

WOODSTOCK BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Po Box 483, Bearsville, New York 12409
Telephone: (845) 679-9955
Fax: (845) 679-9977
www.woodstockfiredept.org

Jeffery DeLisio, Chairman
Donald V. Allen, Commissioner
Evan Holland, Commissioner
Michael Lavin, Commissioner
Keith Hernandez, Commissioner

Regular Monthly Meeting - May 11, 2023 Approved Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Jeffery DeLisio, Commissioners Donald Allen, Evan Holland, Michael Lavin and Keith Hernandez

OTHERS PRESENT: Chief Kevin Peters, 2nd Assistant Chief Tim Pettet, Captain Ignatius Burke, Captain Don Todd, Engineer Phil Eighmey, Secretary/Treasurer Judy Peters, Co#5 President Ted Weidenbacher, Paramedic Patrick Hayes, Cindy Todd, Dawn Neal-Ellsworth, Nils Schlebusch, Sharon Wilber

Resolutions:

Approve pay for instructor courses
Amend Policy
Approve floating holidays
Approve minutes
Accept treasurer report
Approve payment of audited vouchers
Approve probationary member
Approve active membership

Chairman DeLisio called the meeting to order at 6:00pm with the Pledge. A Moment of Silence was observed for Peter Rakov, past member and founder of the Rotron Squad. Commissioner Allen stated Mr. Rakov was one of the first to serve on Co.5's Board of Trustees and if it were not for him, there would not be a Rotron Squad.

Bunkroom Renovation Project at Co#5 – Co#5 President Ted Weidenbacher, past captain Dawn Neal-Ellsworth and Sharon Wilber were present to continue discussions regarding improvements to the volunteer and career bunkrooms. Chairman DeLisio thanked Co#5 for the signed Letter of Commitment stating the project has been scaled back as the board has shifted its perspective from the original proposal which included a kitchenette, bathroom and meeting space to simply providing quality sleeping quarters for volunteers and career paramedics.

Chairman DeLisio stated since last month's meeting, the board met with the Ulster County EMS Task Force consultant to learn more about the county plan for the future of EMS. Initially talked about was a "floating" paramedic scenario where areas that do not have paramedics will be provided one. That paramedic will then start to respond to a call either in that district or potentially up to our district until they get called off, then return to quarters where they stand by. The challenge to that is Woodstock taxpayers will pay for that service through county taxes and through our local fire tax. In talking with the consultant, the board realizes it must take a hard look as to what our go forward plan is and potentially start looking at the entire district facilities. The way EMS is done in Ulster County is going

to change and the board is trying to retain as much control in Woodstock as possible. The likelihood is Woodstock will be one of the hubs and as one of the hubs, in the way the board looks at it with the proposal we are going to outline to them, is that any hub that has existing paramedics gets reimbursed by the county so our taxpayers do not have the burden of paying for all the EMS but is shared by the entire county because we do go on mutual aid. The fact we have two paramedics on the weekends, and the board foresees probably increasing the number of shifts because as we start to get an idea what the county is doing, it will become a political game to be quite honest, and as we start to get into the political play and want to support more out of it, the last thing we want is our duty paramedic that is running with Co#5 to be called out on mutual aid. With the second fly-car, we can throw the fly-car at them and say Woodstock responding fly car only and they will have to figure out how to get an ambulance there.

Chairman DeLisio stated we do not know what the county's decision will be. They might take ALS out of the localities all together and run it as a county system. The reason they are not doing that right from the get go is because of cost. Commissioner Holland stated we believe the county could not be as efficient as the three current providers; New Paltz, Newburgh & Woodstock. Their projected call times were going to be treble what we have. We believe Woodstock should be a hub.

Chairman DeLisio stated the next steps for the bunkroom renovations is to develop specs and requirements for what needs to be done, create a statement of work and seek proposals from contractors. Co#5 and the board will review the proposals and decide how to proceed. Once the costs are determined, we can figure out what the rent reimbursement will be in addition to what we are currently paying, create a lease and sign a contract.

