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**CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD/ CVFRS
JOINT MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
CVFRS STATION
JULY 21, 2014**

APPROVED

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS: Lane Morrison, Chair; Charles Russell, Ellie Russell, Fritz Tegatz, Matthew Krasnow.

CVRES MEMBERS: David McNally, Meg Modley, Ed Sulva, Patrice Machavern.

ADMINISTRATION: Dean Bloch, Town Administrator.

OTHERS: Peter Trono, Nancy Wood, Michael Cook, Stephen Brooks, David Nichols, Peter Carrein, Dr Ruth Uphold, John Hammer, Charlotte News; and others.

ITEMS TAKEN UP:

7:00 PM Review of CVFRS' quarterly financial statements

7:30 PM Rescue operations update

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Morrison, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m., and thanked the Charlotte Rescue Service for hosting the CVFRS quarterly review.

7:00 PM REVIEW OF CVFRS' QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. McNally reported that the Charlotte Fire and Rescue Services, Inc budget, actuals, for the period of July 2013 through June 2014 was under budget in general.

Mr. Sulva reviewed that the financial reports were of the operating budget versus actuals. Trust income, for example, the Barrows Trust, was not included in the budget, and that CVFRS utilized primarily a cash basis, which would be adjusted as a modified accrual basis in the Town Report, said Mr. Sulva.

Mr. Russell said that the MOA did not include language that either a cash or accrual account would be used. An issue was timing for setting the tax rate. A decision was needed on how to accomplish setting the tax rate in relation to the CVFRS end-of-year budget, clarified Mr. Russell. Ms. Machavern noted that the CVFRS surplus was based on a three-year average of the Town appropriations.

Mr. Morrison asked for clarification of the following line items:

Revenue and Expenses by Department FY14 (Preliminary) July 2013-June 2014

- Page 1, line item 51003, Building Maintenance, Barrows Fund in the amount of \$7,132.13 (Mr. McNally said that was for station roof repair paid out of Special Funds);
- Page 1, line item 52006, Auxiliary Support (Mr. Sulva explained that the Auxiliary provided food and drinks during all day training sessions.)

- 46 • Page 1, line item 53001, Rescue Equipment Replacement, Barrows Fund in the
47 amount of \$28,921.99 (Ms. Machavern said that CVFRS had paid on-half of the
48 expenses for two new defibrillators out of Special funds.)
- 49 • Page 1, line item 53101, EMT Payroll Expenses under the operating account in
50 the amount of \$274,096.06, which was \$10,000 over budget (Ms. Machavern
51 explained that the payroll forecast of \$264,000 was under budgeted by
52 \$10,096.06. Mr. Sulva said that some of the increase - \$15,000 – would come out
53 of the Barrows Fund to avoid asking for an increase.)

54 Budget vs. Actuals FY14 (Preliminary) July 2013-June2014

- 55 • Page 1, line item 51007, Dispatching, was showing 70.07 percent spent. (Ms.
56 Machavern said that a final invoice would be received from Shelburne dispatch.)
- 57 • Page 1, line item 51014, Building and Office Supplies, over budget by 313.20
58 percent (Ms. Machavern explained that it included a copier lease, cleaning
59 supplies, paper products, etc. There will be an overage for this year as well.)
- 60 • Page 2, line item 53102, EMT Benefits, had \$13,350.36 remaining of the budget
61 (Ms. Modley reviewed that one of the EMT's had coverage elsewhere and didn't
62 need to be covered, and another person elected not to sign up for benefits.)
63

64 Ms. Wood said that for Rescue equipment purchases, for example, it would be helpful to
65 have a Balance Sheet in addition to the Profit/Loss statement. Regarding overage in the
66 operating budget, how would that be carried forward, and could the numbers be shown,
67 asked Ms. Wood. Mr. Sulva explained that the financial statements were not done on an
68 accrual basis and monthly adjustments were not being done. The adjustments were done
69 in the modified accrual basis for the Town Report at end-of year, said Mr. Sulva.
70

