

SELECTBOARD MEETING

Minutes

December 6, 2018

7:00pm EMFD Station 2

JOINT MEETING OF THE CALAIS SELECTBOARD, EAST MONTPELIER SELECTBOARD and EMFD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Financial Review, Budget Discussion and General Update

Attending: Calais Selectboard Members: Denise Wheeler, Sharon Winn Fannon, Clif Emmons and Rose Pelchuck; East Montpelier Selectboard Members: Seth Gardner, Gene Troia, Kim Swasey, Carl Etnier and Amy Willis; Bruce Johnson, East Montpelier Town Administrator; EMFD Board Members: Ty Rolland, Chief, Toby Talbot, President, Sandy Conti, Jason Cote-Wong, and Albert Petrella, Board Members; Paul Guare, Officer; and Judy Woodbeck, EMFD Treasurer/Administrative Assistant.

Seth Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm for the East Montpelier Selectboard.

Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm for the Calais Selectboard and advised there would be a few more agenda items for the Calais Selectboard at the conclusion of this Joint Meeting. Introductions were made.

Financial Review – Toby Talbot began with the review of FY 2019 financials on the balance sheet from 7/1/2018 to 10/31/2018. Providing ambulance service to the Town of Marshfield added \$40,000.00 per year in revenue. Toby reported \$14,324.14 was used from the Contingency Fund for the engine replacement on the 2012 Ford ambulance (Rescue 4). Ambulance revenue will replenish the fund going forward. Bruce Johnson commented that a year ago we agreed to not take from the Contingency Fund till the end of the year and see if you really needed to use the Contingency Fund. Toby Talbot responded by saying EMFD has already been doing it the other way. Bruce said take care of it all at the end of the fiscal year.

Bookkeeping services are being provided by (Lela McCaffrey from) Fothergill, Seagle & Valley each month. They are doing more work for EMFD and it will continue to cost more.

Ambulance collection revenue for FY2018 totaled \$116,274.06, noting 56% of the calls were Medicare participants and 21% were Medicaid carriers. These calls do not pay the amount of the billed service but a much lesser amount. The amount of ambulance revenue received so far for FY2019 is \$48,772.12.

The proposed FY20 budget was reviewed with notable increases in insurance of \$1,400, dispatch service of \$6,400 and salary of \$10,000. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding salary for ambulance staffing. The proposed FY20 budget includes \$230,000 for staffing. Toby Talbot explained the ambulance service is not fully staffed. EMFD estimates they are at about \$230,000 for salary costs. The volunteer part of the service is eventually disappearing with the hardest time to staff is for daytime shifts, Toby noted. Toby went on to say if the ambulance was fully staffed, seven days a week (using a model scenario he provided) it would cost \$284,804 and \$314,860 for paramedic staffing. The department is moving closer to an all paid ambulance service. Seth Gardner summed it up by saying we should plan on a \$10,000 increase in the salary line item for the next five years to hit the \$284,804 projected cost. The service is costing more money.

Ty Rolland stated to expect a 9% increase every year in the cost of dispatching. Ty noted EMFD is at the end of a 5-year contract, Capitol West just did a million dollar upgrade to equipment and they are trying to get more towns to join Capitol West.

Sharon Winn Fannon noted overall the proposed budget has a 4% increase; Bruce Johnson said it's 7.6% increase. Sharon asked if EMFD can cut the budget to a 3% increase and Ty Rolland

responded by saying no he couldn't. Ty already cut \$6,000 from the budget by removing hose testing and the ambulance tax line items.

Denise Wheeler commented the average person is lucky if they are getting 2.7% increase (cost-of-living) increase. Sharon inquired if EMFD is part of an advocacy association to address issues, including trying to increase the payment percentage from Medicaid. Ty Rolland said "Yes, the Vermont Ambulance Association and they got hit with an ambulance tax on the revenue we bring in."

The updated Capital Plan was not ready for this meeting to be reviewed. Toby said it will be ready next week.

Rescue 4 Motor Replacement – this ambulance had a blown motor and was replaced as previously discussed with the funds coming out of the Contingency Fund.

