

TOWN OF LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
February 25, 2013

Selectmen's Meeting

Members Present: John R. Brunelle, Chairman
Brent Lemire
Frank Byron
M. Patricia Jewett

Members Absent: George Lambert (excused)

Also Present: Jason Hoch, Town Administrator

5:00 p.m. Paperwork Review

5:40 p.m. Consultation with Legal Counsel

6:00 p.m. Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Review of Items for Consent:

1. Approval of Payroll & Accounts Payable weeks of February 18 & 25
2. Prospective approval of Payroll & Accounts Payable week of March 3
3. Minutes of February 11

Approval of Consent Items

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** that the Board of Selectmen approve the items listed under consent. Selectman P. Jewett **seconded** the motion. The motion carried **4-0-0**.

Request for Items - Other Business

None

EMS Program Update - Fire Chief and Paramedic Jim Rea

Chief Fraitzl came forward with Firefighter Paramedic James Rea. The Chief explained that Jim is one of their two full time staff and was put through the paramedic program in 2010 as part of the warrant article to provide the Town with a full time paramedic. The Chief stated that when he came on board about a year ago and started looking at the department organizationally, right away he identified some concerns in the field of EMS, which accounts for roughly half of the calls received by the Fire Department deals. Statistically in 2011, it was 44.65% of the total calls and in 2012 it was 49.11%. The Chief stated that one of the things that was identified right away was a lack of EMS training. In order to be nationally registered as an EMT in the State of NH, you have to do this through the National Registry Emergency Technician, which is a national

organization; they require that you recertify every two years. As part of that re-certification, depending upon skill levels, anywhere from a 24 to 48 hour continuing educational program and 48 hours of continuing over and above the 24 to 48 hour refresher program. You have to show documentation of 48 hours training in other areas. Mr. Fraitzl also mentioned that they were not providing this as an organization; the EMT and EMS personnel were basically left on their own to train. In addition, the FD was not regularly providing or reporting to the State of New Hampshire under the Trauma and Emergency Medical Services incident reporting system. There were quite a few concerning issues and in order to address those in a timely fashion, Jim stepped forward and offered to fill the vacant EMS Coordinator position. The Chief took him up on this offer, given his level as a paramedic; he was fully aware of the protocols of all levels, paramedic being the highest of the three levels. Jim had already identified some of the concerns and a few more and with guidance worked his way through addressing some of those concerns; establishing a reporting system, compliance with the State's reporting system, revising the FD's medical resource environment with St. Joseph's Hospital (every agency is required to have a medical resource facility; we had not updated our agreement with them in a number of years), what we didn't have was a paramedic or narcotics agreement. While we had Jim as a paramedic, he didn't have the tools or medications to work as a paramedic. Jim is not the only paramedic, there are two other paramedics on call department and as of the first of March, they will actually have a 4th paramedic (we are bringing on a new call firefighter who is already a paramedic).

Jim Rea came forward to summarize his report to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Rea started out by saying that basically as soon as the Chief came on board last March, Jim's mission was to try to fix all to the concerns within the EMS department. They basically started off by identifying all the problems and set their goals to prioritize what the problems were and fixed the big problems right away and they are continuing to do that. Jim went on to say that the biggest deficiencies they had were the State required reporting that requires a patient report to be generated for each medical call. Jim stated that what he ended up doing was communicating with Fran Dupuis, who is LFD's EMS coordinator at St. Joseph's (our resource hospital), she gave them advice, the Chief had a lot of input and together they developed a plan where we got patient report documents from St. Joe's and also the notice of privacy practices and patient refusals were updated and sent to the Town Attorney along with the contract with St. Joseph's Hospital for review and approval. This was an effort to confirm that the Town was protected from liability and compliant with Federal and State guidelines. The Town Attorney reviewed the documents and approved all of them. Because of HIPAA and the liability with storing medical records, we developed a plan where potentially some of the reports like patient care reports; we can actually do those online, and any of the hard copies were scanned into the computer and attached to the online patient care reports, and the hard copies are all shredded; the FD is actually doing fully electronic documentation with the help of Ed Glancy, who was able to get them the capability to attach and scan documents. Jim went on to say that everytime the engine is called for any kind of medical response, a patient care report is generated, so they are in compliance. The contract was a big issue; part of the problem was that there was no inventory or supply management. They found that their contract allowed for one medication box at that EMT intermediate level, they

