

**Fire and Rescue Planning Committee Meeting
Minutes of August 29, 2016, 6pm**

Members present: Kevin Johnson, Co-chair; Ben Wallace, Co-chair; Rick Daniel, Jonathan Burbank, and Dave Mercier

Staff: Kristi Eiane, Town Administrator; Marguerite Kelly, Treasurer

Others present: Frank O'Hara, Consultant; members of the public

Call to Order: The Meeting was called to order at 6:03pm

Approval of the Minutes: It was moved, seconded and unanimously voted to accept the minutes of August 1 and August 15.

Plan with Facilitator for September 12 Meeting

Committee member Burbank produced a draft of a Powerpoint presentation for discussion. Consultant O'Hara reviewed the purpose of the September 12 meeting which was to get feedback on the Committee's preliminary ideas specifically from the volunteers and Board members of the three fire departments. The Committee proceeded with reviewing each of the areas of the draft document and providing suggestions for changes. The areas of the Powerpoint were: Description; Background of the Issue; Purpose of the Committee; Proposed Plan of Action; Vehicle Plan with Central Station; and Frequently Asked Questions.

Mr. Moore questioned whether the Committee had considered other options and was concerned that the recruitment issue was being overlooked with the Committee focused on the end game and not on the mid-game. Mr. Moore emphasized that there was a failure in the recruiting of volunteers and that the Town should be doing more to help with recruitment efforts. He suggested that more should be done to find help with recruitment, such as hiring a recruiter.

The Committee discussed that it needed to do a better job explaining the problems—that there has been an ebb and flow of volunteers throughout the departments with numbers generally not on the increase and one department (Harpswell Neck) being critically low in the availability of fire service providers during week day hours. It was noted that as early as the paramedic services report, there was concern that the issue of having enough volunteers on the fire side would emerge over time.

Selectman Daniel indicated that the focus is to try to move to a transitional model that will still utilize volunteers. It was noted by Co-chair Wallace that the Committee recognizes a timely response is needed to 911 calls and the goal is to try and augment the volunteer system to ensure reliable 911 response.

The Committee discussed the need for two people with regard to responding to fire calls. It was discussed that moving to a centralized model would improve response time and that there could be reduction in the total number of vehicles needed. Meriel Longley questioned whether the centralized response would really be faster.

Selectmen Daniel suggested the Committee think about the structure of a municipal department—what would it look like? What would the flow of command be?

The Committee continued to work on revising the Powerpoint presentation. There was concurrence that Frank O'Hara be the one to make the presentation and facilitate the discussion at the September 12 meeting. The Committee agreed to meet again on Tuesday, September 6 to review the revised Powerpoint in preparation for the September 12 meeting.

Scheduling Site Visit at Proposed Building Location with Town Engineer

The Committee suggested that a site visit be scheduled for 6pm on September 19.

Public Comment

Mike Helfgott noted there were many key issues that need to be considered and resolved, particularly how volunteers will be part of the new model. He noted that recruitment and retention should be ongoing. Committee member Burbank responded that the three departments should not count on the Town for recruitment efforts for the three companies.

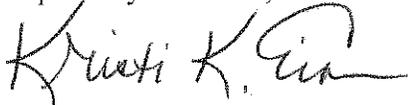
John Moore asked what will be done differently to address the past failure of recruitment efforts.

Nelson Barter reviewed past recruitment efforts noting that these issues are occurring at other levels—state and national—and not unique to Harpswell. Finding people who are available, getting them trained and keeping them qualified is difficult. He noted that the current volunteers are burning out. The Committee resolved to do a better job explaining why there is a need to consider a new model.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristi K. Eiane, Town Administrator