

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
Public Safety Subcommittee Meeting
Minutes of June 5, 2023

Present: Select Board members Lydia Petty and Merry Shernock. Others present, Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Ambulance Director Meggan McCusker, and Matthew Romei.

The meeting started at 2:00 PM.

Public Participation Scheduled: None

Public Safety Discussion

Jeff Schulz stated that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss and provide an update on the Police, Fire and Ambulance Departments.

Jeff that stated that the Police Department continues to face staffing shortages with one officer on voluntary military leave and one officer returning after medical leave. The officer returning from a medical should be back to full working conditions within the next week or so. Unfortunately, a senior officer is retiring at the end June bringing the Staffing back to four officers. The other office is on long term voluntary military leave. The four officers can provide prove 24/7 coverage. The Police Chief Search Committee continues the search process. Jeff anticipates have a new Chief hired by July 15.

Next, Jeff noted that all is well with the Fire Department and the Department is well-staffed. Jeff added that the Fire Chief and Staff are very pleased with the vehicles purchased in the past several years, which include a new tanker and pumper.

Next, Jeff asked Ambulance Chief Meggan McCusker how the Ambulance Department is doing. Meggan stated that she has been on the job for about four mouths and there is a learning curve, however, the Department is doing well. Meggan added that the Ambulance Department is busy and ambulance runs are up from last year. Jeff asked about the return date of the ambulance remount. Meggan noted that the ambulance is expected to be returned within two months.

Next, Jeff stated that another item for discussion is the request for to outfit the third ambulance for service as outlined in a memo Meggan provided to the Town Manager.

Lydia Petty asked Meggan to discuss the request to outfit the third ambulance. Meggan noted that there is a need to outfit a third Ambulance because there are times when the current two ambulances are either on a run call or out of service for maintenance, and the Ambulance service can't response to a call. Meggan added that during these times it does not mean that an additional ambulance was needed. Meggan that the reason for a missed call could be due a 911 call, an interfacility transfer, or that an ambulance is out of service.

Next, Merry Shernock asked about the history of the third ambulance. Lydia noted that the Town purchased the third ambulance for about \$23,000 after an ambulance had an engine failure and was shipped out for a remount. Jeff added that the Town originally purchased the third ambulance as a temporary vehicle and the former Ambulance Director stated that the box on the third ambulance could be sold for approximately \$21,000.

Next, Merry asked about the equipment to outfit the third ambulance and whether it can be easily transferred between ambulances. Also, Merry asked about the about the age of the ambulances. Meggan stated that the equipment can't be easily transferred to another ambulance in part because the ambulances must be certified by the State of Vermont, and it is not clear how long it takes to complete the certification. Meggan added that that the third ambulance is a 2006, the 2014 is being remounted and the 2017 will need to be replaced in 20/27.

Next, there was discussion as to whether the equipment in ambulance lasts as long as an ambulance. Jeff noted typically the equipment has a shorter life than the ambulance.

Next, Lydia asked about when the current third ambulance, which is a 2006, needs to be replaced. Meggan stated that it needs to be replaced in two years. Lydia stated that would result in the purchase of two ambulances in 26/27. Next Lydia asked if the requested equipment for the third ambulance could be transferred to a new third ambulance in two years. Meggan responded that the equipment could be transferred to the new ambulance. Next, Lydia asked about the cost of a new ambulance and whether the Town could purchase a transport van similar to Waterbury Ambulance. Meggan noted that a new ambulance would be approximately \$280,000. Meggan added that a transport type van would not work in Northfield because that type of vehicle is not four-wheel drive, and the Town needs a four-wheel drive vehicle to serve residents on the back roads.

Jeff noted that he will obtain revenue and expenditure data from the ambulance services that he obtained run data.

Next, Lydia stated that the Select Board (Town) needs to determine/decide on the mission of the Northfield Ambulance. For example, should it continue to serve primarily Northfield residents or expand to provide more transports.

The Subcommittee noted that the next steps in this discussion should be include obtaining more information, and that another meeting was needed prior to discussing the proposal to outfit the third ambulance. The group discussed June 19 as a possible next meeting date.

Public Participation (Unscheduled): None

Motion to adorn by Merry Shernock, second by Lydia Petty.

Jeff Schulz, Town Manager