



Select Board

Town of Hinesburg
10632 Route 116 Hinesburg VT 05461
802.482.2281 | hinesburg.org

Meeting Minutes – January 15, 2020

- Approved 1/22/20 -

Attending the Meeting: Phil Pouech, Aaron Kimball, Merrily Lovell, Jeff French, Renae Marshall, Joy Dubin Grossman, Tom Ayer (joined the meeting at 6:57)

Meeting called to order at 6:36 p.m.

Phil said the focus of this meeting is to gather information on the option to hire outside ambulance service for Hinesburg. Both Charlotte and Richmond have submitted proposals for ambulance service.

Phil also acknowledged St. Mike's for service to Hinesburg for 50 years at no cost to the Town.

There were no changes to the agenda or public comment.

Review of Proposals for Ambulance Transport Services (contracted services)

Dick St. George, Rob Mullen and Fritz Tegatz, were present to answer questions relating to Charlotte's proposal for service.

Dick said their proposal is to split the Town along Route 116 and also cover the Mechanicsville Road loop as well as CVU. The proposal was written to be responsible to Charlotte and Hinesburg residents. In 2019, only 2 EMS calls went to an outside agency. They handle 300 to 350 transports a year and can accommodate about 150 more for turnover time. Dick said there is a point where too high a turnover results in the ambulance not being in service to answer calls.

Renae asked about short term and long term coverage for Hinesburg. Dick said they are willing help out if it is 3 months or 3 years.

Dick said they have 24/7, 365 day a year coverage with a paid crew. They have one full time paramedic, four per diem paramedics with a total staff of 27 per diem AEMT's, 1 per diem EMT and 1 per diem EMR. They have 7 active volunteers all at the EMT rate. The average call lasts 2 ½ to 3 hours. Last year they had 473 calls.

The proposal has been reviewed by the Charlotte Select Board.

Phil asked about the income from billing for transport that helps offset cost of service. Dick said there is about a 30% recovery rate from insurance billing.

Renae asked about the overlapping area that both Charlotte and Richmond are proposing to cover. Dick said in order to sell this to Charlotte voters he included CVU as Charlotte students attend the school. To be guaranteed their contract include the Mechanicsville loop and CVU is a sticking point.

Roger Giroux asked if there would be balance billing the patient for what insurance does not cover. Dick said he believes the stipend was meant to make up difference. In Charlotte the patient will get a bill, Medicare and Medicaid rules are that three bills are sent. If after three bills are sent, if there is no payment it is written off to Charlotte residents since they are financing the ambulance. Dick said he would have to clarify that question with his Board but believes that the stipend picks up the billing requirement. He added if they are finding out they are not getting enough to break even the stipend would increase.

Andrea asked with the proposal for outside service will we still have EMT's in Hinesburg? If so, we may need to be paying for some staff EMT's. Phil said that would be the expectation.

Ed Waite said yes, Hinesburg EMT's can deal with a cardiac arrest but the patient still needs to be transported and the shorter transport time is what will benefit the patient.

Paul Lamberson asked about the Charlotte full time paid human resources work chart. Do employees report through the department and are ultimately paid by the town. Dick said they are a 501(c) 3 and work for the Town of Charlotte on a memorandum of agreement. They have been a separate entity since their founding in 1950, and work under contract. All employees are fully covered, they follow the IRS rulings on per diem's for maximum number of hours. They are mostly financed by the Town of Charlotte, billing recovery is about 22%.

Paul asked what Hinesburg's obligation to St. George is. Phil said St. George currently contracts with Hinesburg. Hinesburg would bring them into whatever coverage we decide to go with.

A resident said looking at census data back to 1980 Hinesburg was the smallest and now with the growth rate Hinesburg has the largest population. With the size of the Town, how does it make sense to go with outside service? He lives on a hill in the east side of Town, if Richmond's turnover time is higher than Charlotte does that mean people on the west side of Route 116 are getting better service than he is paying the same taxes.

Dick said if the Town is split and one ambulance turns over a call the other will pick up the call.

Mike Chiarella, Miles Lamberson, and Jillian Leikawskas members of Richmond Rescue were present to answer questions on Richmond's proposal. Mike said they also operate as a 501(c) 3, they have 3 full time staff and 38 volunteers and a wait list for volunteers who want to join. They cover five towns; Richmond, Bolton, South Jericho, Huntington and North Starksboro.