71 Ms. Wood suggested that even on a cash basis there should be a Balance Sheet with carry
72 forwards on it. A Balance Sheet should include the prior year as a comparison to the
73 current year, said Ms. Wood. Mr. Sulva reiterated that every Fire and Rescue account was
74 presented in the Town Report financial statements in a modified accrual reporting format.
75 Anyone could see what was happening with fixed assets, said Mr. Sulva.
76

77 Mr. Krasnow asked for clarification of line item 52011, Protective Clothing. Mr. Sulva
78 explained that bunker gear might be out of date, or there could be size issues for new
79 hires/volunteers. The gear had to fit the person, said Mr. Sulva.
80

81 Mr. Krasnow asked for clarification regarding line item 51051, Federal Taxes of minus
82 \$3,505.84. Mr. Sulva explained that federal taxes were paid on Tower revenue. The IRS
83 refunded the entire 2013 taxes in that amount. It was posted to the Barrows Fund versus
84 the Tower Fund by mistake and would be corrected. According to William Huckabey,
85 Wallace and Tapia audit firm, the IRS would refund taxes for some unknown reason. It
86 was understood that at some point the taxes would be collected again, said Mr. Sulva.
87

88 PUBLIC COMMENTS

89 Mr. Brooks stated that for modified accrual accounting, it would be helpful to see cash
90 balances so that people could do the calculations. Ms. Machavern pointed out that the
91 Town appropriation was \$508,650, of which \$555,803 was spent out of the Operating

92 budget. Mr. Sulva clarified that \$110,000 was received from Patient Billing, which was
93 used to make up the difference, and the net was \$62,000.

94

95 There were no further questions or comments.

96

97 Mr. Morrison thanked the Rescue personnel for their reports.

98

99 **TASKS:**

- 100
- 101 • Clarify CVFRS accounting as either cash or (modified) accrual based and add
102 language in the Town/CVFRS MOA, and CVFRS by-laws.
 - 103 • Review and resolve timing issues related to the CVFRS budget related to setting
104 the Town tax rate.
 - 105 • Consider adding a Balance Sheet statement to the CVFRS financial reports that
106 would include a comparison for prior year and current year.
 - 107 • Show carry-forward balances on the CVFRS P/L and Balance Sheet reports.

107

108 **7:30 PM RESCUE OPERATIONS UPDATE**

109 Mr. McNally briefly reviewed a history of the Rescue conditional license issue. A recent
110 letter received from the state has expanded a Conditional License for an additional three
111 months to see an “evidence base” compliance of the Rescue EMT operations. The
112 paramedic operation has been restored. Dr. Plante imposed a six month probationary
113 period to make sure that required procedures and documentation continues. Rescue has
114 improved communication with the District 3 Board. Meg Modley is the current Head of
115 Service. Rescue is trying to leverage volunteer time versus paid personnel. The service is
116 in a transitional period with options. No one was let go. However, the best personnel
117 structure is being explored, said Mr. McNally.

118

119 Mr. Tegatz recalled that in a previous joint meeting, it was said that a second set of eyes
120 would review all communications to make sure that similar situations would not occur
121 again. Ms. Modley explained transitional changes being implemented by the Rescue
122 Service that included a full time Head of Service position. She was the current Head of
123 Service and reviewed all communications, said Ms. Modley. Mr. Tegatz suggested that a
124 second ‘set of eyes’ should include a Corporate Board member. Rescue could ask the
125 state to send all communications to two people versus one, said Mr. Tegatz.

126

127 Mr. Russell pointed out that the SOP’s mentioned a “Head of Service”. A better
128 definition of the term and job description were needed and should be included the
129 Corporate Board by-laws, stated Mr. Russell.

130

131 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

132 Mr. Brooks asked for clarification of how the communication issues would be addressed
133 and reported to the taxpayers. Mr. Morrison explained that the originator of the
134 communications were the state and the District 3 Board. Those communications would be
135 addressed to two Rescue Service personnel for review. Ellie Russell served as a Charlotte
136 Selectboard liaison between the Town and CVFRS. Ellie reported back to the
137 Selectboard, said Mr. Morrison.

