



Select Board

Town of Hinesburg
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Meeting Minutes – January 22, 2020

- Approved 1/29/20 -

Attending the Meeting: Phil Pouech, Tom Ayer, Merrily Lovell, Jeff French, Renae Marshall, Joy Dubin Grossman, and attached list.

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Phil expressed his appreciation for everyone's efforts in helping with the search for ambulance coverage for Hinesburg.

Phil announced Aaron Kimball's resignation from the Board two days ago. He said the Select Board will be appointing a temporary replacement at the next meeting to serve till the March elections.

Additions / Deletions to the Agenda

Renae said there is need to go into executive session at the end of the meeting.

There was no public comment.

Review of Proposals for Ambulance Transport Services (Town Service)

Phil said tonight we will be looking at Town Service.

Al Barber and Robert (Zeke) Plante reviewed the proposal for ambulance transport service by the Town of Hinesburg. Zeke is a Shelburne resident but noted he pays taxes in Hinesburg. He was asked to help come up with a plan for Town service. Zeke has 30 years' of experience in fire/ems and is deputy chief in Burlington.

The proposal included the objectives of Hinesburg ambulance transport service. It shared information on volume of calls as well as a medical reason for the call. Charts showing time of day and day of week incidents occur. Hinesburg has 10 EMR's, 15 EMT's, 5 AEMT's and 1 paramedic. They provided a proposed budget for ambulance transport service. Zeke said he feels one of the biggest adaptive challenges for the Town is recruitment and retention to sustain personnel.

Renae asked about the need for a building now and in the future. Al said the challenge is the growth we need to have. Currently they can utilize the old fire station and are set with what they have. When the Town has elderly housing and needs increase, they will need a new building. Impact fees can offset some of these costs.

Al spoke about the importance of having the service in Town because of response times. He said the responder knows the person you are responding to and knows the history.

Renae asked about the level of service. Al said the paid people would be on during the day, he acknowledged maintaining volunteers is key. If a second call comes in you need a volunteer to handle that. At the end of the workday and on weekends it will fall back to the volunteers for coverage. Phil noted that this year in the Fire/EMS budget being presented to the Town is one full time cross trained person. That person is to meet the daytime need for coverage.

Merrily mentioned that the facilities of Richmond and Charlotte have living accommodations and said she assumes Al will want a similar facility in the future. She asked, currently when someone is on duty overnight are they at their home. Al said yes they respond from home and the average response time is 7 minutes. Phil shared that Al invited him to wear a volunteer pager and it was an eye opening experience how calls can impact the volunteer's life.

Jeff asked if the type of calls noted were for Hinesburg. Al said yes, that data was from Hinesburg calls. Jeff pointed out that stroke was second highest need for a call and stroke needs immediate medical help. Jeff asked, referring to the job description, if the position will be hard to fill given all the different requirements. Al said the challenge in getting a qualified candidate is money.

Phil addressed the question of regional coverage and how that effects utilization.

Jeff asked about paramedic staffing on calls. Al said if they do not have one they call the hospital, and if available one is sent. The number of calls where a paramedic is needed is very low.

Ken Morton, Williston Fire Chief, wanted to address some of the questions he heard at the last and this meeting. Regarding billing he said Williston has a third party billing service which sends an invoice, they do follow up billing and if not paid the bill will go to collection. Williston does however allow the individual to petition the Town to waive the bill and they often do. He addressed regionalization and said it is a great concept. In reality in the year 1995 there was a program to have regionalized dispatch by the year 2000. 20 years later there is a new regional dispatch group but we are no closer to regional service. He does not see how, if we can't get dispatch to regionalize, it is possible for ambulance to do so. Ken said if we have our own ambulance we gain the following; consistent staff, transfer of care, shortened response time. Not having your own can result in loss of efficiency. Ken said over a 30-year time span before they had their own ambulance they had 1 cardiac save. In the 10 years they have been operating their own ambulance they have had over 20. Paid staff can be doing other tasks when not on a call.

Regarding the ambulance vehicle, Al reminded us that Terry Wilson and Nancy Ainsfield will be donating a new ambulance not a used one.

Paul Lamberson asked Ken if they were at one time a 501(c)3. Ken said it started as a 501(c)3 but when the Town took over it became municipal. Paul asked if there is a Firefighters Association or any other fund raising group. Ken said there is none. Paul asked if there was a need for additional staff to oversee administration tasks. Ken said with growth of full time employees there will be staff time needed for oversight.

Vicki Matthews asked if the full time position will be hourly. Al said it would be an hourly employee. Al went on to say we cannot do ambulance service without full time day coverage but this does not take away from the Fire Department. Vicki thanked the talented fire and police workers in Town.