They are on the road 7% of the time which is low and can take on more calls. Over the past 5 years they have responded in Hinesburg about 100 times. They have paramedic service. Their proposal is to cover Route 116 and everything east for a \$10.00 per capita rate.

They do offer a “member subscription” service at a cost of \$50.00 a year which cover all calls for the member.

Phil asked about billing and Mike said it works the same as Charlotte.

Phil asked if they have brought the proposal to their Select Board. Mike said they visit 5 different Boards and have not had the discussion of service to Hinesburg yet but do not anticipate any problems. Jeff asked why they are able to attract so many volunteers that they have a waiting list. Mike said they have worked to get to this point and have been involved with a lot of EMS initiatives with the State, they also have a Backcountry Rescue team that brings a lot of volunteers in.

Renae asked, in regards to the proposed per capita cost, if overlapping areas are included. Mike said yes that is in the proposal. Renae asked about coverage for St. George and Mike said they can cover that too. Renae asked about adjusting the proposal given the overlap and Mike said they can work on adjusting boundaries and costs.

Vicki Matthews asked if a 911 call would go to Richmond or Charlotte. Mike said 911 calls from Hinesburg go to Shelburne dispatch and depending on your location it would show which ambulance is covering that area.

Miles addressed the fact that most calls do not need transport service and someone is only billed if they are transported.

Tom asked Al Barber what the average response time was for St. Mike's. Al said average was 22 minutes. Tom said the map provided by Richmond seems comparable. Mike said they have averaged 16 minutes when responding to Hinesburg.

Paul Lamberson asked Richmond about the two truck scenario. Mike said they do not keep two crews on site, if there is a second call and he is on site he will call to get a driver and then can go out as needed in the second truck.

Phil asked each department what their facility is like. Mike said they just did a big upgrade last year, adding a third bay to the garage, training area, 4 private bedrooms, office space and kitchen. Dick said Charlotte has fire and rescue in the same building, they have bedrooms for the crew, dayrooms, and office, kitchen and training facilities. They have 4 double bays to accommodate both fire and rescue vehicles.

Dawn Francis thanked all the emergency responders in the room. She noted comparing the two proposals there is a difference of about \$15.00 per capita and wonders what the rational is for that. She asked each what their budget is. Richmond said they have a \$450,000 budget and suggests the difference is due to an economy of scale. They cover twice the size of Charlotte so have more calls and more billing revenue, also have less paid staff. Charlotte said they have a budget of \$514,000 with

450,000 being payroll and taxes. They have no outside contracts. Dawn followed by asking if there is an economy of scale and efficiencies to have more towns in a rescue service. Dick said yes and if the State instituted districts where each town paid in it there would be savings. Dawn asked about the utilization rate, Richmond replied 7% and Charlotte said less than half that. Utilization rate relates to hours on a call.

Andrea asked how Richmond paid for the expansion on the building. Mike said they were fortunate to have some substantial donors, they also used savings and took a small loan.

Terry Francis noted both departments run paramedic service. He asked what their obligation is to the district for paramedic intercepts and if the Town of Hinesburg expecting paramedic service each time. Charlotte said they have a paramedic on staff for three shifts a week. Intercepts could be one a week or two a day, the average is five to six a month. Their shifts are 12 hours. Richmond said currently they are covering about 35% of calls with a paramedic and as other staff gets licensed they expect it to go up over 50%. They provided seven paramedic intercepts last year and they also accept intercepts. Terry asked what level of service we are looking for and was told A level service which is Advanced EMT. Terry suggested if we do have a Hinesburg ambulance service, to get cross-trained AEMT and Firefighters. Terry also cautioned us to think about zoning in regards to elder and assisted living. With increased age comes increased need for emergency assistance.

Lucas Charbonneau addressed the importance of response time and asked why Richmond says it does not matter. As someone who has been on the other side, needing a fast response, he feels it does matter and asked Richmond to explain. Mike, of Richmond, said Lucas is not wrong and you want help to be there. Mike said he is looking at the patient outcome, how people end up in the end after being taken to the hospital and discharged. Does response time of less than 10 minutes or greater than 10 minutes change that? Mike also said there is the call where it does matter and part of what makes this work in Hinesburg is that we have First Response with a 3 to 6 minute response time. Getting the AED to someone in three to six minutes saves them, if the ambulance comes 4 minutes or eight minutes down the road, it was the first responder that made the difference.

