

SELECTBOARD MEETING
Approved Minutes

December 4, 2014

7:00pm EMFD Station 2

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

Quarterly Financial Review, FY '16 Budget and Capital Plan Meeting

Attending: Calais Selectboard Members: Denise Wheeler, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot and Rose Pelchuck; East Montpelier Selectboard Members: Seth Gardner, Carl Etiner, Casey Northrup, Steve Sparrow; EMFD Board Members: Ty Rolland, Chief, Bill Amell, President, Greg Pelchuck, Vice President, Kim Ingraham, Treasurer, Albert Petrella and Rick Barstow; Mike Garand, East Montpelier Road Foreman and Bruce Johnson, East Montpelier Town Administrator.

Denise Wheeler, Chair, called this meeting of the Calais Selectboard to order at 7:15pm. Ty Rolland welcomed everyone and provided an overview of the topics for discussion.

Station 1 - Ty Rolland noted the Town of East Montpelier and EMFD have been discussing sharing the use of Station 1 on Templeton Road for equipment storage for the Highway Department. Modifications will have to be made to the building to accommodate the 31-foot long road grader and the excavator. Ty noted the EMFD Membership has approved sharing the space and a User Agreement is in the works to spell out how the space will be used, maintained and costs divided.

Mike Garand spoke about the intentions of the EM Highway Department to use Station 1 since it has unused space and is adjacent to the Town Highway Garage. Mike would like to open up the backside of the newer side of the building in order to put this equipment under shelter and ultimately save taxpayers money by not having to build an addition on to the Highway Garage. The renovation costs would be paid for by the Town of East Montpelier and detailed in the User Agreement. Mike, a former 30+-year member of EMFD, was very clear about using only a portion of the building as storage and not a maintenance shop in order to relieve any rumors about taking over the Station in total.

Budget Narrative 2015-2016 – A letter detailing various areas of the proposed budget by EMFD Treasurer, Kim Ingraham, was reviewed. The towns have not yet received the annual audit report. Ty Rolland explained that although the audit firm was engaged in July, the audit firm didn't realize there was a firm deadline in the contract. The auditors were at EMFD in October, said they were all set, and then just recently sent a letter asking for more information. EMFD just received the audit yesterday, December 3, 2014, and has not had a chance to review it, although the audit firm had no recommendations to make. A draft copy was then given to each Selectboard Chair.

The rates for Capital West Dispatching are going up considerably. Ty explained there will be two dispatchers on duty each day until midnight; one overnight and they created a supervisor position over all the dispatchers. Calais receives a separate bill from Capital West in addition to paying part of the EMFD line item for dispatching services. That rate is going up as well.

Ambulance Billing Historic Collection Rates were reviewed since the ambulance service began in 2010 (FY 2011). The collection rate for this fiscal year so far is 74% and overall since 2010 is 74.73%. EMFD contracts with a certified ambulance-billing specialist in Barre City to bill the ambulance service calls and is very competent in this area to get the most revenue for each call. Ty noted after this person bills the calls for six months, then EMFD continues to try to collect the collectable outstanding balances. Everyone is very well aware of the fact that most insurance carries don't pay the full amount billed, just a portion of the originally billed amount (the remainder is uncollectable except for co-pay amounts). It was agreed the collection rate of 74% is very good.

EMFD Capital Plan (FY 2014-2025) – The proposed EMFD Capital Plan for the next ten years was discussed. The income stream to support the capital plan comes from ambulance revenue, projected to be \$70,000.00 per year for the duration. NFPA standards plan for a 20-year life use from an engine or pumper. The current pumper is a 1994 and the capital plan indicates replacement thereof in 2018. Toby Talbot explained the price range for a new pumper is \$325,000.00 to \$425,000.00 now; therefore \$400,000.00 is a good estimate for the cost in four years. Both towns will be asked to support this purchase since there will not be enough in the capital plan to pay for it. At the October 16th meeting, it was agreed to review the updated EMFD Capital Plan, then bring it back to their respective Selectboard meetings for approval.

Proposed Ambulance and Fire Budgets FY 2016 – The EMFD proposed budget for fiscal year 2016, beginning July 1, 2015, was reviewed and discussed. The ambulance budget included increases in equipment repairs and \$15,000.00 was added to the salary line item to put a second paid staff person on two to three days per week in order to keep service levels up and provide relief for those individuals that routinely respond to calls from their businesses. Corresponding payroll taxes was adjusted up as well. Ty Rolland has a pool of 14 qualified staff members to cover the increase-staffing request. Medical supplies are up as Ty Rolland explained new infection control protocols from the CDC and Vermont Department of Health. The department had to learn and implement new protocols to decontaminate in light of Ebola threats. The ambulance budget went up 9% (\$20,950.00) overall but since Plainfield has a fixed contract price, the increase for Calais and East Montpelier is 14.5%. EMFD will contribute \$15,000.00 from the Contingency Fund on the income side of the ambulance budget.

The fire budget reflects increases in dispatching, hose testing, personal gear replacement (much gear has been replaced recently) and dry hydrants. Grants have been received for dry hydrants and this is for matching funds necessary to obtain the grants. The fire budget went up 5% (\$7,951.00).

Call Statistics – Call volumes and ambulance transport figures were reviewed. The total number of calls is about the same as last year and Ty Rolland predicts it will stay about the same. Fire prevention education and inspecting burn permit locations Ty believes may be the leading cause of fewer property losses in the community. Regular fire safety reminders are posted on Front Porch Forum. School children have been educated on fire prevention and take those messages home. Ty spoke about the different types of building materials aiding fire prevention/suppression.

Other Business:

- The recent 911 communication failure was discussed. Ty Rolland explained what happened and what working system was in place at the time. Southern Vermont was hardest hit and there was nothing we could do locally Ty said.
- As mentioned at the October 16th meeting, EMFD received a Communication Grant for \$8,500.00 to install a repeater near Station 1 on Templeton Road. Ty noted it is still a work in progress.
- Charitable giving at the holidays: EMFD put together and distributed eight Thanksgiving food baskets this year and collections are underway for nonperishable food items and funds for Christmas baskets for Calais and East Montpelier residents.
- Paramedic Level of Service – Dr. Daniel Wilson, EMS District 6 Medical Director, already gave his blessing on stepping up to a paramedic level of service, which will enhance patient care. EMFD has three paramedics on staff but cannot perform at the medic level without the State license.
- There will not be a Quarterly Financial Review meeting in January 2015.

Toby Talbot made a motion to adjourn at 9:05pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rose Pelchuck