

JOINT DORSET /EAST DORSET
FIRE DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 29, 2017

In Attendance:

East Dorset Fire District: Steve Ludlam, Danny Pinsonault, Judy Collins, Meg Canavan, Andrew Bourn

Dorset: Ben Weiss, Roger Squire, Milton McWayne, Mark Putnam, Shawn Hazleton (Fire Chief)

Absent: Abbott de Rahm, Howard Towsley (Fire Chief)

Other Present: Rob Gaiotti (Town Manager), Tom Smith, Rosalie Marsh

R. Gaiotti began the meeting at 7:05pm.

New Fire Tax Agreement:

R. Gaiotti stated that at the March Selectboard meeting he was instructed to send a letter to both Fire Districts asking for an extension of the current Fire Protective Services Agreement between the Town and both Fire Districts. This is the agreement that equalizes the Fire Taxes in Dorset based on the Fire Services being provided uniformly throughout Town. R. Gaiotti referenced an updated copy of the agreement in which the dates had been changed, all else remained the same. S. Ludlam asked about the inclusion of the actual budgetary figures into the contract. R. Gaiotti stated that year 1 of the contract would have budgetary figures, but years 2 and 3 would just include the budgets as approved by the voters of each Fire District. Discussion ensued about budgets and timelines etc. R. Gaiotti stated that it was the goal of the Selectboard to have both budgets approved by the Fire District voters in December for inclusion in the Town Budget. The final approval of everything would come at Town Meeting, giving ample time for tax bill preparation etc.

Discussion ensued about continuing the agreement. Each District reached consensus that they would agree to sign a new three year contract to continue fire tax equality in Dorset.

General Discussion:

R. Gaiotti then opened the floor to anything else the Fire Districts might like to talk about, with an emphasis on other ways they might collaborate. S. Ludlam stated that he was not willing to discuss anything without the East Dorset Fire Chief present. R. Gaiotti stated that certainly there were items in the purview of each board that they could review and discuss, listing examples: Fire Fighter pay inequities, truck purchasing, fire alarms for Firehouses etc.

S. Ludlam questioned the agenda item referencing a possible merger of the Departments. R. Gaiotti stated that it was asked that this agenda item be added by a board member. S. Ludlam inquired about the Dorset District's intent in all this. M. Putnam stated that during the discussion about equalizing the fire tax it was noted that other benefits of working together would be explored and that the Dorset

group had agreed to pay a higher rate to make things equal but it was understood that the groups would then work cooperatively to make things better/find efficiencies etc.

Discussion ensued about how Dorset members are compensated. Chief S. Hazleton explained that members were paid based on a combination of how many calls they went to and the tenure on the force. He stated that officers and the Chief can make up to \$1,000 to \$1,500 annually. Further discussion was had about the difference between what members of each Department might get compensated. It was noted that neither situation earns the members much more than gas money to attend the many trainings, drills, calls, etc. R. Gaiotti suggested that the District could look at other communities that pay fire fighters and figure out rates of pay that might become uniform for fire fighters in both Departments.

Meg Canavan brought up the topic of making sure that smoke/carbon/low temp alarms get installed in both Fire Stations. This item was suggested in the public safety study of 2015. Milton McWayne gave an update about a few of the vendors he was getting pricing from for Dorset. It was agreed that each side would work to get these systems installed into the Fire Stations.

It was noted that the District Board should discuss many of these items with the Fire Chiefs and Fire Fighters to get their opinions of them. It was further noted that both Chiefs should attend any future meetings because of their knowledge and experience guiding the Departments.

A future meeting date of April 24, 2017 at 7:00pm at the Town Offices was set.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting stood adjourned at 8:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Gaiotti

Town Manager