



TOWN OF NORTH HAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
SELECT BOARD
WORKSHOP APPROVED MINUTES

WORKSHOP – MAY 17, 2013 10:30 AM
MARY B. HERBERT CONFERENCE ROOM

1. **Non-Public Session Pursuant to RSA 91:A-3 II (d) - Executive Conference Room**

2. **Call to Order**

Chair Maggiore called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM. Those in attendance were Selectman Wilson, Selectman Miller, Town Administrator Apple, Chief Page, Chief Cote and Public Works Director Hubbard.

Chair Maggiore stated that the Select Board had just exited from a Non-Public Session.

Motion by Chair Wilson to seal the minutes of the Non-Public Session under RSA 91:A-3 II (d). Seconded by Selectman Miller. Motion carries 3-0.

3. **New Business**

2.1 Mutual Aid Discussion

Chair Maggiore stated that the Select Board has called this meeting in order to get a better understanding on how mutual aid is administered and become more educated on the topic.

Town Administrator Apple stated that he would like each of the department heads to give a presentation of 30 minutes or less.

Chief Cote stated that the Town of North Hampton is part of several mutual aid groups. The Seacoast Chief's Mutual Aid District is made up of 31 communities as well as a few government agencies. North Hampton was voted into a mutual aid district by vote of the town in 1963.

Each mutual aid community sets up their own mutual aid "cards" based on their needs. North Hampton has four run cards; non hydrant, hydrant, brush fire and mobile homes. Run cards are established by the Fire Chief and a committee of members from the department. The run cards are established so that the fire department can mitigate any issue as quickly as possible.

Selectman Miller stated that his whole point in this inquiry is that mutual aid is not mutual, and would like to get to the bottom of why it isn't. He further stated that he wanted to see the data on how many times we were asked for mutual aid, and how many times we received mutual aid from any of the surrounding towns.

Selectman Miller stated that North Hampton appears to be a "donor town" as far as mutual aid is concerned and wanted to know if that is a way that the town should be run. He further stated that the problem that he has is

with our fire department participating in fires in other towns more often than we receive back, and if we get more than we receive it is a burden to North Hampton taxpayers.

Selectman Wilson stated that the fundamental question is if we weren't operating a full time fire department at the caliber we are, would Stratham be able to continue to have a volunteer fire department. They have a larger, total assessed value than the Town of North Hampton, a larger population, fewer mobile homes, and more high value and large homes.

Chief Cote stated that he felt they could as they would adjust their run cards accordingly.

Selectman Wilson stated therefore if that is the case, Stratham would simply shift the burden of response to other towns having a full time fire department so that they can continue to maintain their volunteer fire department. He further stated that Stratham is actively promoting commercial development along Route 33 and still plans to maintain a volunteer fire department.

Selectman Wilson stated that Stratham is essentially playing upon North Hampton's "insurance policy" and are getting it for free without paying a premium. He further stated that it is not just Stratham; it is any community that is not investing a proportional amount in their own "insurance policy."

Selectman Wilson stated that if a town the size of Stratham, which is bigger than North Hampton, can get by with a volunteer fire department, why can't North Hampton.

Selectman Miller stated that he wants to find a fair way to deal with mutual aid for those towns who do not wish to have a full time department. He further stated that the situation has not been fair for a very long time. The town needs to find a fair way so that we are not exporting our fire department to other towns for the purpose of taking care of the things that they do not wish to take care of and be responsible for.

Chair Maggiore asked if the mutual aid contract could be reworded so that there is some compensation. The reason the issue has come up is because there is a budget situation, and the town is still bound by the contract ethically, legally and morally. Chair Maggiore would like to raise this question to the appropriate board members to see if the contract can be revisited to allow for compensation.

Selectman Wilson stated that the original mutual aid contract that is now 50 years old, has not reflected changes in the fire service and has resulted in towns that are not making an equitable investment in fire protection because they don't have to because of the original mutual aid agreement that is now outdated.

Town Administrator Apple stated that this is a very complicated issue with a lot of different cost components that have to be allocated across competitive functional areas. He further stated that it would make sense to get someone with accounting experience and maybe even a forensic background to put all of the pieces into the puzzle it would make the argument stronger in order to quantify the costs.

Chief Page stated he went to Greenland, Rye and Stratham to get mutual aid numbers for the past year. North Hampton provided Greenland with 29 mutual aid calls, and 31 were received; Rye was provided 56 mutual aid calls, and 70 were received; Stratham was provided 17 mutual aid calls, and 9 were received.

Chief Page reviewed Statutes and Procedures used to carry out the mission of mutual aid from a law enforcement standpoint.

Chief Page provided the Select Board with mutual aid data from May 1, 2012 through April 30, 2013 that included overtime costs, percentage of total calls for service, as well as percentage of mutual aid provided based on total calls for service.

Chief Page reviewed the following RSA's pertaining to mutual aid:

- RSA 105:13 Current Extended Authority Statute
- RSA 106-C:1 Current Definitions Under
- RSA 106-C:2 Provisions Effective During Emergency
- RSA 106-C:3 Inter-Community Police Assistance
- RSA 106-C:3-a Inter-Community Special Reaction Team Assistance for Critical Incident Emergency
- RSA 106-C:4 Powers, Rights, Privileges, Immunities
- RSA 106-C:5 Loss, Damage or Expense
- RSA 106-C:6 Liability for Acts of Omissions
- RSA 106-C:7 Reimbursement for Salaries and Expenses
- RSA 106-C:8 Donation of Services
- RSA 106-C:9 Recall from Service Outside of North Hampton
- RSA 106:C:10 Reciprocal Relations with Counties or Municipalities
- RSA 106:I:1 Mass Critical Incidents; Requests for Response; Authority of Officers
- RSA 106-D:1 New England State Police Compact (NESPC)

Selectman Wilson stated that the police department mutual aid agreements are significantly different from fire and the interplay is much more balanced.

Selectman Wilson exited the meeting at 11:30 AM due to a prior commitment.

Public Works Director Hubbard stated that the Public Works Department has a state wide mutual aid program, and is used on an as needed basis. He further stated that in the five years he has been employed with the Town of North Hampton he has never asked for mutual aid, and has never been asked to respond to mutual aid.

Mr. Hubbard stated that it costs \$25 per year for the Town of North Hampton to participate in the mutual aid program with the funds used to offset the price of printing the mutual aid manuals. The manuals help communities by listing what each community has for resources.

Selectman Miller asked Mr. Hubbard to get the name of the mutual aid group that the public works department belongs to.

Chair Maggiore asked if anyone in attendance would like to offer any comments.

Charles Gallant, 112 Exeter Road, asked Chief Cote if North Hampton could effectively and efficiently work a multiple alarm fire in the non hydrant district without calling Stratham, Hampton, Hampton Falls or Greenland.

Charles Gallant 112 Exeter Road, asked if can north Hampton effectively and efficiently work a multiple alarm fire alone.

Chief Cote stated that "no."

Richard Bettcher Lovering Road, stated as a water commissioner the water line runs to rye not connected with Stratham .

Meeting adjourned at 12:10

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Facella, Administrative Assistant

