Fire and Rescue Planning Committee
Minutes of August 15, 2016

Committee Members Present: Co-Chair Kevin Johnson (Selectman), Co-Chair Ben Wallace, Rick Danial (Selectman), Jonathan Burbank, Allan LeGrow, and Dave Mercier. Gail Hart joined the meeting around 7:00pm.

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

Presentation on Retention and Recruitment

Phil Taylor, a member of the OBI department, shared information with the Committee from a workshop he attended in Connecticut this past June. [See attached Powerpoint]. He noted that retention and recruitment are issues of national concern and cited several communities where the numbers of volunteer (or call) personnel were increased. The presentation reviewed the obstacles, goals and incentives related to retention as well as management and recruitment techniques/goals. Mr. Taylor suggested that a collaborative effort to address recruitment and retainage with all three departments involved could be very beneficial. Chiefs Wallace and Mercier talked about past efforts by the departments to step up recruitment. It was noted that the current roster numbers for the three departments are as follows: HN at 35; CH at 21 and OBI at 11. Jonathan Burbank asked if, short of hiring personnel, the trend of fewer volunteers could be reversed, noting that OBI and HN have compensation programs and CH does not. Chief Mercier talked about the compensation program at HN being re-vamped several times, and yet there remains recruitment/retainage issues. Someone from the HN department is working on marketing strategies for recruiting members and Chief Mercier will ask that person to reach out to OBI.

Meeting with the Departments

The Committee discussed setting up a meeting with all three departments. While the Committee has representatives from each department who can keep departments informed, the Committee recognizes that it is important to hold an open meeting where all department members can voice their thoughts, concerns, suggestions, etc. to the entire Committee. It was noted that the Committee should consider options before arriving at a recommendation. Committee members agreed that there was work to be done to explain its current thinking and to build a strong case/rationale for its ultimate recommendation.

The Committee agreed to hold a department-wide meeting at the Town Office on Monday, September 12, 6pm, which would be facilitated by Frank O'Hara of Planning Decisions. Jonathan Burbank offered to put together an outline of the Committee's current thinking that could be provided to members of the departments in advance to react/respond to at the

September meeting. Frank O'Hara will be invited to attend the Committee's next meeting on August 29 to assist the Committee with preparing for the department-wide meeting.

Other

The Committee agreed to add a public comment period at the end of its meeting agendas. Phil Taylor commented on having cost/benefit analyses for various options and Paul Kittle noted that getting information out to the public with figures would be very important. Chief Mercier noted that providing information about the impact on the tax rate would definitely be a meaningful piece of information for the public. Selectman Daniel also noted that he had been asked to meet with a group that was concerned with the direction that the Fire and Rescue Planning Committee was going in. While he encouraged the group to participate in Committee meetings, he wanted feedback from the entire Committee about the appropriateness of his meeting with groups outside of the Committee meetings on this topic. The Committee indicated general support for his meeting with others as long as it was understood that Selectman Daniel was there primarily to listen and to explain current thinking of the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi K. Eiane, Town Administrator

Harpswell Volunteer Emergency Services

Retention & Recruitment

RETENTION

OBSTACLES

GOALS

INCENTIVES

MANAGEMENT GOALS

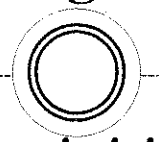
RECRUITMENT GOALS

RIAFC Retention and Recruitment Workshop

June 24th & 25, 2016

- Sponsor
  - Rhode Island Association of Fire Chiefs Workshop
  - Grant from the Department of Homeland Security
- Presented by:
  - "Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response" (volunteerfirefighter.org)
- Approximately 20 participants:
  - York, Sabbatus, OBIFD, Rhode Island, Massachusetts
- Majority were department chiefs

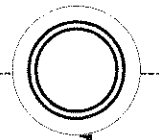
Retention Obstacles
(Things that discourage current volunteers)



- Increased training requirements: initial, annual, BLS
- Time demands: Work, family, school, sleep etc.
  - Responses steal time from planned family activities
- Task distribution demands lead to burnout
  - Expecting more time/energy from people then they have to give creates apathy
- Inconsistent and/or Ineffective leadership
  - Leadership should be able to help mitigate personality conflicts and help steer a team
  - Authoritarian leadership style is not conducive to collaborative/team efforts.
  - Lack of focus and long range planning
- Limited or non-existent department social interaction
- Increased "nuisance" call volume: lift assists, life line calls, false alarms.
  - Increases time demand without award "Where's the emergency we trained for?"
- Poor planning for maintenance/training events:
  - Reduces enthusiasm & degrades readiness
  - Ineffective use of people's time: not sticking to the agenda, starting late/ending late

Don't Make it difficult to Volunteer

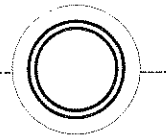
Retention Goals
(The Care and Feeding of Volunteers)



- Foster a culture of inclusion and transparency
  - Involve the families in department functions
  - Be aware of each volunteer's needs & constraints
- Evaluate department requirements & improve efficiencies
  - Narrow job assignments to be inline with volunteer time, skills and training limitations
  - Assign duty shifts to accommodate volunteer schedules and duty demands whenever feasible.
  - Schedule all long/short term training events online
- Current members need to be aware of protocols for inviting new volunteers and be able to embrace the process
  - Information about involvement and how to get involved on the website
  - Phone number to speak to someone...who answers
  - Schedule additional training/orientation for new members
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
  - Everyone should be in the loop all the time

Treat Volunteers as People First

Retention Incentives
(Volunteer benefits)



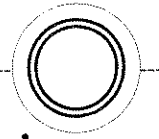
- Personal Advancement
  - Free training and education skills
  - Uniforms, PPE and safety equipment is provided
  - Expenses paid to attend Fire/EMS conferences, seminars
  - Leadership training/development
  - Enhanced resume through training and department membership
- Support and personal well being
  - Annual physicals, fitness and wellness programs
  - Insurance: health, life, accident, dental
  - Pension/401(k) participation
  - Stipend program
- Local Advantages:
  - Discounts to local businesses
  - Tax exemption programs: Real estate? Property tax?
  - Mortgage Programs?

