



## Select Board

Town of Hinesburg  
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### Meeting Minutes – January 29, 2020

- Approved 2/05/2020 -

**Attending the Meeting:** Phil Pouech, Aaron Kimball, Merrily Lovell, Tom Ayer, Jeff French, Renae Marshall, Joy Dubin Grossman, and attached list.

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

There were no changes to the agenda and no public comment.

### Consider Appointment to the Select Board to Fill Current Vacancy until March 3rd Elections

Phil nominated Aaron Kimball to a position on the Select Board as Vice-Chair through March 2nd. Second by Tom and approved with 4 yes votes.

### Review of Proposals for Ambulance Transport Services

Eric Spivak and Dave Estey of Hinesburg Fire and First Response reviewed the proposal for Town Ambulance Service.

Eric stated if there is a structure fire in Hinesburg, we are required to have an ambulance on scene. He asked Richmond and Charlotte if there is a structure fire in their area of coverage will they send an ambulance. Both responded they would.

Dan Opton asked what the context of the question was. Eric said if we contract out we want to be sure of coverage.

Greg Matthews asked about coverage at sporting events. Eric said Hinesburg First Response stands by at football games. Aaron asked if it required and Eric said Champlain Valley Union High School (CVU) requires it. Phil asked if St. Mike's sent an ambulance for stand by and Eric said they have not been available to do so. Rob Mullen, Charlotte Fire and Rescue, said it is required to have medical trained staff at all high school events which would be covered by First Response. If an ambulance is needed they would respond, they also provide stand by events in Charlotte free of charge. They have also participated in the "mock car crash" at CVU.

Eric said there are basically two options, contract or Town operate. We must remember Hinesburg's contract obligations to St. George. He noted the Fire Dept. budget for the current fiscal year is \$311,940. The 20-21 budget for the Fire Dept. which includes one full time firefighter/advanced EMT is \$412,174. The Charlotte contract proposal is \$53,000. The Richmond contract proposal has ranged from \$35,000 to \$60,000 depending on the response area. He understands Richmond said they would consider responding to St. George which will increase their contract amount. He is using \$50,000 for the Richmond contract for the purpose of discussion. After adding Charlotte and Richmond amounts the entire budget is \$515,174 with no offsetting revenues from billings. Eric said this is an increase of \$203,234 and \$03.22 increase on the tax rate.

The Fire Dept. proposal for an ambulance and two full time week day firefighter/AEMT's is \$545,172. This is reduced by an estimate of \$93,000 in revenue billings. This results in a net budget of \$452,172 and increase in the tax rate of \$02.22. (this rate is what was quoted by Eric).

Eric said St. Mike's is open to, but has not committed to, continue to serve us if we are in the process of establishing our own ambulance service provided there is an end date.

The Fire Department has all the equipment with exception of the stretcher needed in use on Med 100. The ambulance is being donated. When time comes for a new ambulance there are options to buy a used unit.

As soon as the ambulance budget is approved, they will apply for the license and begin training. If desired, they can purchase an "out clause" when purchasing the ambulance. Eric said the taxpayers have said they want the issue decided now and many are in support of the ambulance. They are requesting the budget to be presented at Town Meeting to include a Town operated ambulance service.

David Estey said we have not talked about patient care. He referred to cases where responders were on site but not able to do anything till the ambulance arrived.

Terry Wilson said he feels we are missing the human element in this discussion. He feels if we have our own ambulance service, we can control our own destiny. He is not convinced that response times from Charlotte, Richmond or St. Mike's are that great and feels if we have an in Town service it would go a long way. He thanked the Select Board and everyone who worked on this issue. He proposed the vote be put to the Town.

Dick St. George, of Charlotte Fire and Rescue, said they fully support Hinesburg in having their own ambulance. They are here as neighbors, willing to help out for whatever time needed. They are part of a mutual aid system and receive assistance from Hinesburg at times.

Carol Jenkins asked about the lease/purchase amount of \$25,000 that was in the budget presented last week. She also asked about reference to a 2nd ambulance. Eric explained the \$25,000 was removed as it was for leasing an ambulance while waiting for a new one. That will now be put in the Capital Budget to save toward a replacement. The need for a second ambulance would be driven by call volume.

