

DRAFT

Fire Services Study Committee

May 17, 2018
Meeting Minutes

Committee members present:

Michael Ball, Douglas Erb, Kathy Parsons, Richard Sagar, Bruce Ulricson.

There were 7 people in the audience.

Meeting opened at 6:00 pm.

1. Doug read Warrant Article 5, as amended at Town Meeting. He reiterated that this committee is a fact-finding, not a decision-making entity.
2. The Draft Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. There was one spelling correction. Mike moved and Richard seconded to accept the previous meeting's minutes as corrected. Passed by unanimous vote.
3. As requested, Jason Cartwright presented detailed records of Fire Dept. expenditures for the past 3 years.

Michael Ransmeier, who stated that his attendance was as private citizen and not as a selectman, was asked about progress regarding financial records requested from the Select Board. He said that the Selectmen's office had been unusually busy, but that the expenditure data would be forthcoming. He provided the Committee with a comparison of FD expenses of Landaff and Lyman for the period 2011 to 2017.

Michael Ransmeier further stated that Lisbon Selectman Scott Champagne had indicated that any contract with Landaff would be a proportional allocation of operating expenses based upon population. He likened it to the arrangement that the three towns have for the transfer station. He said that Landaff is assessed about 16% of transfer station expenses. There was an extended discussion, and some disagreement regarding the differences between the two situations. Doug stated that the present agreement between Lyman and Lisbon for FD services is much different from the cooperative agreement for the transfer station. Doug suggested that if the Select Board is supportive of a cooperative department, the committee would be interested in more information. Michael Ransmeier said that the contract proposed at the 2018 Landaff Town Meeting was a base charge of \$11,288, based upon population, with additional per call charges for vehicles and manpower. He also stated that this proposal has lapsed and is no longer relevant.

4. Doug had done preliminary research into the impact on insurance rates, in the event that Landaff chooses to contract with Lisbon's fire department for services. He read a letter from his own insurance agency. The letter stated in part, "It can get pretty complex. ISO (Insurance Service Office) determines a rating for every fire department ranging from 10-1, with 1 being the best and 10 being the worst. The insurance companies have their own individual rates for different ratings. Some towns have multiple ratings." The letter mentioned various factors used to determine ratings, including distance from a fire station, presence of, or lack of, hydrants. While ISO has

DRAFT

certain rules (Public Protection Classification), insurance companies are free to set their own requirements.

Doug asked members of the Committee, as well as other citizens, to request letters from their insurance companies regarding any possible impacts on rates if we switch to Lisbon. Susan Stanley stated she had already requested a letter. Doug suggested that citizens could share any responses, so that those opinions could be considered by the committee. Doug also provided several pages of information on ISO.

Michael Ransmeier stated that Landaff has only 17 1/2 miles of roads, and that almost all houses are within 5 miles of the Lisbon fire station.

Jason shared isomitigation.com as an organization who reached out to him to update their survey on the LVFD. He mentioned that the agency indicated that Landaff was rated a 9, and 10 is the worse rating. His understanding was that to get to an 8, Landaff would need to have hydrants and other things not really available to Landaff, so the highest rating we will achieve is a 9. He also felt that without a department and the equipment Landaff would be rated a 10. It was unclear if this would have any impact on insurance rates, given that most of the dwellings are within 5 miles of the Lisbon station. Jason stated that the rating, although it includes the FD, is a rating for the town.

5. Cathy reported that she had contacted the Lyman select board, and was informed that the Committee is welcome to meet with the board. They meet every two weeks on Mondays at 6:00 pm. A date of June 4 was suggested, but, due to scheduling conflicts, she will try to arrange a meeting for June 18.
6. Bruce has contacted Max Schultz at the N.H. Dept. of Safety. Max recommended contacting the combined Tilton/ Northfield FD. He regards this as the best example of two towns who have regionalized. He mentioned Primex Insurance as a good source of information. Michael Ransmeier indicated that Primex provides insurance for Landaff. The Tilton/ Northfield FD has a rating of 3 out of 10. They look at the equipment, key training required, and certification. Training and certification is not required, but is preferred. He mentioned different types of tankers and engines that can respond as a factor; multiple units helps with rating. They have career fire fighters and retention was an issue. They pay firefighters \$11 per hour. Officers, and those that are certified, receive \$20-22 per hour.

If a volunteer who is not certified is injured, Primex will review training records. Combining resources can result in increased efficiencies. Saving money in the long run depends on a lot of issues. There will be savings, but not necessarily significant amounts. Water sources are another factor of insurance. Each town develops its own budget and then reconciles it for the final FD budget. A tax on each house, such as \$50, to help fund the FD has been considered, but is not presently used. Bruce said the FD was open to a visit with the committee. Doug was concerned that we should be visiting towns that were closer in size to Landaff. He suggested that we get the town reports. Bruce suggested a visit, and the committee authorized him to proceed. It was agreed that Bruce, Kathy and Richard would try to visit with the Tilton/ Northfield FD in the next two weeks. They will report back to the committee.

DRAFT

7. Richard has located a contact number for the Saco Valley Fire Association. He will call them. Questions include: how the association provides coverage for the three towns, how long has it been in existence, how affective it has been, and would they let committee members visit?
8. Jason provided detailed information on Landaff call cards and explained their function. They provide guidance for a wide variety of call types and indicate which departments will respond. They also specify the equipment required, back-up coverage of stations, available water drafting locations, and detailed directions.
9. Richard suggested that we presently have a form or regionalism in the Twin State Mutual Aid Association. Kathy responded that we would continue to receive the benefits of the association under a contract with Lisbon. She said that the Twin State bylaws would provide coverage to Landaff as an associate town. Doug pointed out that Twin State is presently reviewing their bylaws and rules, and that we would have to await their outcome. Pat Webb, who is the LVFD representative to Twin State, stated that he will attend their meeting next week and try to ascertain the status of their committee which is considering those changes.
There was a general discussion of Mutual Aid Associations. Doug explained that they were initially driven by dispatch needs, and later evolved into training and other services. Twin State has 29 supporting departments.
10. The committee asked Jason for an update on the requested training records for the LVFD. He is still in the process of assembling that information. He will provide records for both in-house and outside training, as well as any other documentation in the LVFD records.
11. Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 31, at 6:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi Sagar