Plainfield Ambulance Contract - the 3-year contract for ambulance service for the Town of Plainfield expires June 30, 2019 and is up for renewal.

Marshfield Ambulance Contract – the 1-year contract for ambulance service for the Town of Marshfield is up for renewal. Both Plainfield and Marshfield are served by the Plainfield Fast Squad, a trained group of First Responders.

Schools – Fire Prevention Program at Calais Elementary School was held this fall. Calais Elementary kindergarten and 3rd graders will be at EMFD on December 19th beginning at 9:30 am for the annual Christmas giving program where they give the nonperishable food items they have collected and make holiday cookies together for the Christmas baskets.

A major search drill was held at U-32 recently and Ty Rolland reported it went very well.

EMFD General Update – reported by Ty Rolland, Chief:

The new defibrillator is in service.

Rescue 2 Loan was discussed.

Three students are going to EMT classes at present.

Exterior building painting is expected in FY20 in order to properly maintain Station 2.

Door jamb repairs were made by Connor Contracting with the invoice being paid by the fund balance in the original bond account. The door jambs had deteriorated and needed replacement.

New Junior Firefighter, Justin Orr from East Montpelier has joined the department. He is the grandson of Durward Lamb, adjoining landowner to EMFD.

Paramedics – EMFD has five paramedics with two in class at present. The Vermont EMS District 6 runs the classes.

Ty reported EMFD has several new members and EMS staff over the past six months, noting more and more members live out of town, which does impact response time.

Call Log and Ambulance Run statistics were reviewed through November 21st.

ISO – Toby Talbot reported the new ISO rating score is 6/6Y, down a little from the last score of five, with 1 being the best score and 10 the worse score. Toby explained the ISO changed the scorecard they use to determine the rate, nothing has really changed. Toby will check with the ISO person to see if the new score relates to both Calais and East Montpelier.

Note: The ISO (Insurance Service Office) provides this score, often called the "ISO fire score," to homeowners insurance companies. Insurance companies buy the data from ISO. An ISO fire insurance rating, also referred to as a fire score or Public Protection Classification (PPC), is a score

from 1 to 10 that indicates how well-protected your community is by the fire department.

Holiday Gift Baskets – EMFD put together and delivered 15 Thanksgiving baskets and is collecting nonperishable food items for the Christmas gift baskets. If anyone would like to help, Ty welcomes the help; info has been posted on Front Porch Forum looking for families in need. Ty Rolland does get names from the schools and noted teachers make many things for those in need.

Community Advocacy Program for aging population - Ty is trying to come up with information for seniors, like a 211 Service, to help them find resources available to them. Ty is seeing the current systems too cumbersome. Ty encouraged the Selectboards to have someone in town educated to know what services are available. Denise Wheeler talked about using the Town Service Officer as a resource. Ty suggested perhaps a community health and wellness check can be done to check someone's blood pressure and save them a trip to the doctor. Toby reminded us that we can't rely on state government, so the towns need to be aware that we have people in need in our communities. Sharon Winn Fannon thought it was a good idea to rejuvenate the Town Service Officer position.

The Joint Meeting with the East Montpelier Selectboard and EMFD adjourned by them at 8:55 pm. The Calais Selectboard continued with a few more items as follows:

Year End Bonuses – As previously discussed at prior meetings, the Selectboard is in favor of giving an end of the year bonus to employees. Denise explained she researched further the idea of gift cards for the road crew and town staff, and learned that in fact gift cards are taxable and therefore more complicated than the Selectboard expected in its earlier conversation. Sharon Fannon made the motion and Clif Emmons seconded to give bonuses in the amount of \$375.00 before with-holdings to each person who has served on the road crew, office staff, and the Selectboard recording secretary for at least three months with half that amount going to Ed Rowell and Dana Houppi since they are part time; the motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Town Auditor Position – Denise Wheeler reported the town attorney has advised the town auditor cannot be the assistant town clerk, as those two positions are in conflict.

Sharon Fannon made a motion to adjourn at 9:12 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Pelchuck, Selectboard Member

Approved by the Selectboard at the 1/28/2019 meeting