138

139 Ms. Wood asked Ms. Modley to describe what a CQI was, and what ‘demonstrated
140 changes’ as noted in the state and District 3 Board letters were needed. Ms. Modley
141 explained the SIREN protocols for checking service calls and written reports regarding
142 calls that were required. A problem was that Charlotte Rescue documentation was not
143 “discoverable” within the SIREN system. In response, Rescue has been required to send
144 in CQI’s for six months to the state and District 3 Board. The state has extended the
145 Conditional License for three more months, and then would review the situation again,
146 CQI’s were critical in documenting what was seen, done and said during a call. The CQI
147 was then documented in the SIREN system. SIREN makes sure that calls were reviewed.
148 Charlotte calls were now 90 percent reviewed, said Ms. Modley.

149

150 Ms. Wood asked if Charlotte Rescue received feedback on patient outcomes from the
151 hospital. Ms. Modley replied that the hospital feedback was more general in that Rescue
152 could check on the status of a patient. Generally at the transfer point our care ends, said
153 Ms. Modley.

154

155 Mr. Russell asked for further clarification of a CQI related to being ‘discoverable’. Dr.
156 Uphold explained that rescue calls were written into a report in the SIREN system. The
157 case was reviewed by District 3 and critiques written in response to the report as
158 feedback to the person who wrote the CQI, which should be read and acknowledged in
159 return. Charlotte was not acknowledging that they were reading the critiques, said Dr.
160 Uphold. Ms. Modley explained that she was now requiring that the rescue crew go into
161 the SIREN system and read the reports and notes. She now has the authority to access the
162 system and make sure that the reports were read and acknowledged. The person in
163 question has been removed as Head of Service. There is a new Training Officer.
164 Charlotte’s calls are 90 percent EMT and 10 percent paramedic level calls, said Ms.
165 Modley.

166

167 Mr. Russell asked why the person didn’t know they needed a code access for the drug
168 lock box. Ms. Modley explained that the code access versus key access requirement. She
169 was now the designate for paramedic meetings, said Ms. Modley.

170

171 Ms. Russell asked if a Training Officer could review the paramedics. Ms. Modley replied
172 no. Only paramedics could review paramedics. There were two paramedics on the service
173 now. One was on probation and one was certified currently, said Ms. Modley.

174

175 Mr. Morrison asked what the ideal number of paramedics for Charlotte was. Ms. Modley
176 replied that ideally three full-time paramedics were needed to cover nine 12-hour shifts
177 per week. Two paramedics and a few per diems would give good coverage since most
178 calls were day time calls, noted Ms. Modley.

179

180 Mr. Morrison asked if another paramedic was hired would that person be “Head of
181 Service”. Ms. Modley replied that Charlotte’s organization was a volunteer service. Most
182 of the staff worked full time jobs as she did, said Ms. Modley.

183

184 There was further discussion regarding the differences between a certified paramedic and
185 a probationary paramedic who was required to call into the hospital for medical guidance;
186 current coverage for six shifts per week; and a desire for a third paramedic as a Rescue
187 Director position, which would allow for three full time shifts. Ms. Modley said that Dr.
188 Plante was the medical director that a probationary paramedic would call in to.

189

190 Mr. Trono asked if Rescue tracked the number of paramedic calls. Ms. Modley said that
191 the majority of calls were during the day. There were about 30 EMT calls per month, said
192 Ms. Modley.

193

194 Mr. Trono said that if you read the Charlotte newspapers a majority of the call logs
195 appear to be for emergencies outside of Charlotte. What does it cost the Charlotte for
196 those calls and is Charlotte getting something in return. What was the portion of the
197 budget for paramedics, asked Mr. Trono. Ms. Modley explained that Charlotte Rescue
198 responded to a number of critical calls when surrounding town's rescue services couldn't
199 provide a paramedic level care. It was hard to put a value on paramedic level care. She
200 would calculate a cost, said Ms. Modley.

