

Fire Services Study Committee

Minutes from Meeting April 10, 2018

Requested by Richard Sagar, Vice Chair

DRAFT

Committee members present: Michael Ball, Douglas Erb, Kathy Parsons, Richard Sagar, Bruce Ulricson.

There were 20 people in the audience. Meeting opened at 6:00 pm. Richard Sagar opened by asking for an introduction by each Committee member.

Election of chair and vice-chair:

Richard nominated Doug Erb as chair. The vote for Doug was unanimous.

Douglas nominated Richard Sagar as vice-chair. The vote was unanimous.

Meeting Minutes:

Heidi Sagar was appointed as minute-taker. Pat Webb pointed out that minutes need to be posted within 7 days of meeting as “Draft” They will be distributed as follows: Front of Town Hall, downstairs bulletin board, Blue School, Landaff Ledger, Town Website, and sent to the Committee members by email.

Procedures:

Doug Erb explained procedure – Committee business will be taken care of first, and audience comments will be addressed at end of meeting. Doug read Warrant Article 5, as amended at Town Meeting. A status hearing will be held at the end of August, 2018. Final report will be issued by December 1, 2018.

Issues to be addressed by the Committee:

Doug Erb:

1. Doug stated that Landaff is one of about 20 towns in NH with a similar tax base of about 50 million, and of similar population.

We should contact those towns, ask for town report. From there, determine their annual cost and annual capital investment for fire protection. The list of towns to contact was distributed among

Committee members. Richard suggested we should compare the percentage that the fire departments represent in the total budgets. Doug suggested calculating the effect on tax rates. Bruce was concerned with the quality of fire fighters.

2. We need to watch for an upcoming decision by the Twin-State Mutual Aid Association regarding a revision of their policies.
3. Evaluate any changes in State fire regulations.
4. Determine any effect on home insurance rates, so that voters can compare their insurance costs vs. property tax impact.
5. Ask to be updated on Fire Department staffing.
6. Doug stated the Committee's charge is to look forward, not backward. He said, this group is a study group, not a decision-making entity.

Richard Sagar:

7. Richard stated a need to determine whether either fire department, Landaff or Lisbon, are prepared to handle future needs and potential growth of population.
8. What can be expected from a contract with Lisbon?
9. Are non-tax contributions likely to continue?
10. What is the outlook for recruitment for both, Lisbon and Landaff?
11. How do we compare with other fire departments?
12. Assess the impact of a potential new Landaff fire station.
13. Develop a long-term plan with the Fire Chief.
14. Consider challenges to reestablishment of our own fire department if Lisbon contract terminated.
15. In the event of disbanding, what happens to the assets?
16. Determine the purpose of the Landaff Volunteer Fire Association. Will they continue their support of the Fire Dept.?
17. What to expect from Twin State Mutual Aid Fire Assoc. if Landaff F.D. disbands. Would Twin State charge for services by other responding departments?
18. Ask Landaff Select Board for all correspondence with Lisbon with regard to fire services.

19. Ask Landaff Select Board for permission to talk to Lisbon Selectmen and/or Fire Chief.
20. Ask Lisbon to disclose all potential costs.
21. Determine estimated response times and possible effects.

Michael Ball:

22. Check with Lyman and Benton regarding costs.

Bruce Ulricson:

23. Concern whether our fire fighters are certified.
24. How many fire fighters are needed?
25. Discuss renovation of the old fire station.
26. Make water available at different locations.

Cathy Parsons:

27. Can the old building be modified?
28. Agreed to ask Benton and Lyman about their experience.
29. Concern with loss of life from inadequate service.

Audience Comments:

- Jason Cartwright pointed out the Fire Dept. performs other services besides fighting fires, such as rescuing dogs, assisting at traffic accidents, monoxide alarms, et al.
- Phil Finkle had questions regarding written comments. The Committee will address this issue.
- Susan Stanley suggested that an open town meeting , with Lisbon officials attending, might be more impartial than a committee.
- Pat Webb pointed to State Reg. #154, stating that a fire dept. is a service, not a profit center.
- Richard Giunta is concerned with the viability of maintaining our fire department, questioned the average age of our fire fighters, and was concerned with recruitment issues.
- Becky McGovern suggested that young people who have left the area may return and serve
- Jason suggested that a new building is not the focus of this study. Doug stated that the purpose of the Committee is to find facts for the Town to make decisions, and that the new building needed to be considered.

Doug stated that operating costs in 2017 were \$44,000 for Bath and \$88,000 for Lisbon.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Sagar