Diane Barber wanted to thank Richmond and Charlotte for being here and saying they would be good neighbors but she feels one of them is a good neighbor and the other is looking at this as a business. She said that three Fire Chiefs visiting said the best thing for Hinesburg is to have our own ambulance. In addressing the tax dollars, she said she has a problem with paying Charlotte \$52,000 and a bigger problem with giving Richmond \$35,000 or up to \$60,000. Will the fire budget loose fees from the \$40,000 contract with St. George? And then add the \$55 membership fee to Richmond. She said she pays taxes and is not willing to pay Richmond \$55 to come to her house with an ambulance. She noted there is one firefighter in the proposed budget. She said her understanding is they will be an EMS/firefighter. The second EMT will be on the ambulance. She noted that volunteerism in the Hinesburg department is strong. Addressing the talk about how important paramedics are she said two Fire Chiefs said paramedics do not have to be on our ambulance, we will not be a licensed paramedic service right away. Diane addressed the Richmond department in asking how they can ethically say they can give Hinesburg and St. George citizens that are paying for this service the coverage they need when they are now contracted with Bolton, Huntington, Richmond, Jericho and Underhill. They are trying to contract with parts of Starksboro and will add St. George and Hinesburg. When we need an ambulance, they will be some other place and we will end up having mutual aid come but we are paying for their service upwards of about \$50,000. Adding what Richmond wants to what Charlotte wants Diane said is about \$97,000 and then add the \$55.00 membership fee for households Richmond covers. Diane said the budget Al and the Fire Dept. officers figured out is \$132,998. There then is the revenue the Town gets back from peoples insurance which we will not see if contracted out. Diane said it is time to vote this onto the ballot for March. Diane presented a petition to the Board signed by 282 residents to petition the Select Board to include a vote for Town ambulance service be included at Town Meeting.

Phil explained the rules governing petitions being placed on the Town Warning and this petition is past the 40 day time frame.

Katie Charbonneau said she keeps hearing paramedics mentioned. The level of care given by Hinesburg Rescue is so good and paramedic care is only necessary in about 2% of the calls. She spoke about response times and the need for the shortest time possible.

Lyn Porter, EMT in Hinesburg, Williston resident. She said the reason she volunteers in Hinesburg is because of the quality of the department. Lyn said she has heard from residents of other towns that they do not want their service to cover Hinesburg as it may not be available when they need it. She explained the mutual aid system to those questioning it.

Nancy Anisfield said we started the meeting talking about finances and response times. Her question to those questioning a Town ambulance is, what exactly is your price, in time and dollars on a life with the difference that it would make if the ambulance were here in Town.

Miles Lamberson, Richmond Rescue, said he grew up in Hinesburg and was on Hinesburg First Response. He now lives in Richmond. He wanted to address a few things about the Richmond proposal. They are looking to help out their neighbors and willing to do this for whatever time frame Hinesburg needs. The reason they are charging a \$10.00 per capita fee is because taking on additional calls puts more wear on the trucks and equipment. To address the subscription fee, a family can pay \$50.00 a year and they are not billed beyond their insurance. This is optional and not a requirement of service.

Cathy Ryan said if this is voted for this year she asks it be a ballot item on Tuesday to allow more people the opportunity to vote. Regarding response time, she cited a call from Swamp Road that Richmond Rescue responded to and got there faster than Hinesburg First Responders. She said the only reason she checked response times on that call was that Chief Barber brought it to her attention. She said looking at the distance from the station in Town to the call scene you need to factor in the time it takes the first responder gets to the station. Richmond is in their building 25 hours a day ready to go. She noted if response time is the deciding factor, she would like to see data on response times. Cathy noted she has been a volunteer EMT and said sometimes a paramedic is needed, they can do almost everything that can be done for the patient at the ER. Richmond has a paramedic on 60% of their calls. She noted the revised budget was only sent out a few days ago and that was totally different than the one presented a week ago. It concerns her that the budget keeps changing.

Greg Matthews asked about billing services, what will the policy be on money due not covered by insurance. Will we be offering a member service for \$50.00 per family?

Dave Estey said they have not discussed that as group of officers, but thinks it is not a bad idea. Eric said the way it is being done now by St. Mike's is that a bill is sent to the insurance and if not paid there is no collection. There has been no decision by Hinesburg on policy yet. Aaron asked who would make that decision. Eric said probably the officers and Select Board.

Erik said in response to Cathy, Hinesburg's average response time to the scene is 7 minutes for a jumper getting on scene whether from the station or their home. At night there are two and sometimes 3 members on call. Night and weekend response will not change from what they are doing now. The 12 lead piece of equipment was taken out of the first budget presented as they have one that is only a few years old. Renae noted in addition to the ambulance the 12 lead would be something to put into the capital budget. The new budget was broken down into the first page being the current budget, the second page is items that are ambulance specific.

Val Spadaccini said she found the budget numbers confusing. Some of the numbers in the proposed FY 21 budget were taken from the proposed numbers in the FY 20 budget. If people are looking at the ambulance budget and adding the proposal submitted by AI it is actually about \$50,000 less than the correct proposed FY21 numbers. Phil said in preparing the budget there was a lot of overlap in Fire/EMT and ambulance. Renae said there are some figures that need to be adjusted.

