

Board of Firewards

Town of New London – DRAFT Meeting Minutes

April 1st, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 PM with the following members in attendance: John Ryan, Bill Degnan, Pete Lauridsen, Karen Hoglund and Chair Steve Ensign by phone. Selectboard representative Janet Kidder and Fire Chief Jason Lyon were also in attendance. There was a recommendation to accept the Draft Minutes of the February meeting and they were accepted as posted. Motion made by Pete Lauridsen and second by John Ryan.

General Updates regarding NLFD calls and mutual aid:

The NLFD has responded to 211 calls and has been steady with miscellaneous calls. The NLFD is being requested for more “back to back” incidents, however no major fires since the five in the beginning of the year. Jay talked about a CO response at The Seasons and a reported smoke in the building on the campus of CSC at Rooke Dorm.

The budget/Town Meeting update:

Town Meeting on March 13th went well. Pete Lauridsen made a motion from the floor to increase the amount requested for the Fire Department Utility Truck, from \$55,000 to the amount of to \$77,000. The justification was based upon the most recent quotes and the article passed. Chair Ensign inquired about the time frame for the ordering of the replacement. Jay explained the process and hopefully the delivery shouldn't take more than 4 to 6 months. Selectmen Kidder inquired about the cost of the plow if it is replaced, and they are currently around \$10,000. The Board felt a new plow probably made sense, since the old one is 15 years old.

Fire Apparatus update:

The new Engine 2 is completely outfitted and is in service. The old engine has been sold to a company in West Berlin, NJ called Digger Land, an amusement park. The \$18,200 will be deposited into the general fund from the sale of the apparatus.

Dispatch:

Steve inquired about the issues with Active 911/Active alert. He asked about the “General Alert” designation and mapping inconsistencies. He asked why a call on I-89 is showing the location in Sullivan County. Jay explained that dispatch has a new software operating system. Chief Cobb and the CSI team have been working to resolve the issues. Steve was concerned about making sure that emergency responders were dispatched to the correct location. Jay was more concerned about the time it takes for the Fire Department to be toned out and used the smoke in the building example. Hopefully, as the dispatchers become more acclimated to the new system, the time it takes will be reduced to meet the National Standard.

Appointments:

Steve talked about Jay's recommendation to appoint Courtney Heath as the Deputy Chief and Mike Matthy and Geoff Daley as the Captains. Jay explained the rationale behind his recommendation. Discussion flowed. Steve Ensign called for the vote Ryan made a motion which was seconded by Bill Degnan. The motion passed with Steve abstaining because he was participating by phone.

Steve talked about Board of Fireward appointments for 2024. Steve indicated that he was still interested as well as John Ryan. Steve will draft up an email to the Town Administrator asking for the two to be considered by the Board of Selectmen.

Selectmen's Report:

Janet Kidder will continue to be the Firewards representative, Chief Fireward Ensign expressed his appreciation as it assists with the continuity moving forward. Bill Helm is now the Chair, Bebe Casey is the Budget Committee Rep and Janet will also be the Water Department and Tri-Town Assessing rep.

The NL - Springfield Water Precinct is moving forward with the installation of the Main Street water replacement. A bond was approved and a contractor has been chosen. The project should start end of April or beginning of May and will be constructed in 3 phases. They are hoping that it should take 270 days but the project will have a significant impact on Main Street. Advanced notification/communications will be important.

New London Ambulance:

Steve talked about the proposed contract between the Town of New London and New London Hospital. Steve was a little concerned with a 90 day cancellation notice. Jay has a meeting tomorrow at the Hospital and will give an update at the next meeting. Jay talked about the number of ambulances available to respond to calls the 7 towns. The number increased number of EMS were discussed and the issue with transfers from one hospital to another. Most FDs provide EMS, however NLH has provided a great level of service over the years. There is a concern about EMS backup and the travel distance if NLH ambulance is not available (Lebanon, Franklin, Newport, etc). John Ryan asked about forming an oversight committee (Board of EMS), but this might be difficult as the Hospital is privately owned. Steve talked about the history of the ambulance and how EMS was provided in the past. Steve talked about the support from local residents as well as the \$200,000 that the Town of New London gives to subsidize the Ambulance. Janet talked about the cost for New London to run an ambulance and although there might be a desire by some for the NLFD to operate one, the cost implications would need to be reviewed and justified. Pete Lauridsen asked about the number of ambulances available? He thought there were at least two that the hospital operated. Jay clarified that NLH has five currently, but these five are not staffed all the time, usually there are two to three during the day and sometimes only 1 at night. Back up ambulance coverage was discussed. More information will follow.

Ice out on the lakes:

Steve inquired about the boat launch access to the lakes and ponds as the ice is not out, but the ramps are still blocked. The boat is ready to respond to any call on the lakes and we could use the plow if needed.

Other Business:

The Annual NLFFA dinner will be held next week on April 16th at the Refinery. Social hour will start at 5:30 with the dinner at 6:30-ish

Body Fanjoy has submitted a letter to the Firewards and is interested in the live in program. Jay talked about the potential of having more than one live in student and the benefits of having a succession plan. Further discussion will follow at our next meeting.

Bill Degnan asked about a comment made by the Selectboard during Town Meeting about a large building project and the need for a building inspection services. Jay thought that the comment was in reference to the New London Place project or the workforce housing project behind the NL Shopping Plaza. Janet clarified that the Twin Pines project would be 60 units divided in 4 buildings and Continuum Project is behind the Hospital

between County Road and Parkside. Both were successful with supplemental water (drilled Wells) for drinking and the sprinkler system would be supplied off the Water Precinct.

Selectmen Kidder asked about any updates regarding the Lake Sunapee Country Club? The variance request is still being reviewed by the Fire Marshal's Office (FMO). A corrective plan of action was been submitted to the NLFD and therefore the Permit of Assembly has been issued. Former NH State Fire Marshal Bill Degnan explained the variance process. We are still working with the property owner and the FMO.

Next Meeting: May 13th at 4:30 PM

Meeting adjourned 5:31 Pm. Motion made by Karen Hoglund and seconded by John Ryan.

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