Sharon Wilber – So basically the board wants the Stryker room turned into sleeping quarters for the paramedics and the social room turned into sleeping quarters for the volunteers. Everything else, including the location of the gym can stay as is. Chairman DeLisio agreed. Sharon stated the Stryker room is large enough to divide if the career staff want a small sitting/tv room.

Dawn Neal-Ellsworth – Looking at the original architectural drawing, we must decide on a couple things; changing doors around to make sure there are two between the engine bay and sleeping quarters, and the direction of the hallway leading to the bathroom. Chairman DeLisio stated whichever is most practical. The hallway that runs frontage along the bay is less construction. A heating split and window will be needed.

Sharon Wilber stated there is a way to increase the size of the current shower. It would involve moving the electric panel. The bathroom will need a better heater as the door to the engine bay is always left open.

Commissioner Allen stated the shower/bathroom has been out of service for three weeks which is totally unacceptable. Remember the career paramedics live in that building and are now using the showers at Co#1. If an issue cannot be resolved, please reach out to the district so the maintenance department can assist. Chief Peters stated he and Nash will investigate the septic issue and report back.

Commissioner Holland stated the septic issue in its entirety must get immediately investigated and corrected by Co#5 and then right parallel/right behind it is we get two good bunkroom living quarters set up and finished as we move forward on the larger county EMS situation. The board should establish an end date goal which gives us an incentive to reach it otherwise this will go on and on. Chairman DeLisio agreed we should be able to have what we need out to the contractors by the end of May, ask the contractors to submit their proposals by mid-June and basically start work as soon thereafter as possible. Chairman DeLisio will meet with Sharon Wilber and provide a list of contractors.

Chief's Report – Chief Peters stated the second fly car will be done this weekend. Once inspected by the health department, it will go into service.

Hose, pump, and ladder testing was performed this week. The company was amazing, much faster than the last group and very well organized. Some hose did fail so will need to order more.

A lithium battery class will take place at Co#1 on July 12th from 6pm-9pm. Commissioner Holland stated member participation in this class should be as strongly mandatory as possible as this topic is our future. The Chief was reminded an SOP is needed for the use of Co#4's blanket.

EMS Coordinator's Report – Chairman DeLisio stated it has been another banner month. We are running calls at a pretty good clip. There were 75 EMS calls in April, 302 total year-to-date. We were down to eight calls with no full BLS crew, mutual aid was up to nine; six to West Hurley, two to Olive, and one to Diaz. We are very busy.

Instructor courses – Chairman DeLisio stated one of our career paramedics will begin classes to become an instructor this summer which is to the benefit of this district. Discussion about whether the hours of instruction are a charge to the district as regular work hours. This employee may receive partial compensation from Mobile Life and asks the district cover the balance. When the board approved this employee to take the class, the intent, although not voted on, was to cover the hours required to be in those training courses. This first class consists of six courses, two to four hours each; up to 24 hours total.

Commissioner Lavin asked what Mobile Life's incentive for paying him is. What does he give back to them. Paramedic Patrick Hayes stated Mobile makes a lot of money on education and typically has a non-compete clause so once you are trained through them, the money the students are paying goes to Mobile Life. It is very difficult to get your own certification so it probably makes more sense to split the difference with Mobile.

Chairman DeLisio stated the next phase of the training is teaching an entire EMT course which will be more hours but again the incentive the board wants is to have instructors within the department. The paramedic may have to come off the schedule during some of the courses but that is the EMS Coordinator's issue. The board agreed to pay any full-time paramedic wishing to become an instructor for their time.

SOP - Paramedic Responses Outside the District – Chairman DeLisio stated this policy is basically about our mutual aid. EMS Coordinator Baker has requested the policy be amended by deleting #4 which refers to when staffing is above minimum capacity (shift change, a 2nd paramedic available, that type of thing). The request to strike #4 is so when we have two paramedics on duty, it would not be mandatory but at our discretion whether to send a paramedic. If we do not strike #4, we are obligated to send our second paramedic. The most senior paramedic on duty, the EMS Coordinator or Chief would make the decision whether we go or not. The board approved the amendment.

