

Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard

April 8, 2021 Selectboard Special Meeting

This meeting was conducted remotely using the Zoom conferencing platform hosted by EMFD. Participation options were provided to the public.

SB Attendance: Chair Seth Gardner, Carl Etnier, Judith Dillon, Amy Willis and Jon Jewett; Town Administrator Bruce Johnson

Calais SB Attendance: Chair Denise Wheeler and Rick Kehne; Recording Secretary Katie Lane-Karnas; ORCA was recording the meeting on behalf of Calais

EMFD Attendance: Chief Ty Rolland, President Toby Talbot, Sandy Conti, Paul Guare and Albert Petrella; Clerk Judith Woodbeck

Public Attendance: Rose Pelchuck, EM Treasurer Don Welch, Bill Powell

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Additions to Agenda: None

Public Comment: None

East Montpelier Fire Department Service & Budget Update

EMFD Chief Rolland and EMFD President Talbot welcomed the board members.

Mr. Talbot gave a short update on the current FY2021 budget status, with the only area of concern continuing to be the ambulance staffing costs which are running 10-15% over budget. This is a continuation of the trend discussed at the December 2020 update meeting. EMFD explained at that time that it is trying to always have paid staff for the 7:00 a.m. to midnight period to reduce reliance on volunteers. Both boards have been in support of the shift to full paid staffing and are working incrementally to have the necessary funding in the EMFD budget by FY2023.

Insurance revenues for ambulance services are exceeding expectations to this point for FY2021. This revenue stream is notoriously unpredictable month-to-month and even year-to-year, so although the current status is good news, it may not signal dependable long-term revenue growth.

Pandemic relief funds have provided the ability to provide bonuses to the emergency service workers and will also cover the unexpected PPE and other safety gear expenses.

Chief Rolland took the reins for the remainder of the meeting. He reviewed the call log and transport chart for the current year, with the numbers in line with past service. He went on to

discuss community programs, highlighting the availability of masks for community members, the success of the holiday programs with excess donations going to local food banks, and noted that the smoke & carbon monoxide detector program is once again operational.

Chief Rolland then opened up discussion on the recent notice of non-renewal of the interlocal service agreement issued by Calais. This was greeted mostly with silence, but Chair Gardner did observe that the short timeframe available to redo the agreement was problematic and requested that Calais provide the reasoning behind the notice as soon as possible.

Calais Chair Wheeler requested information on current dispatching service issues, which have been the subject of a series of emails to central VT governing board members, revolving around Capital West, the Capital Fire Mutual Aid Service and the Central VT Public Safety Authority. Chief Rolland provided a brief synopsis of what is going on, highlighting an ongoing effort to inventory the various emergency dispatching/communications equipment available to the central VT EMS providers. The intent is to formulate a report targeting methods to improve communication options. When the report is available, it will be provided to the towns.

Both boards thanked Chief Rolland and Mr. Talbot for the presentation and the myriad services provided by EMFD to the community.

The meeting was adjourned by informal consensus when EMFD abruptly ended the Zoom meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator

Approved: April 19, 2021 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting