

Special Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
October 29, 2013
Harpswell Town Office
Approved on November 21, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selectmen Present: Elinor Multer, Alison S. Hawkes and Richard A. Daniel

Staff Present: Kristi Eiane, Town Administrator and Marguerite Kelly, Treasurer

1. Adoption of the Agenda: Chairman Multer moved, seconded by Selectman Daniel to approve the agenda as amended by moving item 3 before item 2 and adding 5.5 Consider Letter re: barriers on causeway; passed 2-0 [Selectman Hawkes not yet present].

3. Consider Fire and Rescue Committee Recommendation for 24/7 Paramedic Services Effective January 1, 2014: Administrator Eiane stated the three Fire Chiefs from each Fire and Rescue Department have been meeting for the past few months to discuss the issues and challenges the departments are facing. One main issue is not having enough volunteer staff coverage at the stations during the times MC2 is not available or in some cases, no staff. The Town's Fire and Rescue Committee, comprised of the Fire Chiefs and Rescue Captains, met last Monday night and Selectman Daniel attended. The Committee has recommended the Board of Selectmen consider implementing paramedic coverage for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week effective January 1, 2014. Administrator Eiane stated she sent an email to the Board after that meeting advising of the recommendation and explaining that the 2014 proposed budget currently includes increasing the coverage to 24/7 with an implementation date of April 1, 2014. The Fire and Rescue Committee recommends implementing as of January 1, 2014. [Selectman Hawkes arrived]. Administrator Eiane met with Dave Hudson, lead paramedic, and he provided the costs for 3 months 24/7 coverage at \$34,800. That would be the amount voters would be considering if the Board calls for a Special Town Meeting vote to implement a 24/7 dedicated paramedic coverage from 1/1/14 - 3/31/14.

Ben Wallace Jr., Cundy's Harbor Fire Chief, stated the Chiefs believed that a year and a half was available to stabilize the Orr's/Bailey Island (OBI) emergency medical technician (EMT) roster. However, due to recent events, as of January 1, OBI will not have any EMTs. This is a critical problem not just for one area, but for all of Harpswell as a Town. Cundy's Harbor cannot provide primary response to OBI – it can act as a backup but not primary as the distance is too far and his volunteers are stretched as well. This proposal is to buy time until the next EMT graduating class. New EMT's should be ready in August. The recommendation was to begin on 4/1/14 but due to these circumstances, it is essential to implement as of January 1. Selectman Hawkes stated that even with the 24/7 paramedic coverage, the primary response from OBI will still be lacking. Ed Blain, Orr's/Bailey Islands Fire Chief, clarified that one EMT living out of the district may move to the district by January 1. Mr. Wallace noted when MC2 is on duty, the response time is often quicker than the primary responder due to the central location and the paramedic being prepared to go with its equipment. Additionally, Harpswell uses the backup fly car, MC1, more than any of the other towns using that service and the increase in the MC2 service will increase the availability of MC1. Chief Wallace stated the paramedic is going with the patient to the hospital on most calls.

Selectman Hawkes asked how to resolve having a primary responder available from OBI – does one need to be hired if there are no volunteers? Chief Wallace stated that option was considered and it raises multiple issues such as how do you pay one and not the others? Also, if OBI pays for coverage, Chief Wallace was concerned that may lure some of Cundy's Harbor and/or Harpswell Neck's volunteers. You could require the paid person to be from out of Harpswell but that would be insulting to the dedicated Harpswell volunteers. There are a lot of implications with hiring someone with uncertainty on its success, whereas with MC2, that service is known and a success. The original recommendation to contract for a dedicated paramedic 5 days/week 6 am – 6 pm was due to a shortage of EMT's during the day in another district. The issues continue. Administrator Eiane noted the most recent data on average response time for MC2 to a call is 8 minutes 11 seconds and the average response