didn't have paramedic items at that time, so that was not an issue. What they had was enough medications to complete 2 medication boxes as well as extra, that was just sitting in storage, and most of the medications we had were things they didn't have a need for or were going to expire anyway. Jim stated that he worked with Fran at St. Joe's and they were able to get their primary med kit updated and stocked at mass capacity and were able to turn in all the extra medications to St. Joe's. Jim mentioned that they have also initiated some training on how to re-supply the medication properly. Jim stated that they also started a medication tracking system, it has a little plastic tab to close, and has a number on it and you track the tag, which helps with the inventory and addresses some of the security issues. EMS training was a huge issue, EMT's need about 48 hours of continuing education every two years to keep their certification, advanced EMT's need 36 hours of con-ed and the paramedics need 24 hours of con-ed, there are also several certifications they need to keep current, they also need 24 structured training and also some transition training. The last 2 years, before the Chief came on board, there was no EMS training going on in the LFD. In April, they started right away with their first EMS training and this was on EMS documentation. Jim stated that they also now do EMS training once a month for two hours; what they are looking to do in the near future is to contract with an outside EMS education company. They are hoping to have someone come in from the outside (professional Instructors) and teach a 3 hour class once a month and that class will include the continuing education they need and also over time each month, it will knock out some of the requirements for their refresher training, so they won't have to send every EMT to a separate refresher training every two years. A refresher training costs about \$225 - \$250 per student. Jim mentioned that another issue was that when EMT's get their certification, there was no mentoring process or precepting. Chris Schofield was the first student of the preceptor program and went through that successfully and we now have another EMT that is going to be going through that and just graduated from the EMT basic program. Jim stated that basically they assigned preceptor to that candidate, they will be going to med calls with preceptor supervision doing patient care, getting the initial experience. Jim also mentioned that he had been working on the paramedic medications. This was a couple month process to be able to get these on their primary med call vehicle which is Rescue 1. They actually determined that Rescue 1 was going to be the vehicle for med calls, it was sitting there without a real job until the Chief decided to make that the primary piece, which has worked out wonderfully. We are using the Rescue all the time now. We have a med compartment, when we do get the paramedic medications, it is required that the narcotics be double locked, so we have a medical cabinet that we put inside the orange cabinet and inside that, there is another cabinet, it is double locked and they are checked daily. The only people that have access to those medications are the paramedics in the department. The Chief stated that this is in compliance with the Federal drug requirements. Jim stated that the last couple of things are the CPR, first aid as well as their new child safety seat inspection program. Over the last couple of years, CPR and first aid went out the door, we had had a good program. Jim stated that the current Chief is very community service oriented and when asked about about CPR training, the Chief said absolutely, whatever the community needs, we will do it. Jim stated that they have trained about 80 people in CPR since last March. They are going to be going to Pine Creek, a 55+ community, to do 2 CPR courses and 2 first aid classes. Jim mentioned that they also got the whole Police Department

CPR certified. Jim mentioned that a resident was asking if the Town provides services for child safety seat installation and inspection, and we said no, they thought the Police Department did, but at that time they did not have someone available. Jim stated that they called around to other communities and found out that technicians that can do this are few and far between around the state, so Jim suggested that he get certified in the Child Safety Seat Certification which can be another service the FD can provide to the community. The course is a 16 hour course, which we have already gotten through and have already started inspecting seats and have actually been getting referrals from other Towns.

