the two ambulances is because there is that much more area to cover. He felt that we have the staff already, and the Chief was right to tell us about the added costs. This was more about an upgrade in skill levels. Joel said that there will be times when our staff are on vacation or the like and we are not getting the added coverage it might seem, even if we upgraded the skill levels. He added that in discussing our ambulance contract the owner of the firm spoke to retention problems as his EMTs often aren't busy enough to stay interested. Chris agreed there are some obstacles in attraction and retention, but that some people like the 5 day schedule and we need to give people the best service. Jon said that based on that theory, we should have an E.R. doctor on staff, but we have to make judgment calls as to what is the most practical approach. Joel asked what kind of person would they attract and would they just be looking for a start and then moving on. He agreed that we will have attraction/retention issues because we don't have the volume of calls to keep them interested. Russ said this is the first step into going into the

ambulance business and he didn't want to go there. Jon said there is no guarantee this paramedic will even be there to fill in the gaps in Stewarts' paramedic coverage. Russ was concerned over a revolving door of staffing. Chris said that the employment agreement could cover this as we do for others. He reiterated that this isn't creating a new position, just upgrading the skills of the people that we do have. People want the most well trained and equipped person showing up. He asked why we seem to do that for the fire service, but there seems to be such reluctance to do so for the EMS side of the service. He said he simply wanted to "up the ante" and provide a better service. Jon said that Chris might be able to convince him to upgrade if we were doing it on our contract side for 24/7 for the two ambulances and not just 40 hours a week with a staff person. He thought the ambulance service was a better way to get there if that's what we want to do. Chris said he wasn't necessarily talking about the first call; it is the back to back second call. Ed said that we've gone through this a number of times in deciding how to set up the Stewart Ambulance requirements and he hasn't seen anything that has changed that. Chief Bengtson spoke to possible incentives for existing call firefighters to upgrade their skill levels. Chris said it has nothing to do with Stewarts', they are a great service. He is simply looking to upgrade our service, especially on the second call. The Chief said we have taken a number of steps in upgrading our EMS service and other good first response steps such as having police cruisers equipped with AEDs, reducing response times by keeping Stewarts ambulance garaged at the Public Safety Building (PSB), adding a second ambulance at the PSB, adding coverage requirements for more paramedics on peak summer weekends, and having higher overall shift coverage rates for paramedics. Chris said Stewarts also considers how this plays into their transports. He acknowledged the Chief and others had done a good job in reducing response times, but said we are still a long travel time from the hospital. Jon said he didn't think he could be convinced to upgrade to paramedic staffing. He repeated his view that the best way to go, if we wanted to upgrade, was an add-on of \$40,000 to Stewarts. Russ agreed, we would get more highly qualified coverage through Stewarts without having to pay the other added expenses (equipment, annual maintenance and supplies replacing, and possible salary upgrades). He thought that money spent on upping our staffing was not money well spent. Jon asked how many of our call firefighters are paramedics and learned that we have 4 who were career firefighters with other departments. Chief Bengtson said as with fires same for EMS, earlier the intervention the better. Chris said that although we have paramedics, we don't equip to that level. They show up with their hands tied as they can't function at the paramedic level. This is all about risk reduction and if we can upgrade our skills and buy some equipment, then we can't go wrong. Joel thought that by the time you are done with \$70,000 of equipment and more training, he found it hard to think that this is the way to go. Chris understood the sense of urgency in filling the position, but he is not sure everyone understood what a paramedic brings to the table. Jon suggested that perhaps we should at least put the equipment (paramedic level) on the two trucks. Chris agreed that this needed to be done regardless of the decision on how to fill the vacancy or upgrade the level of service. He said that regardless of a decision on Stewarts, this upgrade in our level of the person hired would then complete the picture. Carter said he would prefer to advertise the position based upon a firm decision, but wondered if we might advertise as now approved (EMT Basic) with a notation that higher levels of certification were preferred and the salary would be dependent upon qualifications. We could then see what we get. Chris didn't think we should advertise for a basic level and felt we should at least be at an intermediate level. Joel was concerned that if we upgrade the position we do have a current Firefighter with an Intermediate certification and we could not bring someone in at a higher rate of pay without upgrading that pay also. Carter suggested we upgrade the job description to an EMT Intermediate at the current salary and advertise noting we would be undergoing a salary survey which could then deal with the issue. Joel asked the Board if they wanted to add \$62,000 to the Chief's budget for paramedic level equipment.

The Selectmen recessed at 5:20 p.m. and reconvened at 5:25 p.m.

After continuing discussion of annual costs, inventory control, and liability it was determined to hold a special workshop on January 30th, 7 p.m. to review the needed salary, initial and annual operations and maintenance costs in order to make a final decision prior to the budget public hearing. Discussion of the apparatus plan was placed on hold for that or a future meeting.

4. DPW's Public Sand Bin: The Board reviewed a memo from the DPW Director/Road Agent explaining issues he was having with the sand bin in which large amounts were being taken by pick-up trucks, trailers, and hopper sanders and commercial users. He said he thought it necessary to establish a policy regarding the sand bin use by residents. He reported that most communities he surveyed have signage limiting the town sand bin to residents only, prohibited commercial use, and limits the withdrawals to 5-6 5 gallon pails per resident. The consensus was to approve a restriction to residents and taxpayers in 6 (equivalent) 5 gallon pails at any one time. In a brief discussion of possible penalties the Town Administrator said it had been found that merely posting such a sign eliminated about 80% of the abuse. The DPW Director will be advised to proceed to obtain such signage and a formal vote will be scheduled for 02/06.

5. Sanding of Driveways: The Board reviewed a memo from the DPW Director/Road Agent explaining that when he took over the position there had been in place a so-called "elderly driveway sanding list". This list had been created informally by the VNS for those receiving VNS services, Meals on Wheels home deliveries, financial ability and the like. He has recently received several calls from people seeking to be added to the list and was seeking direction as to how this list is be managed in the future. Options cited were to discontinue the service as it is completely illegal to expend public monies on private property. A second option was to have someone establish the criteria to be on the list and then an agent of the BoS would provide the list to the DPW. The Town Administrator suggested a third option of continuing the service to those on the list, but cease adding any names to it, which would extinguish the service over time. After discussion of the legality of the service and the liability the Town was exposing itself to, it was decided to inform the DPW Director to cease adding names immediately and that the BoS would place the item on its agenda of 02/06 for a formal vote to inform the current recipients of the service that it would be ceased as of the end of this winter.

6. Annual Report: Carter gave an update on the number of pages that had been submitted which was far in excess of our contract and the need to pare some of the material back. He also wanted to confirm that the annual reports of non-town entities (federal/state legislators, funded agencies, etc.) would continue to not be included. The consensus was to continue to be our practice. The question arose to the inclusion of the CIPC report and the Board was advised it was proposed to reproduce it in house as we did for the ABC report. With respect to the CIPC vote being on the warrant, there had been a prior legal opinion that this was not allowed by statute. The TA asked if the Board wanted him to have Town Counsel revisit that question and there was no consensus to do so.

7. Adjournment: There being no further business the Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Approved

Respectfully Submitted Date
 Carter Terenzini, Town Administrator