Paramedic Hayes stated he was recently called mutual aid to W. Hurley as they had no personnel to roll the ambulance. Minutes later our ambulance was requested which was going to be driver alone and W. Hurley was just going to stand down. I requested county dispatch W. Hurley members respond to the scene, whether in a truck or ambulance, to provide manpower rather than just thinking Woodstock's got it and not even roll a tire. These departments who are unable to get the ambulance out should still provide manpower to assist us.

Commissioner Allen stated he spoke with Commissioner Justice Rice about a recent call that was mismanaged by County 911. Believes it is time this board sit down with the commissioners from West Hurley to discuss mutual aid. Sending our paramedic is fine but having no one from their department show up is an issue. Will try to get a meeting scheduled soon.

Woodstock Summer Camp Program Agreement – Each year, the EMS Coordinator serves as the off-site health director for the summer camp program so the Town of Woodstock can get their health department operating permit. Each day, when possible, the EMS Coordinator or paramedic on duty stops by the field to touch base with the on-site health director, make sure their medical supplies are stocked and to answer any concerns. This agreement has been in place for many years. The board authorized Chairman DeLisio sign the agreement.

Employee handbook – Eligible full-time paramedics receive six set holidays. Request the board consider changing those to floating holidays to increase their paid time off. Floating holidays can be taken anytime throughout the year but are cancelled at year end. Chairman DeLisio asked if this question was asked of our labor consultant. Secretary Peters stated no. Commissioner Allen stated this request is a union negotiation without a union. If employees want to act like a union, they should unionize. In a union negotiation, the employer gives something and the employees give something in return. The board agreed to change the fixed holidays to floating.

Unfinished Business / Committee Reports

UC EMS Council - Commissioner Allen stated there was nothing more to report. Commissioner Holland stated County EMS Taskforce Consultant Matt Zavasky may be experienced and bright but works in Texas which is a whole other metroplex. Given what we are seeing with the inefficiencies and difficulties in personnel particularly in the southern tier of Ulster County and the western third of Ulster County, it would be prudent for the board to write out its plan definitively of what we see Woodstock and this northeast quadrant should be like and how it should run because we running it privately as our own district/department would be more efficient and less costly to the taxpayers. Forty-five-minute response times are not acceptable. Our report should be submitted to the consultant so that it is not what he heard or translates into his notes but what we say. It is important.

Commissioner Allen stated we may have resolved a lot with Co#5 tonight but asked the board continue discussions and move forward with review of department facilities focused mainly on the district owned building to decide possible future changes to this building and possible changes to where the paramedics end up down the road. Would not like to see the board get bogged down. The county will catch up. Commissioner Holland stated he totally agrees moving forward with our discovery phase looking how we want to build and house. With the announcement of the initial \$25 Million dollars of upstate New York funding for firehouse or medical infrastructure, we should get right at the front of the list because if we can apply for \$1 Million dollars to offset what would be a future bond, it would really reduce the burden on the taxpayers. It also shows the state and county or whoever is going to make that decision where the money goes, that we are on it and not just sitting around waiting to hear. The bond will not be ready for this election period as we would not have enough information and a proposal to put a bond together by then. If we just say we have a plan, it is too amorphous, not defined, but if we set a date and say hey this is what we want to do, we want to break ground in 18 months, whatever that number is, we can then work back from that, we have our own scheduled discipline of when we are going to get things done otherwise it will just keep sitting. Discussion to continue later in the meeting.

Technology Committee – Commissioner Lavin

Website - Commissioner Hernandez stated he has some quotes for a new website design. Cost is between a couple hundred dollars to a couple thousand dollars depending upon what we want to do.

Recommends the design be mobile first as most people go to the website on their mobile devices. Does not have any schematics or design drafts yet but there are people ready to help. The maintenance of the site could be done by somebody in the department who can jump into the management system. Unsure who that task would fall to on the company level.

Chairman DeLisio stated he is not averse to having the website built for a couple thousand dollars. Better to have more than less. Agrees mobile first is the way to go. Suggests the vendors look at what we have, come up with proposals, mobile first, content, navigation, everything.

Commissioner Holland - In terms of the difference of the cost of maintenance, is the more expensive simpler to maintain by either a professional or one of our lay members? Commissioner Hernandez - The management of the site will probably be the same cost whether it is the most expensive or least expensive. It depends on the depth of how many pages and updates we want to have.