201

202 There was further discussion regarding a \$225 per call intercept pay for paramedic
203 service as set by District 3; Charlotte Rescue as a hub for regionalized service; benefits of
204 mutual aid between towns within a district; a suggestion that a town should be billed
205 versus an individual person; and calls billed to individual persons. Ms. Machavern
206 reviewed that a person's insurance was billed for service and what was not covered by
207 insurance was billed to the person. Outstanding amounts for out of town service was sent
208 to collections if not paid. Regarding a suggestion to bill a town, if Charlotte Rescue was
209 already engaged in a call and there was an event in Charlotte that Vergennes Rescue had
210 to handle, would Charlotte be willing to pay Vergennes for service, asked Ms.

211 Machavern.

212

213 Mr. Brooks asked why he has not been given a report on the licensing issue by Dr.
214 Uphold. Dr. Uphold reiterated that she just gave a verbal report. This was a serious issue
215 that needed to be talked about. There were holes in the Charlotte staffing. There needs to
216 be accountability of the Corporate Board. There needs to be a performance improvement
217 program in place. She had discussed the issues with the District 3 Board, with Charlotte
218 Rescue, and arranged joint meetings. She also conducted a lot of interviews. There was a
219 difference of opinion between herself and Charlotte Rescue regarding the person
220 responsible for causing the license issue. The individual was a bigger liability than an
221 asset. Meg thinks otherwise. The issue will come back, stated Dr. Uphold. Mr. McNally
222 said that there were diverse opinions. The service was trying to look at the whole picture
223 and keep options open. There was a concern that if someone was let go there would be
224 ripples throughout the service. He had confidence in the Rescue Chief, stated Mr.
225 McNally.

226

227 Mr. Krasnow asked if there was an insulating structure between the District 3 Board and
228 the Head of Service. Ms. Modley explained that the previous Head of Service has been
229 removed and she was now the Head. The idea was to have a liaison of a qualified person

230 to interact with the state and District 3 Board. She was on top of the CQI structural
231 changes. She was the backup that checked to make sure they were compliant in CQI
232 reporting. If not, then there was remediation through her. A person could be sent 'down
233 the road' depending on the degree of failure of an action, said Ms. Modley.

234

235 In response to questions regarding the incident, Ms. Russell said that they shouldn't be
236 talking about the actions of an individual in a public forum. Any further discussion
237 should be in Executive Session, said Ms. Russell.

238

239 Mr. Trono asked if there was language in the MOA that the Selectboard could deal with
240 Rescue in any way. Mr. Morrison replied that there was a requirement in the MOA for
241 the service provided. This would be looked at in Executive Session. The Town funds 90
242 percent of the CVFRS operation, said Mr. Morrison.

243

244 Mr. Morrison suggested exploring granting agencies regarding a new hire for paramedic
245 service. Dr. Uphold said that the District 3 Board was anxious to have Charlotte continue
246 service, or to have a Shelburne paramedic service. The Town's people should weigh in on
247 the discussion, said Dr. Uphold.

248

249 Mr. Krasnow asked if mutual aid was an agreement that the towns signed on to.

250

251 Mr. Tegatz asked if there was a daily rescue call log that could be reviewed. Ms. Modley
252 replied no. CVFRS compiled an annual report summary for the Town Report. There was
253 call data in the monthly patient billing report that was included in the financial
254 statements, said Ms. Modley. Ms. Russell and Mr. Tegatz requested a monthly summary
255 call report.

256

257 **TASKS:**

- 258 • Request that the state and District 3 Board send all communications to two people
259 versus one, with one person being a Corporate Board member.
- 260 • Define the term "Head of Service", and draft a job description of the position, add
261 to the Town/CVFRS MOA, Corporate Bylaws, etc.
- 262 • CVFRS to calculate a cost for providing incremental paramedic level care to the
263 Selectboard.
- 264 • Implement a performance improvement program for EMT/paramedic service as
265 due diligence of the Corporate Board.
- 266 • Possible Selectboard Executive Session to discuss rescue personnel issues, MOA
267 language for CVFRS service provided and Town funding of CVFRS operations.
- 268 • CVFRS to provide a monthly summary call report to the Selectboard.

269

270 **ADJOURNMENT**

271 **MOTION by Mr. Russell, seconded by Ms. Russell, to adjourn the meeting.**

272 **VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.**

273

274 The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

275

276 Minutes respectfully submitted, Kathlyn L. Furr, Recording Secretary.
277