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Fire Services Study Committee

August 2, 2018
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Don Beaudin, Douglas Erb, Kathy Parsons, Richard Sagar, Bruce Ulricson.

There were 3 people in the audience.

Meeting opened at 6:00 pm.

- Doug read Warrant Article 5, as amended at Town Meeting. He reiterated that this committee was a fact-finding, not a decision-making entity.
- Doug expressed concern and questioned if notice of the meeting had been properly posted. In the ensuing discussion, Richard stated that notice had been posted with the draft minutes of the previous meeting. He said that a Landaff Ledger reminder had been posted a few days prior to other meetings, but that there may have been an oversight as it had not been done prior to today's meeting. It was agreed that more care should be taken to insure that a reminder notice is posted on both the Landaff Ledger and the Town Websites. Richard will be responsible for posting those reminder notices in a timely manner. As notice of upcoming meetings is included in the draft minutes when posted, it was decided that the legal requirements for notice of the meetings had been met.
- The minutes of the July 12, 2018 meeting were discussed. Upon a suggestion from Don, it was decided to amend the first sentence of the third bullet point on page one regarding Michael Ball's resignation to read: The Committee was informed of the resignation of Michael Ball due to his engagement in a full time firefighting training course at the Fire Training Academy. It was also pointed out that the transcript of the answers provided by Jason, and included in the minutes, had references to attachments which were provided to the Committee but not attached to the minutes. It was decided that it would be appropriate to attach those documents to the minutes. The following documents will be attached to the end of the minutes: current roster of the Landaff FD with training levels; call records for 2016 & 2017; and records of department training sessions. Additional wording will be added to page 4 referencing these attachments. There were no further changes, and the amended minutes were approved.
- There was a discussion of when the required town hearing should be scheduled. Richard suggested the September 27 meeting as a possible date. He stated that there are still several areas of concern that he feels should be addressed prior to the hearing, and felt that the Committee would need the three intervening meetings to cover that material. Doug stated his opinion that the Committee's mission is a work in progress, and that it may not be possible to answer all questions before the hearing. It was also felt that the hearing would

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likely generate additional questions and concerns. It was decided to schedule the Town hearing for September 13.

- Richard suggested that it would be helpful to seek opinions from some of the area fire chiefs regarding proposed changes in Landaff's fire coverage. He mentioned that he had spoken informally with Sugar Hill Chief, Alan Clark. Richard reported that Mr. Clark had expressed a willingness to attend a Committee meeting to share his ideas. Mr. Clark had indicated in his conversation that he felt that Twin State would enforce its existing by-laws, which allow departments to charge associate towns when responding. He said that he would expect a minimum of \$2000 for any response from the Sugar Hill FD. Richard asked him if there would be a charge for station coverage in Lisbon while the Lisbon FD was engaged in Landaff. Mr. Clark's response was that they would not charge because Lisbon is a full member of Twin State.
- It was decided that Doug will invite Allan Clark, William Minot (Bath Chief), and Jack Anderson (Bethlehem Chief & Twin State President) to attend the next meeting.
- Richard expressed continued concern regarding any effects a change to Lisbon providing coverage would have on responses in South Landaff. Although historically the number of responses to the area have been few and generally minor he wondered about costs to the town in the event of a major response, such as for a forest fire. He pointed out that such an event could be prolonged over a lengthy time period. Harry McGovern said that forest fires are a different issue, and that the State pays for half the costs. Richard also suggested that due to the remoteness of the area and a number of vacation dwellings there could be an increased risk of vandalism or arson which could produce a major incident. Doug said that the issue, particularly concerning forest fires, needed more study.
- There was a report on the July 23, 2018 meeting with the Lisbon Select Board. All Committee members and Chief Hartwell attended the meeting. The Board indicated that the town is still interested in providing coverage for Landaff. They said any contract would be similar to the contract provided to Lyman. It would be based on population as provided by the latest US census. They did not clearly indicate what figure would be used to determine the base charge. Per call charges would apply with the tanker billed at \$150, the engine \$300, and the ladder \$350 per hour. Firefighters are paid \$12 for non-certified, \$15 for certified per hour. The Chief is paid \$27 per hour. Charges would be for actual time spent with no minimum call. Chief Hartwell indicated that in the case of a false alarm, or other situation where the responders were turned back, Lisbon would not likely charge. It was stated that Lisbon has provided coverage to Lyman for more than 35 years. Lisbon would be willing to consider an extended contract; perhaps 2 to 5 years, with a clause allowing either party the option to withdraw early if they wished to do so. A minimum notice period for such withdrawal could be negotiated. There would be no requirement for Landaff to maintain its own station. Any costs for Capital investment and interest payments would not be charged

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to Landaff. Lyman's contract has a Capital improvements clause, but they have never been charged. The Lisbon FD presently has 16 firefighters. Ten have level one or higher training. Chief Hartwell said that firefighters are required to commit to becoming certified, and that there are presently no plans to change that policy. The time period for new members to become certified was unclear. Training can be intermittent and is paid for by the FD. The Lisbon Select Board was asked about grants for the new station. They indicated that they had not been able to get any grants for the construction, but that they had received about \$120K for EMS equipment.

- There was a discussion regarding what issues should be presented at the town hearing. Among the areas to be considered are: insurance issues; comparisons with other towns; the results of the meetings with the Lisbon and Lyman Select Boards; information provided by the Landaff FD; the Northfield/Tilton FD meeting; and possible renovations to the current Landaff station to meet the needs of the fire department.
- Committee members were each given an area to summarize in preparation of the hearing. Don will look into possible renovation of the station building; he will contact Ron Howard and Kevin Schofield and ask if they can assist in evaluating the needed work. Doug will address the insurance and comparison of towns. Richard will summarize information provided by the Landaff FD. Kathy will report on the Lisbon and Lyman meetings.
- There was a general discussion regarding how to separate known facts from opinions when choosing what to include in any report to the Town. Kathy felt that much of the information gathered so far represented opinions rather than facts. Richard suggested that the Committee needed to evaluate the opinions expressed by various parties for their relevance; but that some opinions are necessary to make reasonable estimates for any future decisions and should be included in any report. He felt that it should be clearly stated that they represent opinions rather than facts, and that the voters of Landaff can decide the degree to which they feel that those opinions weigh on the various issues. There was continued discussion, but there was no clear agreement by the Committee regarding how to handle the issue.
- Richard suggested that the final report should include a note of gratitude, and acknowledge the dedication of the present and past Landaff FD volunteers. He feels that it should be noted that, if the town chooses to make any changes in its fire coverage, it should not be viewed as a negative reflection on their efforts. He also suggested that a similar statement should be made with regard to Lisbon. He said that he has seen nothing that would indicate any ulterior motives in their offers to provide coverage, and that it would appear that Lisbon has been a fair partner in past dealings with Landaff and other towns.

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- The next scheduled meeting will be August 16, 2018 at 6:00 PM in the Landaff Town Hall. The Town Hearing will be scheduled for September 13, 2018 at 6:00 PM in the Landaff Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Heidi Sagar