Commissioner Holland - Then it falls on the board to define that management aspect and who has the task of doing it.

Will continue discussions next month.

Public Information Officer - Commissioner Lavin stated this all relates with a Public Information Officer. Will it be a volunteer or paid position. Chairman DeLisio – The board needs to discuss further. As we go forward, we do need a PIO to gather everything that we have with all the companies and help provide guidance to them. We have Twitter and Facebook accounts we have no control over and there should be some uniformity and things going on that the PIO has a grip around it.

Chief Peters stated most local departments have a volunteer, retiree or someone designated by the chief. Commissioner Holland - In the volunteer setting, you must find the right person. In order to keep the PIO as impartial and as objective and separate from the day-to-day firematic activities and interpersonal relationships with other firefighters, fire police and paramedics, you must pay them and take them out of it. It needs to be a professional. The communication is to two different populations; your internal population (members) and your external population (community) and that kind of exposure is critical. Does not believe it should be a member. Sees a fatigue across the members in addressing public information or being asked on the scene and believes there will be a real relief that there will be a professional front face on our department and that no one needs to be responsible.

Commissioner Lavin – Any statement from the department or what happened at a call should have clearance from a commissioner or chief and a commissioner. If the PIO was techno-savvy, he/she could also maintain our account page; a public information officer and content manager.

Commissioner Holland – Fundraising efforts are not nearly the success projected to be due to lack of the promotion of the event. The fatigue on the shoulders of the people who are running the event who normally get the word out is palpable. A PIO could take that burden off the volunteers so they could handle just the logistics of the event itself. There is a limit as a volunteer what you can do and how effective you are. A PIO who just takes it so the good foundational work that we do as members can then be professionally promoted into the community or whatever the public sphere is that gets the results we need. In the end, it will generate more donations, more people who are looking to apply. It is time to create this position of PIO.

Commissioner Allen – The hardest part will be changing the mentality of the district that has basically been freelancing for 100 years and get them to refer inquiries to the PIO. There are classes for PIO at Montour Falls. Agrees position needs to be paid. The board should also give thought to the fact a

couple months ago we were talking about possibly considering some type of paid administrator but we never want to make that step. A paid administrator could handle all these things.

Chairman DeLisio – Agrees a PIO will take the burden of handling content off volunteers and give us more of a professional tone. We need a scope of work, a job description, discuss budget for it and then as part of the process, where we advertise, we do have to make it publicly known unless we know someone specifically, and then ultimately require the course at Montour Falls on firematic PIO.

Facilities review – Chairman DeLisio stated last month the board discussed doing a building review of the district building. The board agreed the first step is to create a committee. Commissioner Lavin and Commissioner Holland were appointed to head up this committee. The appointed commissioners will run their committee as they choose with the stipulation input is required from all five companies and the chiefs. The committee may appoint one or two members from each company or invite people into different meetings for input. While EMS is driving some of this, there are other factors in firematics that we are not compliant with. Co#1 previously had presented some good ideas about the need for a decon room, fitness center, lockers, showers, etc.

Chairman DeLisio stated once the committee comes up with recommendations, at the appropriate time the board will vote on what we think we want and need, then engage engineering, architect solicitation to provide feedback, a request for information (RFI) how they would handle this and provide recommendations. Once the RFI is underneath, then we look at budget. If we decide to do anything, it will need to be bonded which means we need drawings, proposals, be able to explain to the public what is going on. It is likely be a \$2.5 Million dollar bond but hopefully that cost can be offset with state and federal grant money now available for firehouse construction. The district's bonds for this building are paid in full.

Commissioner Lavin stated there are a lot of firms that specialize in design and construction of firehouses. Commissioner Allen stated Montour Falls offers courses on the design and construction of firehouses. Commissioner Holland stated there are also several local newly constructed firehouses to visit.

Discussion to be continued next month.

New Business

LOSAP Annual Report – Chairman DeLisio stated the annual report was received and suggested Craig Relyea from Firefly be invited to the June meeting. All agreed.

