

**Town of Sunapee
Board of Fire Wards
September 4, 2019**

Present: Josh Trow, Austin Brown and John Paris.

Also present: Chief Dan Ruggles & Donna Nashawaty, Town Manager

Josh Trow opened the meeting at 7:16AM.

Ambulance- Donna Nashawaty announced that she has disseminated budget process to the Finance Director and department budgets will be sent out to Department Heads very shortly. The ambulance line is in the Fire Department. and on that note a decision must be made shortly about the status of the ambulance so that a dollar figure can be placed on that line item. Josh Trow asked about any communication from New London Ambulance. Chief Ruggles indicated they are going thru reorganization and it has been difficult to contact someone Austin Brown said that Director Tim Monahan was leaving and thought New London Ambulance had been through the first round of interviews. Donna Nashawaty felt it was important to speak to an Executive of the hospital and not the Director. Josh Trow feels it is imperative that we have a signed contract as he does not feel we are being provided the service and coverage we agreed upon. Josh Trow brought everyone up to date of how we came to be serviced by New London Ambulance. It was noted that New London is experiencing some of the same issue as Sunapee getting coverage from New London Ambulance. Donna Nashawaty wants Fire Wards vision for ambulance service. Josh Trow suggested putting together a bullet list of what we expect for coverage etc. Austin Brown replied that we should look at NFPA standards ensuring we are meeting their standard. Donna Nashawaty stated we need a itemized list to present to New London Hospital before we meet with them, and is hoping this can be put together for the next meeting. Jake Paris stated at some point we need to talk about having our own ambulance. Jake Paris shared an experience he witnessed this summer in the harbor and the long arrival time of the ambulance. Austin Brown noted that people assume we have our own ambulance especially our seasonal population. Jake Paris agreed. Chief Ruggles cautioned that the cost to purchase and equip a new ambulance would be approximately \$200,000 which is not including having to employ personnel 24/7. The Fire Wards all agreed we should not be looking at making money, we need to be concerned with lives. Donna Nashawaty feels we should try to consult with Newport again. Josh Trow reiterated we need to come up with a list of what we want and try to negotiate with both Newport and New London Ambulance and see what they can provide us. Donna Nashawaty explained some of the insurance issues involved with providing our own ambulance service. Josh Trow stated we need to get something that documents our calls with New London Ambulance. Austin Brown noted we have actually had 10 mutual aid that required ambulances other than New London. Austin Brown expressed his concerns about what happens when all New London Ambulances are in service and the time it

takes for backup. Chief Ruggles took exception to this as he stated it only takes Lebanon 35 minutes to arrive in Sunapee. Jake Paris stated this is unacceptable when it comes to that first all-important hour, and if it were your family member I believe you would feel the same way. Donna Nashawaty asked that we think outside box and hire someone per diem to be housed in our station. Chief Ruggles stated this will not work as we are not allowed to drive the ambulance. Donna Nashawaty feels this still should be on the table in discussion with New London Ambulance. Chief Ruggles questioned if New London Ambulance have difficulties hiring personnel where we are going to them. Austin Brown gave an example of calls when he could have taken the ambulance. Chief Ruggles stated this will not work as we do not meet their criteria. Josh Trow feels we should not drop this topic and it should be discussed with New London Ambulance.

Human Resource – Donna Nashawaty started the discussion noting that the Fire Department is different than most departments when it comes to begin and end times for timecard purposes. There are so many different activities the Fire Department performs such as parades special details etc. She questioned if we have an internal guideline governing pay on these types of activities. Donna Nashawaty went on to say we should be billing back some of the business, clubs etc., but at this point we do not have a detail pay rate. For instance, the Looney Plunge in the winter. Donna Nashawaty asked if someone like the photographer gets paid for these types of details, and it was answered if the photographer attends then yes. Josh Trow stated we should have a detail rate for non-emergency situations such as drills and feels we should charge for excessive alarms. Josh Trow explained the Police department has a detail rate and feels the Fire Department should also. Josh Trow said the Fire Wards should see the calls on a quarterly basis and that will be an opportunity to check for repeat alarms.