Dawn Francis asked why the cost estimates for coverage from Richmond and Charlotte portray revenue they receive from billing as a cost to Hinesburg. Al said this is to show the revenue that is paid to the ambulance service. Dawn said that is not a cost to the taxpayers it is paid by Medicare and Medicaid.

Dick St. George, Charlotte Fire and Rescue, said when they broke their proposal down they went by response time and call volume in the two zones between Charlotte and Richmond. He said the recovery costs projected are accurate.

Paul Lamberson asked if next week's meeting will be looking at all three services. Phil said the Board will have a discussion tonight on how to proceed from here. Paul noted the inclusion of the recovery costs and would like that removed from the cost estimates to better compare actual costs to taxpayers. Paul asked about the emergency management position on the organizational structure chart. Al said he, as Chief, fills that position.

Dawn said she does not want the local emergency responders to think she does not support them just because she is asking some tough questions. She is trying to figure out the viability and sustainability of this service going forward. She also noted with the Chief only receiving \$10,000 it is a testament to Al's service to our community. Dawn says she hopes this is an Australian ballot vote either in March or November as it is such an important decision. She said what was expressed by the Fire Chiefs tonight is that we need to figure out the financial affordability. Dawn noted Richmond is telling us \$10.00, Charlotte \$25.00 and rough estimate of \$38.00 per capita costs for Hinesburg. A very important factor is recruitment and retention of people. Dawn does not think legally they can be hourly employees and asked Renae to check on that. With salaries come benefits. Phil said that has been figured into the cost for the one full time employee being proposed. Dawn said to also think about competitiveness when setting salaries.

Action Item - Renae to check if employees for rescue can be paid hourly.

Bill asked, if you take out the one-time expenses, what is the increase from the current budget to staff this. Al replied about \$100,000 for the actual ambulance operation.

Elizabeth Deutsch asked if Hinesburg will provide paramedic care. Al said they will be relying on intercepts. Elizabeth asked what the time frame is to get Hinesburg up to medical level of care. Al said the call volume needs to be much higher. Elizabeth said, as we educate people on what the different levels of care mean we also need to educate on the difference of having a medical level service vs. not

having medical level service.

Roger Giroux said he got the feeling from other departments they quickly change from volunteer mode. Charlotte said all their coverage is by paid personnel and in the last three years have gone to 24/7 staffing. Roger followed by saying it looks like Hinesburg in a very short time will go from hiring 2 people to hiring 6. Dick said the transition has not been fast in Charlotte.

Terry Francis said regarding ambulance billing services, he recommends billing be done out of house. Carol Jenkins said this is not a one-year decision and would like to see the 5-year expenditure for ambulance service.

Andrea said we have a wonderfully dedicated crew with phenomenal response time the way it is operating now. She asked, if we have only one full time paid person at the station and it takes two people to go out on an ambulance will that mean a second person needs to show up at the Fire Station to go out. Also she noted the numbers represented in the ambulance budget for employees are spread out but in total are \$197,000. In the Fire Department budget there is \$52,000 in reimbursable. She does not see how the numbers add up. Al said to answer the staffing question, if Hinesburg has an ambulance there are two full time people budgeted in the ambulance budget, there is also a full time person in the Fire budget. That will supply the two needed for the ambulance during the day, night time goes back to the volunteers. The reimbursable is in the Fire budget but a portion will be utilized in the ambulance budget. Andrea said she hopes by the next meeting there will be clearer picture of the numbers and how it will work with responders.

Elizabeth asked if there is an AEMT on every call. Al said it varies, we have five current AEMT's and two people in school to become AEMT's. Elizabeth asked if we go with an in Town ambulance will that be a requirement. Al said it will.

Phil said in the end, it is what the taxpayers want. He is thinking to contract for a year and continue to work on this. He feels we have some time as the growth we expected is not here yet. He thinks in the end the taxpayers will want in Town service, and will be willing to pay more. His suggestion is to have a warned article asking to pay X amount to hire out the service.

Tom said he knows we will have great coverage no matter where it comes from. He is concerned with the financial liability and sustainability of Town service. The proposal has a \$154,000 budget and Charlotte and Richmond are in the \$500,000 budget range. He likes the start we have toward service but until we get the growth that was planned for, and are expecting, the financial aspect to have our own is overwhelming. We have great offers to contract and feels that is the most viable option right now.

Merrily said she appreciates everyone's attendance and good questions. She said the simple picture is it will cost us something now no matter what we do. She said she heard from Charlotte, Richmond, Williston and Shelburne that what you really want is your own service as that will give you the best level of service. She agrees it will likely be more of a cost than we can figure out till we are in the middle of it, but feels that is something the taxpayers should decide.