Make it an OPPORTUINITY

Management Goals

(Motivation: Understanding the hierarchy of needs)

Management Goals
(Foster Teamwork)

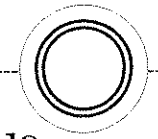


- Reward enthusiasm and initiative
  - Help members to realize their ideas
  - Listen to others and provide constructive feedback
  - Identify people who can coordinate and accept responsibility
  - Entertain new and innovative ideas
  - Delegate, with authority, responsibilities & tasks to match members skills
  - Identify and assign; "the creative", "the organizer", "the self starter", "the researcher", "the team builder"
  - Recognize excellence where recognition is due
- Generate a common vision to provide focus and purpose
  - Ensure that everyone clearly understands their roles and tasks
  - Present clear logical objectives
  - Enforce continued improvement: Celebrate success and learn from setbacks
  - Provide opportunities for regular & continuing engagement (training etc.)
- Develop a supportive, informal group atmosphere
  - Mentor newer members
  - Push members to expand their capabilities & enable them to succeed
  - Encourage Non-Response related activities and gatherings

Foster a culture of inclusion, improvement & transparency

Recruitment Goals

(Needs assessment:)



- How many volunteers are required?
- Identify & Publicize all possible positions:
  - Fire Fighter
  - EMT
  - Support
    - Marketing/Recruitment
    - Data entry, Information Technology
    - Apparatus Maintenance
    - Supply
    - Building maintenance
    - Compliance requirements
    - Training/Education
    - Social coordinator
    - Grants writer
    - Community Presenter
    - Safety Officer!
- Define the Training Requirements
- Match the position with the skill sets

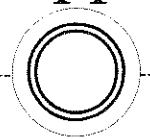
Remind the Community: You don't need to be a responder to be part of the team

Recruitment Goals
(Target Audience)

- Veterans:
  - similar mission, different uniform
  - Offers highly focused training; resulting in poise and excellence
- Students:
  - High School
  - Vocational School
  - College students
- Residents
  - Folks who work in town
  - Guard and Reserve personnel
  - Current emergency responders who live in town but work for surrounding communities
- Women are increasingly becoming significant and productive members of fire departments. Don't overlook their potential to participate in all roles, including FF positions.
- Boys/Girl Scouts for Junior FF programs

Remind the Community: You don't need to be a responder to be part of the team

Recruitment Goals
(Visibility opportunities)



- Active Recruitment
  - Recruitment tent staffed with department volunteers available at community events
  - Visits to local schools: Career Days! Fire Truck/SCBA Demos
  - Parade Participation, invite community to training events
  - Periodic dinners/barbecues for meet and greet opportunities
  - One-on-one direct invitation to join
- Passive Recruitment
  - Public service announcements: Cable TV, local theatre
  - Station signs, brochures, posters, flyers, banners throughout the community
  - Having a community presence
    - Department uniforms
    - Opening bay doors at every opportunity to enhance visibility
    - Being Out and visible as a group in the community

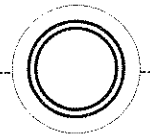
Recruit by example

Recruitment Goals
(General Marketing)

- Everyone is a recruiter (including board members)
  - Be Accessible – Respond to Interest enthusiastically
- Identify and promote incentives/benefits to potential recruits
- Increase department visibility through presentations at local organization meetings
- Spread the word about who we are, what we do and why we are an essential part of the community's emergency safety net
- Schedule meet and greet opportunities
- Improve online presence and available information
- Capitalize on social media apps
  - Manage the Facebook & online experience to provide department visibility online to capture younger generation interest

Show up, even when we haven't been called on

Recruitment
(When a recruit shows interest)



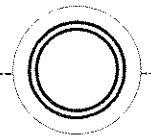
- Follow up right away
  - no more than two days
- Second follow up by a different member by phone
  - next two days
- Follow up by chief acknowledging mutual interest
  - within the week
- There must be a **welcoming and proactive culture** for introducing new members into the organization
- Orientation process must be comprehensive, professional and in a format that ensures that all relevant topics are presented
- Keep the new recruit apprised of their status in the orientation process
- Assign a mentor who is willing, competent, responsible and trained to prescribed standards

Potential Volunteers!

Age Group Numbers*	Harpswell	Orr's Island	Bailey Island	Totals	1%
15-19 years	110	6	9	125	1
20-24 years	121	8	26	155	2
25-34 years	298	18	30	346	3
35-44 years	278	0	52	330	3
45-54 years	504	38	24	566	6
55-59 years	312	63	76	451	5
60-64 years	452	47	30	529	5
	1965	174	238	2377	25

* Numbers obtained from: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates
2010 - 2014 American Community Survey 5 year Estimates by Zip Codes

Retention and Recruitment



The End

Thank you!

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Questions for Consideration

for the

Fire and Rescue Planning Committee

- Unintended Consequences of a central fire station and the removal of neighborhood ambulances:
  - Will there be public support for this regardless of the efficiencies presented?
  - Will it erode financial support and volunteer support for the local community fire stations thinking that the town will now take over the fire and ambulance services?
  - How will people feel that the ambulances will be removed from their neighborhood fire station?
  - Will the public have the perception that local volunteers are no longer necessary?
  - Will centralization become a disincentive for volunteer retention and recruitment?