

SELECTBOARD MEETING
Approved Minutes

April 16, 2015

7:00pm EMFD Station 2

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

Quarterly Financial Review

Attending: Calais Selectboard Members: Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot and Rose Pelchuck; East Montpelier Selectboard Members: Seth Gardner, Carl Etiner; EMFD Board Members: Ty Rolland, Chief, Bill Amell, President, Albert Petrella and Rick Barstow; Kim Ingraham, Treasurer; and Bruce Johnson, East Montpelier Town Administrator.

Scott Bassage called this Continued Meeting of the Calais Selectboard to order at 7:10pm.
Ty Rolland welcomed everyone.

Treasurer's Report - Kim Ingraham provided the Selectboard with the FY 2015 budget summary. EMFD has received all expected revenue from the towns, Kim reported EMFD is on par with where they were at the same time last year going into the last quarter of the fiscal year. Net ambulance revenue deposited into the contingency account is 84% of their expected target and the amount deposited into the capital reserve fund is 81% of their expected targeted amount (total in both accounts is \$75,177.84), Ambulance collections for FY 2015 are currently 70.74%, which is slightly down from other years. Variables that impact collections were discussed.

Chief's Report – Ty Rolland reported the Vermont Ambulance Association is encouraging members to ask municipal leaders to express support for legislation being sponsored that will require Medicaid to pay EMS providers on par with other healthcare providers. Ambulance services are currently paid about 42% of Medicare, while most other providers get paid 60-70% of the Medicare approved rate. Ty urged the Selectboard members to contact their legislators to support this bill.

Staffing Changes – Ty Rolland reported beginning on April 1st, EMFD began adding a second paid staff person from 7:00 am to 12:00 noon at \$10.00 per hour. The rationale was explained to provide additional coverage to lessen the coverage burden on volunteers that continually take time out from their businesses to respond to calls. Overnight coverages have changed as well four nights per week. The goal is to encourage more participation and foster improved skill level teaching from seasoned EMS veterans. Ty said this new program of staffing is going well in the two weeks since its inception.

“OnCall For Vermont” Recruitment and Retention Program – Ty Rolland introduced the Selectboard to the new aggressive recruitment effort put forth on radio and television from the Vermont Department of Health. The program includes a step-by-step Recruitment and Retention Toolkit for EMFD to use in efforts to attract new people in EMS and fire service. EMFD has some new Junior Members training for the Emergency Responder (EMR) credential. EMFD is working with the local schools to grow interest. EMFD is excited about these new programs.

Various Brief Updates -

- Dispatch contract with Capital West has been signed and is in effect for four years; Ty Rolland noted the towns receive a high quality service.
- Ty noted an upcoming emergency management meeting in Plainfield; something about receiving an emergency alert system. The Selectboard did not know of any such meeting.
- EMFD receives record requests and the EMFD Record Request Policy was recently revised and readopted by the EMFD Board of Directors.

- Incident Command Training (ICS) is being offered to fire department members and municipal officials on April 21st, 28th and 29th from 6-9:00pm at EMFD. State agencies are coming to do the training. Registration is required. Municipal officials should have ICS certification.
- EMFD computer upgrade has been done along with a new server. RB Technologies has included Cloud data storage and increased security and anti-virus protection.
- Hutch Crane – CCS legal claim against EMFD and the Town of Calais has come to a settlement agreement through mediation. Ty Rolland reported overall it was a successful end result. Details of the agreement have not yet been released; Bruce Johnson was very eager to know the details of the action. Ty Rolland has asked the EMFD insurance company attorney to look and see if anything else can be done to prevent this from happening again.
- As mentioned at the October 16, 2014 meeting, EMFD received a communication grant for \$8,500.00 to install a repeater near Station 1 on Templeton Road. Ty Rolland reported that Radio North and Clark Communications are bidding on the project; still a work in progress.
- Renovations to Station 1 as discussed at the December 4, 2014 meeting have not happened yet. Sharing the use of Station 1 on Templeton Road for equipment storage for the East Montpelier Highway Department have been approved. The costs are being paid for by the Town of East Montpelier and a User Agreement is in the works to spell out how the space will be used, maintained and costs divided.

Rose Pelchuck made a motion to adjourn at 8:17 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rose Pelchuck
Calais Selectboard Member

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 carriers 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