Chief Fraitzl had a couple of things, he stated that as Jim mentioned they have put in place a preceptor program so that our new EMTs or those that have advanced to the next level have a guidance program and put that into place because we had more interest and at this point we have more EMTs in the department now than the department has ever had. The Chief stated that they have 3 paramedics now and will have 4 at the end of the month; currently we have 4 advanced EMTs and 1 Firefighter who is in the advanced class right now and should be finishing within the month and we have one long time member of the FD who went out over the fall and did the 200+ hour EMT class and has a National Registry Card. The preceptor program has someone helping and coaching them along so they can build confidence. The Chief stated that this is Jim's project and he has done a great job and is extremely impressed and proud of what he has done. Mrs. Jewett had a question in regards to having to St. Josephs Hospital and if a patient had to go there or could they go to any hospital. The Chief stated that they can go to any hospital; the department must have to have a medical resource facility, which has been historically St. Joseph's, but they can transport to any one of the New Hampshire hospitals. Mr. Byron had a question on continuity of care: you as a paramedic get a call to go to a home and you start treatment there, how does the treatment fall? Jim stated that when they first arrive, they will start the initial care, and as soon as the Hudson ambulance arrives they will do a transfer to Hudson, they will have written down the medication list, medical history, etc. Basically at that point the Hudson ambulance has taken over patient care and generate their own patient report and this all goes into the State website, which the emergency room can access. Mr. Byron asked if the Litchfield EMT accompanies the patient to the hospital. Jim stated that usually the more non-critical patients will be transported by Hudson and the more critical, at least one of the Litchfield EMT's will go and help out. The Chief stated that if Hudson does not have a paramedic on the ambulance and can't get one, our agreement that they have to provide a paramedic on the ambulance or at the minimum an EMTI, but if the primary ambulance is out and the other paramedic on duty in Hudson is unavailable and if it is going to take some time, Jim can actually continue care in the Hudson ambulance and provide the same level of care. Mr. Byron asked the Chief to talk about the use of the Rescue versus the tanker. The Chief stated that they have a tanker (which stores a large amount of water and has a pump on it), they have 3 engines that have some water as well as pumps, and then they have the rescue which does not carry any water or have a pump. It basically carries the Jaws of Life, medical equipment and so forth. Before the Chief arrived, the Rescue truck really had no role in the organization, which was an easy decision, that if they have it they are going to use it for medical calls; that way they are not exposing water and pumps to sub zero temperatures, it is a smaller

vehicle which is easier to maneuver and much easier to train the department on. The Rescue is the primary vehicle to all medical calls, motor vehicle accidents, etc.

Jim also wanted to mention something about the defibrillators that are on the warrant article, they have been doing an incredible amount of research comparing monitors and have already started demos. If the warrant passes they will be able to purchase two new monitors which is critical to be able to provide to a paramedic to provide care.

Public Input

Ann Moody from 28 Garden Drive came in front of the Board to ask questions about the Litchfield Website, she stated that there are some documents that she can no longer find. Mr. Brunelle explained to her how to find these documents and if they are not there he will add them (There are currently updates going on to the website).

Administrator Report

New Business

Blizzard Reimbursement

Jason stated that he is not sure that anything will develop out of this; two weeks ago he got a call from the State Office of Emergency Management looking for a ballpark number for what our costs were for dealing with the snowstorm of the 9th and 10th. There were doing a preliminary damage assessment. Jason mentioned that he hasn't heard any more and his guess is that we will not hit the threshold for it. Jason stated that he did a quick tally of our expenses for that weekend which was about \$15,000. He referred to an article from the Eagle Tribune about the storm and noted that compared to other towns, Litchfield had a much lower cost.

Stormwater Permit

The re-issued draft small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) general permit for New Hampshire is now available for public comment. The public comment period is from February 12, 2013 – April 13, 2013. Jack will be attending the Manchester Regional Stormwater Group on Tuesday and Jason will be attending the Nashua Group next week. Jason mentioned that there will be a public hearing on March 14th in Portsmouth, NH and they hope is to issue the permit in the fall. Jason mentioned that their hope is to issue a permit in the Fall which would start a clock for the Town for the first phase, which we would need to send a written response of our broad plan and then get into the more technical plan within the coming year. If the rest of this time table holds there will be a cost implication that the Board needs to look at for 2014.

