

## **Fire Rescue Planning Committee Minutes, Meeting of June 19, 2023**

**Meeting Called to Order by Chief Wallace, 10:09 AM**

**Members present: Ben Wallace, Jonathan Burbank, David Mercier, Harvey Pough, John Pearson, Peter Nikitas. Staff/liasons: Kevin Johnson, Kristi Eiane, and Art Howe**

**Guests: Phil Taylor, OBIFD, and Nelson Barter, HNFR**

**Motion made and approved to accept minutes of May 15, 2023**

**Chief Wallace confirmed singular agenda item to be discussion of a possible central fire station. Jonathan sees need for central station at some future date to house personnel and equipment. Question arose on whether we could offer a stipend or hourly rate for volunteers to staff such a station, along with existing weekday fire coverage.**

**Discussion on value of EMTs. Present licensure requires EMT in each department. Chiefs feel strongly that EMTs are vital to EMS here, in addition to the one paramedic.**

**Do we centralize now for fire response, with EMS down the road? We could start with smaller station now, keeping it modular, and adding to it later.**

**Both Fire and EMS delivery now are fragile and may necessitate a change of staffing in the future. Recruitment and retention of volunteer Firefighters and especially EMTs continues to be challenging. Central will not replace volunteers, only augment them. A central station will be an expansion of existing services. Paid staff cannot replace the volunteer fire and rescue companies.**

**Medic 2 should be included in a new station.**

**Central also adds equity in serving to respond equally to all districts.**

**Should we hire more Firefighters as building is being built? but no consensus on this. Peter expressed real concern over hiring & recruitment due to tight labor market and competition.**

**John Pearson made pitch for communicating central station idea and plans to volunteers. Don't surprise anyone, and be respectful. Consensus to communicate within each department ASAP.**

**RFQ should include someone with fire station experience and square footage requirements**

**Motion made and approved to have Selectboard set an RFQ for design/architect ASAP.**

**Next meeting July 10, 2023 at 10 AM.**

**Meeting adjourned at 11:21 AM**

**Respectfully,**

**Art Howe, Fire Administrator**