

The Fremont Board of Selectmen attended a special meeting of the Fremont Fire Rescue Department on Monday October 22, 2018 at the Fremont Safety Complex in the meeting room. Selectmen Gene Cordes, Neal Janvrin and Roger Barham were present, along with approximately 60 % of the Department's membership including Richard Butler, Joe Nichols, Kevin Zukas, Kevin O'Callaghan, Joel Lennon, Bryan Bielecki, Ryan Dame, Ron DeClercq, RJ Giegerich, Matt Griswold, Doris Nichols, Vinnie O'Connor, John Roderick, Karen Rota, Danielle Zukas and Gordon Muench, member of the public. The meeting got underway around 7:15 pm. MRI consultant Chris Olsen was also present.

There was no written agenda but the meeting had been suggested by the Selectmen and called by Chief Butler to discuss with the Fire Rescue Membership the idea of proposing per diem and evening/weekend paid on call coverage for the Town.

Chris Olsen led the meeting, and near the end of the meeting it was explained by Cordes about why the Board of Selectmen was there and that they had requested the meeting.

This meeting was supposed to be about the Department's response to calls but got into a discussion about a draft 3 year strategic plan, including a vision that there would be an ambulance and transport service. Butler and Olsen had intended to get feedback from the Selectmen before moving it forward for further discussion with in the Department.

The cross- training and other goals / expectations were mentioned as a coming changes that may not work for all the current membership. The implication is that it may be for new members and other current members may want to move on / age out.

The first the Department knew about the draft Warrant Articles was when Rick called for the meeting a couple of weeks ago. The WAs were not handed out in hard copy or specifically discussed. Broad concepts and rough costs were.

It was well understood and quickly grasped that an expense of \$200 K is a big number for per diem and on-call coverage and that it has/will generate a lot of scrutiny from the Budget Committee as well as voters. There is real concern about rejection. It was made clear that the Board of Selectmen has not taken a position and time is of the essence. The Board is looking for consensus within the Department and a rationale and data that the supports the need. Cordes stated he will let the BC know that no recommendation is forth coming at this time, perhaps there will be in the coming weeks.

The call response data does not suggest a need for near term Fire response strategies but EMS response is a problem. The feeling is that the response times from Raymond Ambulance elongates the time the public waits for care compared to Fremont's first responders when available.

It is generally agreed that the state of volunteer departments has been changing and that Fremont is not unique in that regard. Regardless of what is done in the near term, we need to prepare / adjust to the changes that are known and have been experienced elsewhere.

There was discussion about the Town's contract with Raymond Ambulance.

Some EMS members feel a two person duty schedule could help on nights and weekends. Additionally a paid on-call would help Fremont compete with surrounding towns. There is plenty of work for a few people. This is a factor in our EMS response.

No active strategy is in place to develop an interest in the department for potential new membership. (Word of mouth, information sessions for the public / scouts, developing an Explorer post etc.) The demographics are known.

There is some general dissatisfaction with the IT capacity and network of the Department and no one was familiar with the plan being developed through DayStar. EMS mentioned “pads” and “notebooks” for reporting.

Internal Department communication continues to be an issue. The communication boards are supposed to be going up and posted upon.

There will be a meeting of Department leadership next week to further discuss call responses and strategies including the Warrant Articles.

The meeting ended around 8:50 pm. Selectmen participated and listened, but no Board action or decisions were undertaken.

Notes taken by Gene Cordes.