Roger Giroux said there is a third option that has not been considered. Response time is when the first member gets to the scene that is what saves lives. He prosed police officers be reminded of their job description to be first responders. That would provide day time coverage. Also suggests to then move the rescue vehicle to be housed at the police department.

Michelle Franklin, St. George resident, said she is the one paramedic that is on Hinesburg First Response. She said paramedicine is a difficult profession; it is a lot of schooling and practice to get there. It will be hard to find a paramedic to work where they will not be able to use their skills. There is the difference between a transporting agency and a first response agency.

Paul Lamberson said he is not ready to support the ambulance proposal yet, and emphasized yet. He is not clear of the current status of the nonprofit 501(c)3 Firemen's Association and the Town Fire

Department, and adding an ambulance to the mix just makes it more so. Richmond and Charlotte are stand-alone 501(c)3, and for comparison would want to see Hinesburg Rescue be its own stand alone 501(c)3. In referring to the organizational chart, he would like the citizens advisory board to be trustees of a 501(c)3 called Hinesburg Fire and Rescue. He feels there is work to be done on the numbers and does not feel we are educated on this. He noted in hiring the additional full time position that is planned for in the Fire budget it is an opportunity to test the labor market.

Eric said they will be applying for a grant. The Police Department is trained as EMT's but it is an availability question.

Meg Handler said she knows nothing about health care and feels the conversation is the weeds of the details and the budget will be put before voters like her who knows nothing about this area. She said what is being talked about is essentially setting up a health care delivery system from scratch. Her concern is the timeline in trying to do this so quickly. There are two expert organizations that have stepped up to fill the gap while we figure this out.

Eric said once the Select Board decides what they are going to do they will be holding public meetings to educate the people and said they are probably a year from going into service.

Carl Bohlen expressed his respect for all the responders. In the short term he thinks flexibility is the best. He feels we should have different budgets showing what it would be depending on growth. This decision needs to be done considering 5 years out not just one year.

Ed Waite, Captain and EMT on Hinesburg Fire, said they have a good core group of experts and are not starting a new health care system but improving on the current system they have now. They are not starting from scratch. He guarantees if the Select Board decides tonight to put this on the warning or ballot they will have enough informational meetings to answer questions.

Phil explained the Select Board cannot put this question on the Australian ballot on March 3rd as it would need to be warned sooner. Renae said you have to warn that you want to vote via Australian ballot on a certain item.

Missy Ross, Town Clerk, explained since we vote our questions from the floor at Town Meeting this cannot be on the ballot. It must be an article acted on at Town Meeting. There can be an article asking to vote the question by Australian ballot at some future date.

Lanny Dennison asked Missy if, when at the end of the meeting, the moderator asks if there is any more business to be brought before the Town, can the ambulance be brought up at that moment. Missy said someone can stand up at Town Meeting and move to amend the budget. Lanny spoke of personal experience with calling 911, good response time, St. Mike's ambulance arriving in good time and when additional help was needed getting it from Charlotte. Transport is the issue. He suggests hiring the services of Richmond and Charlotte to give us time to study this.

Dick St. George asked Michelle how many of the paramedic runs are for pain management to which she responded almost all. Dick said that can be done at AEMT level.

Phil polled the Board.

Phil said he is 100% in support of voting this by Australian ballot, it is a huge topic and we need time to get educated. We need to consider all the other things going on in Town. We have had good coverage from St. Mike's but likely would not contract with them now. Phil said it has been said that the importance is the first person who shows up not the ambulance, the Town has supported our EMT's and will be taking another step by adding a full time position this year in the Fire/EMS budget. The Board still needs to finalize the details of the two proposed contracts. The question of long-term capital costs is an issue, there is need to clarify how the organizational system will be set up. The Board needs to be sure to include in the warning enough funds to maintain ambulance service until we have a long-term plan.

Aaron said it is clear to him we will have an ambulance at some point. The people need to know more about this. There is a large group of people who need to know more about the implications of what is being discussed. He supports Australian ballot to allow time to continue conversations; he wants to have broad community support and feels we are not ready for a vote but certainly ready for conversation.

Merrily asked for clarification of how the question gets on a ballot in November. Missy said she will check but her understanding is there can be an article at Town Meeting stating the request to vote this item by Australian ballot at a future time.

Tom said there has been a lot of good conversation from which we have learned so much, we are still learning. He re-stated his belief that regionalization is imperative. Sustainability is a concern he has. Tom said he sees no down side to contracting for an unlimited amount of time, whatever we choose. He still has a lot of questions on how this will operate and the ultimate costs with only a one-year projection for the budget.