Chief Ruggles explained he receives run sheets that have been entered in the Fire House Program on a monthly from the Administrative Assistant. The Fire Wards requested to see the timesheets quarterly. Donna Nashawaty stated it is very important to remember that everyone is an employee now there are no more volunteers. Austin Brown reminded everyone how important it is to maintain the correct hours especially if we had to file a workman's compensation claim. Donna Nashawaty explained it is the Chief's decision on how many personnel are needed. Chief Ruggles explained that even though we do not attend many we do go to parades normally in Newport, Claremont and New London and personnel now get paid for their attendance. Austin Brown suggested that we monitor calls of this nature during the next year, and Donna Nashawaty agreed saying the Chief is responsible for his budget that includes any of these extra functions. The next year will be a good test with the new pay table.

Josh Trow questioned why the Chief has not moved forward with filling and hiring the positions in the Fire/EMS Department. It was noted that Primex is conducting a class on interviewing and hiring and Chief Ruggles would like to attend that class before he proceeds. Chief Ruggles asked for guidance concerning the Administrative Assistant and Custodian, and

if these should be posted. The Fire Wards agreed they should be posted, and they will be posted internally first as with any other position available in the town.

Chief Ruggles explained to the Fire Wards that the Fire Academy Officer 1 at NH Fire Academy is full for this period, therefore, he would not be able to meet the deadline he was given to complete the course. He asked to take the NFPA online course instead. Chief Ruggles felt the one given in Concord is out of date and too much book work and not enough practical. Jake Paris disagreed and said he feels they are now up to date. The system is now working better after they discovered the issues Chief Ruggles is referring to. Jake Paris is not in favor of an on-line course because he feels networking is very important element of enrolling in any course. Austin Brown stated there is another course available that might work. Josh Trow asked if we could compensate Chief Ruggles for taking time off his full-time job. Donna Nashawaty explained what we do for the Chief we have to do for all other fire department personnel. Josh Trow stated maybe we should adjust the Chief's pay in order to compensate. Jake Paris asked if it is easier to come up with an hourly rate rather than a stipend. Chief Ruggles opinion is to have an hourly rate for the Chief in 2020. Donna Nashawaty cautioned the Fire Wards about an hourly wage because if that is the case, we are probably talking about another \$4,000-\$5,000. A motion was made by Josh Trow and seconded by Jake Paris to add a line to the pay table for Chief Training at the rate of \$25.00 per hour. The compensation will be disbursed upon successful completion of a course, and any training the Chief wants to enroll in must be preapproved by the Fire Wards.

It was noted the Administrative Assistant and Custodian are on the Town's 18 step pay able. Josh Trow remarked it is very important that we pay our personnel fairly for the jobs they are trained to do. Austin Brown made a motion and it was seconded to approve the pay table for Sunapee Fire/EMS as presented. This will have to be approved by the Board of Selectmen.

SOP- The SOP's will be worked on at the next meeting.

Recruitment- Chief Ruggles stated he has ordered a banner to be placed on the Safety Services Building to recruit members. He also has had conversations with other Chiefs in the area about their recruitment process. Chief Ruggles met with New London Fire Chief Jay Lyons regarding their Jr. Program, and hopes to have some information for the Fire Wards at the next meeting. Sunapee Fire Department Firefighter, Lance Harbor works for FEMA and has offered his services to the Chief.

Josh Trow made a motion and it was seconded by Jake Paris to enter non-public session at 8:38AM per RSA91-A:3 II(b) – The hiring of any person as a public employee. All in favor.

A motion was made by Josh Trow and seconded by Austin Brown to return to public session at 8:54AM. There was a motion made by Jake Paris and seconded by Austin Brown to seal the

minutes of the non-public session as this would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of the Board. All in favor.

Donna Nashawaty shared that there is a very good article in the July/August 2019 Town & City Magazine about Fire Fighters.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56AM.

Submitted by:

Betty H. Ramspott