

**STAFFING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES – October 16, 2013**

1:00 p.m. – Selectmen’s Meeting Room, 63 Main Street, Northborough, MA

Members Present: Dawn Rand, Selectman
Bill Pantazis, Selectman
Elaine Kelly, Chair, Appropriations Committee
Richard Smith, Financial Planning Committee
Susan LaDue, Personnel Board
John Coderre, Town Administrator
Kimberly Foster, Assistant Town Administrator

Also Present: David Durgin, Fire Chief

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Pantazis moved the Committee vote to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2013 meeting; Ms. Kelly seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Presentation of Fire Department Staffing Request, Chief David Durgin

Fire Chief David Durgin presented an overview of the services currently provided by the Fire Department, including emergency medical response, advanced life support ambulance services, search, rescue and fire suppression services, fire prevention and plan review, as well as natural/manmade disaster and hazardous materials planning and response. The Chief referenced the detailed materials included with his October 9 memo to the Committee, highlighting current and historic staffing levels as they relate to workload and the Department’s ability to meet industry standards for safety and level of service. He also discussed a number of workload, staffing and performance measures whereby he believes the Town is falling behind relative to a set of comparison communities.

Chief Durgin indicated a need to double the staffing levels from the current four per shift (one Captain and three firefighters) to eight per shift (one Captain and seven firefighters) in order to continue the level and mix of services currently provided, to meet industry response and safety standards, and to provide adequate coverage if multiple incidents occur at the same time.

Following the Chief’s presentation, the Committee asked questions. The point was made that the Fire Department’s staffing needs are fundamentally a result of the high level of service the Department provides and the policy decision made in 2000 to provide in-house paramedic services, or Advanced Life Support Services (ALS). The Chief

indicated that the Town has struggled since its inception to meet the staffing required for ALS.

For clarification, the Town Administrator pointed out that the need for additional Fire Department staffing is not a direct result of the recent development of Avalon Bay and Northborough Crossing. The Chief indicated the department responded to 200 total calls to those developments in the last year, or less than one call per day. While the growth has added some service calls, the request for eight positions is rooted in the level of service being provided and not the recent development. Somewhere along the line the discussion regarding staffing levels resulted in the misperception by some that the request to double the departmental staffing is the direct result of the new mall.

After a brief discussion with the Committee about the budgetary impact of adding staff, including the possibility of seeking a SAFER grant and adjusting ambulance billing rates, the Chief stated that a compromise position could be to add five more firefighter/paramedics to get to six personnel per shift rather than eight, and to add a full-time Assistant Chief and full-time Fire Prevention Officer.

The Committee thanked the Chief for his presentation and indicated that they will be in touch with follow-up questions or requests for more information, as appropriate.

Next Meeting Date

Wednesday, October 23, 2013, 1:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at which time the Committee will hear presentations from the Police Chief, Library Director and Senior Center Director.

Adjournment

2:20 p.m. – Ms. Kelly moved the Committee vote to adjourn; Mr. Pantazis seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Foster

Documents used during meeting:

1. October 16, 2013 Meeting Agenda
2. October 2, 2013 Staffing Committee Meeting Minutes
3. October 9, 2013 Memo to the Staffing Committee from Chief Durgin