Merrily said there are so many questions we still have not addressed. We now know it cannot be an Australian ballot vote on March 3rd. She is in favor of the vote in November to allow time to continue discussion and dig into the questions.

Jeff expressed his thanks for all the responders do. Personally he would approve an ambulance now but wants to see how we are going to get there, what are the costs. He would want the warning to note the vote will be in November.

Phil said the Board will add a warning to authorize the Select Board to spend up to \$75,000 to maintain ambulance service. And another item on the warning to conduct a Town wide vote by Australian ballot in November to determine the long range strategy to obtain local ambulance service.

The question was asked if the vote date can be flexible as we are setting a deadline and may not be ready.

Ken Brown said he feels the point for leaving the date flexible is if we are no closer to getting answers or the budget numbers we can make the vote happen when we are.

Renae asked for clarification from Richmond and Charlotte on their proposals. Richmond to include St. George is \$42,370 and Charlotte total is \$52,500. The numbers are subject to change a little bit but as they stand is \$94,807. Phil said boundaries have not been finalized or the question of coverage for St. George. Eric noted if the Town has a definitive date they can have the discussion with St. Mike's of extending coverage.

Diane Barber asked about the contract with St. George. Phil said we have not had discussions with St. George yet.

Rob Mullen said St. Mike's covers St. George, with Williston and UVM as back up.

Renae asked everyone to let her know what information they need to have to fully understand and get all their questions answered.

### **Consider Finalizing FY 21 General Budget and FY 21 Capital Transfer Summary**

Renae said the tax rate in the current year was \$0.5296 and the proposed is \$0.5579. The Board was in agreement with the budget as reviewed.

### **Consider Finalizing 2020 Town Meeting Warning**

Phil moved to add two more articles to the warning; To authorize the Select Board to spend up to \$94,870 to maintain Town wide ambulance service. And to further authorize Renae to word as appropriate. Second by Aaron and approved with 5 yes votes.

Phil moved to authorize the Town to conduct a Town wide vote by Australian ballot in the November election to determine the long-range strategy for ambulance transport service. And to further authorize Renae to word as appropriate. Second by Merrily and approved with 5 yes votes.

### **Town Administrator Report**

- Renae attended a FEMA funding meeting and was informed the Town does qualify for public assistance for damage from the Halloween storm. This will be a lengthy process.
- Joy reports we are moving ahead with the safety programs.

### **Select Board Forum / Correspondence**

Jeff inquired about February meeting schedule. Renae said the Board will be meeting the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays.

## **Review Minutes of January 22, 2020**

Aaron moved to approve the minutes of January 22, 2020 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 Phil and approved with 5 yes votes.

Tom moved to adjourn at 10:15 p.m., second by Aaron and approved with 5 yes votes.

Respectfully submitted,  
Valerie Spadaccini, Clerk of the Board





# Selectboard Meeting

## Sign-in Sheet

### January 29, 2020

1. Barbara Symen

2. Dancy Daddard

3. Art Weis

4. Vicki Matthews

5. Greg Matthews

6. Eric S. Sacer

7. Lucas Charbonneau

8. Katie Charbonneau

9. Margo Casu

10. Linda Parilli

11. Robert D. Dyer

12. Paula Parker

13. Ed Waite

14. Jessica Waite

15. TERRY Wilson

16. Cathy Ryan

17. Karen Charbonneau

18. Emore Ahl

19. Henry Lodereth

20. Michael Chiarella

21. Lydia Fuller

22. Lyn Parker

23. Diane Barber

24. Anthony J. P. P.

25. Andrew P. P.

26. John Powers

27. Ala Goss

28. Scott Hest

29. Liam Bensheimer

30. Chrissy Driver

31. Jerry Southall

32. ~~John~~

33. Joy Wilson

34. Eva Machacek

35. Linda Dennison

36. Wanda

47. Terry Francis

48. Tam Opton

49. Pat Brown

50. Carol

51. Paul Lamberson

52. John Kiedzisch

53. MIKE LONER

54. Missy Ross

55. Natacha Luzzi

37. Pat

38. Kendall Bianck

39. Miles Lamberson

40. Michael Bussard

41. Harrison Mead

42. John

43. Holly Pasackow

44. Seoter MacMillan

45. Pat

46. Wendy

~ Andrea Morgante

Carl Bohlen

Dawn Francis

Sarah G. Tischler

JOHN CHRISTMAN

Will Moran

Meg Handler

Bess Glade

John

56. Catherine Goldsmith