Utility Assessing

Jason stated to the Board that his plan for tonight is to introduce one of the things that he is looking at and start a conversation about the issues we have. Jason wanted to discuss the conversation they had at the non-public with Legal Counsel at the end of last meeting. When the Town did their revaluation with Pennichuck East for 2010, their rate went up. Pennichuck challenged that assessment and challenged it in Superior Court. While this went forward, we

moved into 2011 and they then filed a claim in Superior Court for 2011. We have been dabbling in this on and off for about a year and a half or so. We were getting to the point where it was getting close to preparing for trial, which would have the cost for our Counsel for trial and the prep work for that. Jason mentioned that one of the things that came up in the conversation was having a secondary expert witness; we were looking at a fairly sizable cost for that (around \$25,000 for service expenses). In round numbers, our assessment was around \$9 million, Pennichuck was claiming it was around \$4 million. Jason stated that in terms of utility assessing unlike residential assessing, where you can look at comparables and sales, there are a variety of methodologies all accepted by the court. Looking at the potential risk and exposure of going back to a significant loss of r valuation from 2010 (if all or part of the assessment didn't hold as well as going forward. Counsel and Jason discussed a potential settlement to give us a known number. A couple of things in that settlement would be to gradually reduce the assessment rather than having it all fall off in one year; the other piece was knowing that we do a reval every five years, was to lock in a value for five years, this deal with the claims behind us and keeps 2013 and 2014 off the table, so we would do a fresh reval in 2015. Jason mentioned that with that, the settlement agreement with Pennichuck reduces their 2010 assessment from \$9,051,900. to \$7,900,000. Their 2011 assessment to \$7,400,000, their 2012 to \$7,000,000, 2013 to \$6,000,000 and \$5,750,000 for 2014. We would be refunding them payments for 2010, 2011 and 2012; there will be no interest, they agreed to waive any interest charges on that. In 2015 we will do a full reval. Selectman B. Lemire motioned that the Board of Selectmen approve the settlement agreement as drafted by the Attorney and presented to the Board tonight. Selectman P. Jewett seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Jason also stated that with the resolution of the Pennichuck issue, but knowing that we need to prepare for utility assessing between now and the next revaluation, now that Avitar is no longer offering that service, Jason requested a proposal from Skip Sansoucy. The proposal would be for 2 years of updates and 1 full reval in 2015. The cumulative price is \$28,000 per year for the 3 years. This would mean that we would need to up our overall assessing budget line in future years to cover this cost. We could cover this year's cost through the accumulated savings that we've been setting aside. Unfortunately, building the dataset from scratch means the first cycle is more costly. His proposal outlines some of the other items for easements that once compiled, are updated on a much less frequent timeline.

The other alternative is to use the state values, which have the drawback of being lower than the methodology we use and over the past few years, they have not been ready by September 1, which then delays tax rate setting.

Jason passed a spreadsheet out to the Board that summarizes the other utility properties we have and our valuation vs. the state. Moving the state value for these 4 utilities would result in a decrease of valuation of \$10,656,122. At a tax rate of \$20, this would be a revenue loss of \$213,122. So, while the annual cost for utility assessing is relatively steep, avoiding the loss of valuation will more than pay for the services. Jason stated to the Board that he is not looking for an answer tonight that he just wanted to introduce it to the Board and bring back up at a later

date.