time for a department is 12 minutes and 58 seconds. Chief Blain stated OBI will only have one EMT as of January 1, who lives out of the district. OBI is assisting in the EMT's search for affordable housing within the district, including offering financial assistance such as a security deposit. There are a number of factors affecting volunteers such as affordable housing, medical issues, and family and job commitments. Chief Blain stated the departments have been working diligently on recruiting new volunteers. Chief Blain stated the going rate for a paid EMT is \$12-\$14/hour and a new worker's compensation program would be required since the existing one is only afforded to volunteers. He also noted OBI is a volunteer organization and does not have the expertise to administer paid staff, in addition to the issues that paid staff would create with the volunteers. Chief Blain reviewed the difficulties with maintaining a full roster and with not knowing how long the same volunteers can continue to contribute. OBI has 9 active fire and medical volunteers and is expressing the need very loudly and it is up to the citizens to respond to this dire need. Chief Blain noted OBI is also looking at bringing Northeast Ambulance into the situation, which may not be a viable option. Chairman Multer asked if there was any issue with volunteer drivers; Chief Blain responded no.

Selectman Daniel asked when Mid Coast Hospital would be able to implement the increased service; Administrator Eiane responded Mr. Hudson indicates it could be January 1. Administrator Eiane suggested the Board make its decision regarding this at the November 7 meeting when more information regarding special Town Meeting options, including costs and schedules could be available. Marguerite Kelly, Treasurer, stated Mid Coast Hospital has been very accommodating during this situation including the proposed costs, which appear to be low in relation to the addition of staff. Ms. Kelly relayed Mr. Hudson is anxious for the garage and she encouraged that process to continue moving forward. Don Jones stated MC2 is a great asset to the Town. Mr. Jones asked if this is only a money issue. Selectman Daniel responded the issue was just brought forward and while money is a consideration, other issues are being considered as well. Chairman Multer responded if there was no cost involved, the process would not be so complicated but the importance of the issue rises above the costs. Selectman Daniel agreed how important the issue is and the details will be decided at the next meeting. Selectman Hawkes thanked all the volunteers for their dedicated service. Chief Blain encouraged the Town to form a committee to look at the long range issues with both volunteer fire and rescue services.

2. Shore and Harbor Grant Application Re: Mitchell Field Waterfront: Administrator Eiane stated this grant is to seek funding to develop a viable economic plan for the Mitchell Field waterfront. Hiring some professional services to look at the pier, waterfront, etc. to try and layout costs, options, plans on how best to turn Mitchell Field into a destination location. The Town has received two Shore and Harbor Grants before, one for the boat ramp design and one for the Coastal Waters Management Plan. Administrator Eiane noted she will be adding the Recreation Director into the budget. The maximum grant is \$20,000 with a \$5,000 required match that can be in-kind services such as staff time. The grant has a November 1 deadline. Selectman Daniel asked if the consultant would be expected to suggest if the Marine Business district should be expanded and by how much? Administrator Eiane responded yes it is a possible outcome. Administrator Eiane stated a Town Meeting vote would be required to change the district size and/or location. Chairman Multer moved, seconded by Selectman Hawkes to approve the application as amended; motion passed 3-0.

4. Election Ballot Clerk Appointment for November 5 Referendum: Chairman Multer moved, seconded by Selectman Daniel to appoint Douglas Johnson as an election ballot clerk on November 5; motion passed 3-0.

5. Authorization of the Warrant: Chairman Multer moved, seconded by Selectman Hawkes to authorize warrant #49 in the amount of \$83,152.08; motion passed 3-0. Chairman Multer moved, seconded by Selectman Daniel to authorize warrant #50 in the amount of \$49,959.60; motion passed 3-0.

5.5 Letter to the Department of Transportation (DOT): Administrator Eiane stated the Board agreed at the last meeting to send a letter to DOT regarding the Board's dissatisfaction with the concrete barriers placed on the

causeway on Harpswell Neck. Copies will be mailed to Representative Saxton and Senator Gerzofsky. Chairman Multer moved, seconded by Selectman Hawkes to approve the letter; motion passed 3-0.

6. Adjournment: The Chair adjourned the meeting without objection at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri-Lynn Sawyer
Deputy Town Administrator