L Porter, volunteer EMT, asked for clarification if Richmond and Charlotte were paramedic squads when built or became paramedic later. Mike, from Richmond, said paramedic level was not available when they started. They are now paramedic and plan on staying that way. Dick, from Charlotte, said it is the same for them.

Greg Matthews said he heard St. Mike's average response time is 22 minutes. He asked the question of response time to Richmond who answered 16 minutes and to Charlotte who answered eight to ten minutes.

John Lyman asked how the EMS level effect billing. Mike, of Richmond, said there are three levels; BLS (basic life support), ALS1 (advanced life support), ALS2 is the highest level of billing which includes a large list of treatments and interventions to qualify. John asked if that is universal and Mike said it is.

Dave Estey said the Town will be relying on Hinesburg first responders for EMS services in the future. That will increase the cost to taxpayers along with the increase to contract services. Phil agreed and

said even if we contract out the ambulance service it does not at all reduce Hinesburg's costs for responding.

Discussion / Next Steps for Bond Vote in March for Wastewater Upgrade

Renae reported that the surveys were read and Hinesburg did not qualify to apply for the grant funding as the median household income was too high. The USDA application is currently on hold and Renae is checking with the State to see if it still makes sense to have a bond vote in March. Renae said the State is looking at towns like Hinesburg experiencing hardship and there are some conversations about possibly directing other funds toward this. Renae hopes to have clarification on the necessity of a bond vote by next week's meeting.

Andrea said the survey only went to wastewater users, what about water users such as Triple L. Renae said the survey is directed by the USDA and their rules are to consider wastewater users only.

FY 21 Capital Budget Review and General Fund – Expenditure and Revenue

Renae has been meeting with department heads and talking about the salary line, wages now reflect a 2% increase. Removed the requested amount for a 5th position for the Highway Department. The Board agreed to add 10 or 15 thousand to help with work that might be contracted out.

Capital transfers – reduced the savings toward replacement of the 2009 dump truck, used reserve funds for the Case tractor.

Tom said we need to look ways to grow the grand list.

Discussed offsetting the tax rate by using some fund balance.

The Community Resource Center reduced their request by \$4,000 by increasing their grant allocation.

Town Administrator Report

- Renae continues her budget work.
- Working on the wastewater upgrade.
- Working on closing out the last items remaining for the Village North Sidewalk.
- Select Board Forum/Correspondence Received
- All correspondence received regarding the ambulance search are being put in a packet for the meeting on the 29th.

Review Minutes from January 8. 2020

Phil moved to approve the minutes as amended, second by Tom and approved with 5 yes votes.

Consider Approving Warrants

Aaron moved to approve the warrants, including payroll, as submitted by the Town Treasurer. Second by Tom and approved with 5 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 for personnel reasons including Renae and Joy. Second by Tom and approved with 5 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 Aaron and approved with 5 yes votes.

Merrily moved to come out of executive session, second by Tom and approved with 5 yes votes.

Merrily moved to adjourn, second by Tom and approved with 5 yes votes.

Respectfully submitted,
Valerie Spadaccini, Clerk of the Board



Selectboard Meeting

Sign-in Sheet

January 15, 2020

1. Scooter Macmillan

2. WILLIAM MURTAGH

3. John Lyman

4. Barbara Lyman

5. Vicki Matthews

6. Karen Charbonneau

7. Françoise Robitaille

8. Ed. Fournier

9. Scott LoSavio JR

10. Gill Coates

11. Matt Rivers

12. Bambi Lofthouse

13. Gregory P. Matthews

14. Jillian Lehouckay

15. Michael Chiarella

16. L. Charbonneau

17. Katie Charbonneau

18. Al Baker

19. Diane Barber

20. Lydia Fuller

21. Mike Keller

22. David Tesley

23. Mike Lamberson

24. Andrea Morgante

25. Richard Andrews

26. Michael Brannette

27. Fritz Tegatz

28. Paul Lamberson

29. Arwel Jen

30. RUC Tan

31. John Powers

32. Dawn Francis

33. Ken Proecis

34. Samie Carroll

35. Missy Ross

36. GP/My

37. Wendy Minzell

38. Margo Cassio

39. Amanda Vincent

40. Arne Donegan

41. Roger Giroux

42. Jeff Nevius

43. Kendall Blanck

44. Harrison Mead

45. Maggie Gordon

46. _____