

**Fire and Rescue Planning Committee
Minutes of August 1, 2016**

Committee Members Present: Co-Chair Kevin Johnson (Selectman), Co-Chair Ben Wallace, Rick Danial (Selectman), Jonathan Burbank, Allan LeGrow, Dave Mercier, and Gail Hart.

Others Present: Kristi Eiane, Town Administrator; Marguerite Kelly, Town Treasurer; Mike Helfgott, Steve Normand, Paul Kittle, Zach Stoler, Phil Taylor, Sean Hall and Dan Reynolds

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm.

Minutes

The minutes of July 18 were unanimously approved.

(Please note that the following minutes are intended to be a summary not a verbatim transcript).

Guest Speaker

Topsham Fire Chief Brian Stockdale was present to explain the system that Topsham uses for providing fire and rescue services—it is a call department supplemented by per diem and paid staff. He prefaced his remarks by stating this is Topsham's experience and what Topsham does may not work for Harpswell. Chief Stockdale has been Fire Chief in Topsham for 6 years. When he came onboard, fire and EMS were not fully integrated. He had difficulty at first integrating the system and had to spend considerable time clarifying people's roles. One of the first things Chief Stockdale did was to develop a strategic plan asking the question what did the Topsham department want to look like? Ultimately, the department wanted to be an inclusive one that provided better service to the community. There were about 50 members when he became Chief, however, he lost about 27 members in the first 2 years with new people joining the ranks over time to replace those who were lost.

Topsham handles about 1900 calls per year with 70% of those being EMS and 30% being fire related. Recent data shows that 3050 calls were from 7am to 7pm and 541 from 7pm to 7am. Busy days for Topsham are Fridays and Mondays. There are 2 full-time employees, the Chief and the Deputy. Also, during the day there are 4 per diem people on and at night there are 2 per diem people. Per diem shifts are made available to call members first, then offered to others outside of the department. Call members are expected to respond to other calls as needed and to always respond first by going to the station not to the scene. Students are there to learn and are not used as paid staff. Chief Stockdale explained how and by whom calls are covered, and when mutual aid is needed.

The call department is critical to the effectiveness and functioning of the Topsham system. There are 2 ambulances in Topsham. 86% of the per diem folks are cross-trained. When there are multiple EMS calls, Topsham needs mutual aid like other communities.

For the Topsham system to work, there needs to be a pool of about 35 per diems. Currently about 18 of the per diem staffers are call members. The Topsham department hires from within its call department pool first and then goes outside. Paramedics are typically hired from outside. There are four levels of per diem pay and no benefits. To compete with other communities, Topsham offers an environment where training is covered and leadership positions are available. Flexibility is also an important component to the system. At times, the Chief and Deputy Chief may have to fill in. Topsham does not always have a paramedic on duty. Call department members can become officers and receive additional stipends for doing so. Call members are paid between \$10 -\$15 per hour.

Minimum training requirements are required for call members. They have to sign a roster when they report to a call. There is supplemental accident insurance provided and training courses are paid for. Call members need to live within 10 miles or 10 minutes of the station.

Topsham has had a full-time Fire Chief for 20 years. In 2007 the merger of EMS and fire started, by 2010-2011 it was completed.

In order for Topsham's system to work it has to have a call department. Topsham has 1 tanker and must rely on mutual aid for other tankers. Chief Stockdale noted that the number and types of vehicles a community has should be based on call activity/volume.

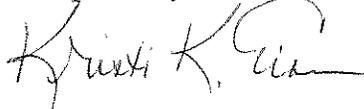
Billing and collections are done in-house.

The Topsham operational budget (exclusive of capital) is \$768,000. More detail can be made available.

Chief Stockdale was thanked for his presentation and departed the meeting at approximately 8:00p.m. The Committee indicated that it would continue with its agenda at the next meeting on August 15 with the addition of OBI member Phil Taylor who would present information on ideas for recruitment and retainage of volunteers.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:14p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristi K. Eiane
Town Administrator