Jeff likes the idea of an ambulance in Town but looking at the numbers feels everybody should have

the right to choose. We need to get the solid numbers and a 5 year plan and then put it to the people for a vote.

Ed Waite said the proposal is for Firefighter and EMT service. Going out of Town just gets EMT service.

Consider Delaying March Wastewater Upgrade Bond Vote to November

Renae said after reaching out to the State, USDA and the Town consultant it was agreed the best choice is to hold off on the Bond vote and wait for November. The Board was in consensus on a decision to wait.

FY 21 Capital Budget and FY 21-25 Capital Improvement Plan Public Hearing

Phil opened the public hearing on the Capital Budget and Capital Improvement Plan for the FY 21.

Tom suggested to pay for the Case tractor from the fund balance. Renae said it would have to be on the warning for a vote and there is not enough to purchase the tractor after using \$125,000 to off-set the tax rate as discussed.

Tom moved to approve the Capital Improvement Plan as presented. Second by Merrily and approved with 4 yes votes.

FY 21 General Fund – Expenditures and Revenue

The Board agreed on an additional \$15,000 in highway salaries to be used where possible to help alleviate the burden of being understaffed.

The Board agreed to set the employee salary increase at 2%.

The Board reopened the public hearing on the Capital Budget and Improvement Plan.

The Board agreed to use another \$25,000 from the fund balance which will make the total fund balance amount to \$150,000 to off-set the tax rate. To use \$15,000 from the fund balance for sidewalk/maintenance and construction. And to use an additional \$10,000 toward the sidewalk plow.

Phil moved to approve the Capital Budget and Improvement as amended. Second by Merrily and approved with 4 yes votes.

Review Draft Town Meeting Warning

Discussed including a warned article to include the funds to hire out ambulance service. Merrily wants to give voters a choice to hire out or to have Town Ambulance.

In November we can have an Australian ballot vote when we have numbers on costs for more than a year.

The Board will add an article for X amount to contract ambulance service after July 1 as the Town looks toward a decision to provide full time service. Also suggested was language to contract out till Hinesburg has their own service.

Action Item - Renae will check with VLCT on rules for wording warnings and she and Phil will put together the warning.

Town Administrator Report

- Renae continues to be busy with budget work as well as work on the question around the bond vote for the Wastewater upgrade.
- She and Joy have a rough draft of a welcome packet for committee, board and commission members.
- Renae is still waiting on billing to finalize the Village North Sidewalk.
- Working on a grant for safety items.

Select Board Forum/Correspondence Received

Phil shared correspondence from Chris Conant, of LIA, with information on some of the questions raised at the meeting when the LIA budget was reviewed for the second time.

Review Minutes from January 15, 2020

Phil moved to approve the minutes from January 15, 2020 as amended. Second by Tom and approved with 4 yes votes.

Consider Approving Warrants

Phil moved to approve the warrants, including payroll, as submitted by the Town Treasurer. Second by Merrily and approved with 4 yes votes.

Consider a Motion to Enter Executive Session Under Provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(a)(2)&(a)(3)

Phil moved to go into executive session, including Renae and Joy for an update of union negotiations as premature disclose could put the Town at a disadvantage. Second by Tom and approved with 4 yes votes.

Phil moved to go into executive session under provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(a)(2)&(a)(3). Second by

Tom and approved with 4 yes votes.

Merrily made a motion to come out of Executive Session. Tom seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

Merrily made a motion to adjourn. Tom seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0

Respectfully submitted,
Valerie Spadaccini, Clerk of the Board



Selectboard Meeting

Sign-in Sheet

January 22, 2020

1. Al Barber

2. Allen Mackinnon

3. Alex Goss

4. Ed Waite

5. Scott LOSTOS JR

6. Deane Barber

7. Andrew Driscoll

8. John Lyman

9. Kate Charbonneau

10. Michael Busnette

11. Eric Spitzer

12. Matt Rivers

13. Seoster MacMillan

14. Bunbi Suttles

15. Linda Parent

16. Kevin Rorer

17. Dawn Francis

18. Kendall Black

19. Harrison Mead

20. KEN MORTON - WILLISTON

21. John Powers

22. Jillian Wilkowsky

23. Mark Ferky

24. David Estay

25. Maureen Black

26. _____

27. Andrea Morgante

37. Karen Charbonneau

28. Paul Lambertson

38. _____

29. Carol Jenkins

39. _____

30. Tom Cosimake CV FKS

40. _____

31. Teng Chan

41. _____

32. MITCH BARRON

42. _____

33. Lyn Porter

43. _____

34. Roger Giroux

44. _____

35. Amanda Vincent

45. _____

36. Elizabeth Deutsch

46. _____