Old Business

Code Red

Jason mentioned that we launched our start call to build the database with the Code Red system last week. This system will notify people by phone, cell phone, e-mail, text, etc. Validata ran the week of 2/18/2013. The All Call database consisted of 3,066 records to be called. From the All Call, there were 862 records that were not connected to, which they ran through Validata. Once Validata completed, it still was unable to connect to 734 records, proving to be non-working numbers. This means that 24% of our database was removed. The first call that went out, they connected with about 71% of those. Jason stated that the active database of phone numbers that they have been able to validate is about 2,300. Jason also mentioned that the initial approach was the phone call, they have slowly started to get the message out in other places to help people understand why this call from Florida coming in or what is this code red. The announcement have been put out on our website and rolling on cable tv. The next piece to grow it is people enrolling in our system which can be done by going onto the main website page and go onto the registration page, you can enroll additional phone numbers for calls or emails or people who do not have landline can register their cell numbers. Jason mentioned that as of Friday, they have picked up about 500 residents that have gone through the enrollment process. Jason stated that the next stage of this (which they have started putting flyers out) is having some way of having the FD leave some cards as they deal with service calls or training. We can also have a presence at the polls and maybe enroll people there.

State Fire Marshal Nixle Service

Jason mentioned to the Board that the State Fire Marshal has sent out a message to say that they are using Nixle for information that the State Fire Marshal's Office wants to share with residents.

Legal Services

Jason stated that the Board got back to him with their top 3 proposals. Jason summed them up and stated they had three firms scored the highest across all of the Board's ratings: Donahue, Tucker & Ciandella; Mitchell Municipal and Hage, Hodes. Jason asked the Board where they wanted to go next. The Board discussed what they wanted to do and decided to have a meeting on the 25th of March to bring in the top 3 firms and listen to what they have to offer. Jason mentioned that they could have one firm come in on the meeting of the 18th and the other two on the meeting of the 25th.

Workers Comp Renewal

Jason mentioned that Primex is offering a renewal if we commit to the next two years, it has a maximum increase of 8% for each year for our workers comp. Our overall cost for our current year is \$57,295. Jason also received a quote from LGC for 2013, which is for \$57,077. In the past 2 years, their rate increase has been 9%. Potential benefit of integration with Property &

Liability insurance. Commitment would be only one year. No additional requirements for risk management/mitigation measures. Jason met with a Member Services Rep from Primex on 2/21, outlined concerns with the Loss Mitigation Agreement not matching our organization's scale. At the end of the day on Friday, Jason got a new Loss Mitigation Agreement from Primex. Changes to requirements so that 3 employees from various departments attend Supervisor's Academy over the next year. The Supervisor's Academy is a four day training program. Also, reduced HR requirement to 2 courses. Selectman Byron had questions about what Workers Comp had to do with Supervisor's Academy. Mr. Lemire also stated his concerns as well as Mr. Brunelle. It was the consensus of the Board not to participate in the Primex rate guarantee program because of the requirements. Jason will pass this along to them.

Voter Information Flyer

Mr. Brunelle stated that it is out on draft and solicited for feedback, all feedback has been integrated into it. It needs to be approved tonight so that it can get to the printer and get to the HLN for stuffing. The Board decided that the draft was good. Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** to authorize the TA to send to the printer. Selectman P. Jewett **seconded** the motion. The motion carried **4-0-0**.

Other Items

The next Board of Selectmen meetings will be held on March 11th, 18th and 25th.

Selectmen Reports

Selectman J. Brunelle wanted to mention that Candidate's night is on March, 9th at 6:30 at Campbell High School Auditorium. All the candidates have been invited.

Selectman P. Jewett read a thank you letter from one of the servicemen (Sean Wright) that received a package around Christmas. Mrs. Jewett also mentioned that she had a couple more thank you's from parents of servicemen who received packages.

The next meeting of the Conservation Group will be on Thursday the 7th of March.

Mrs. Jewett wanted to mention that the Winterfest was awesome and very well organized. Everyone had a great time. The Board thanked the Recreation Commission especially Keith Buxton and Colleen Gamache.

Items moved from Consent

No items moved

Other Business

No other Business

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** to Adjourn. Selectman P. Jewett **seconded** the motion. The

motion carried **4-0-0**.

The Meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be March 11th at 6:00 pm at Town Hall.

Approved March 11, 2013