WFD good news – Commissioner Holland - A feel-good moment amid all this administrative, operational, budget nightmare in which we live; there was a call on April 2nd for an 84-year-old gentleman who had a very nasty fall on Overlook Mtn. Woodstock's response was very fast. His brother, Don Doyle, wrote a wonderful letter of thanks to the paper which Commissioner Holland read aloud and which is attached to these minutes. Commissioner Holland stated we sometimes forget just what we do and so he commends everybody and hopes we all keep our backbone and our strength to keep going forward. I want to thank everyone of us for what we do, how much we do and with the great intent that we bring to it. Even though in meetings we may disagree with one another, I love when the companies on the scene of an emergency, everyone just works together, no questions asked. Thank you. Chairman DeLisio thanked Evan for sharing.

Leadership Conference in Montour Falls – Commissioner Holland stated in addition to what we may

look at down the line or should or will be looking at in terms of professional service, we are still a volunteer organization that is changing from a tight knit circle where everyone was in regular daily communication with one another, there was a scope of power and authority that was equally laid out, to building into a pyramidal organization. We must; there is just too much to get done and too many people as part of it. Montour Falls has come up with a 2 ½ day fire and emergency services leadership management conference focused on upper-level content; the HR aspect, both the administrative side (commissioner and paid) as well as the firematic side, HR, grant writing, administration, code of ethics, leadership programs for any officer, staff or whomever has a breath of people working for him/her. This is not strategy or tactical stuff but pure personnel leadership. Highly recommends the following attend: all three chiefs, five captains go, one or two commissioners and Judy if she would like to. This conference is November 3-5th. Will send out more information when available. Highly recommends the board approve personnel attend this conference.

Building rental – Discussion regarding a request by Linda Lover to use the firehouse meeting room and kitchen during the summer months for the Office for Aging program which provides seniors with a free lunch every Thursday afternoon. According to the building rental rules, groups are not permitted use of the firehouse on a regular basis. The senior recreation committee exercise classes were given permission to use the meeting room years ago during the summer months when they were removed from the community center while the summer camp program was in operation for their exercise classes. One of those classes is on Thursday afternoons from noon to 4:30pm. The board wishes it could be of assistance but agreed since the exercise was our previous and prior commitment and the fact we are simply over capacity during summer months, to deny this request.

Treasurer's report – Secretary/Treasurer Judy Peters stated the district received a 35% dividend of \$31,181 from the workers' compensation safety group Glatfelter. There are two invoices not reflected on the report; \$8,147 from Reliant Hose Testing and \$1,015.25 from PCA. The bill for the two new tough books was re-coded to split the cost between the computer budget and the EMS equipment budget.

Resolutions:

RESOLUTION #53-2023

Approve pay for instructor courses

Offered by Commissioner Lavin, second by Commissioner Hernandez

BE IT RESOLVED to authorize the payment of hours attending classes to become an instructor to any Woodstock Fire District full-time paramedic at their regular rate of pay; classes must be pre-approved by the board.

Vote: 5-0

RESOLUTION #54-2023

Amend Policy

Offered by Commissioner Lavin, second by Commissioner Holland

BE IT RESOLVED to amend the SOP for paramedic responses outside the district by striking item #4 "staffing is above minimum reserve capacity."

Vote: 5-0

RESOLUTION #55-2023

Approve floating holidays

Offered by Commissioner Hernandez, second by Commissioner Holland

BE IT RESOLVED to amend the employee handbook by changing the holidays for full-time paramedics to floating holidays; unused holidays are cancelled at the end of the year.

Vote: 5-0

RESOLUTION #56-2023

Approve minutes

Offered by Commissioner Lavin, second by Commissioner Holland

BE IT RESOLVED to accept the minutes of April 13, 2023.

Vote: 5-0

RESOLUTION #57-2023

Accept treasurer report

Offered by Commissioner Allen, second by Commissioner Lavin

BE IT RESOLVED to accept the treasurer report as amended for April, 2023.

Vote: 5-0

RESOLUTION #58-2023

Approve payment of audited vouchers

Offered by Commissioner Lavin, second by Commissioner Hernandez

BE IT RESOLVED to authorize payment of the audited vouchers in the amount of \$49,106.64.

Vote: 5-0

RESOLUTION #59-2023

Approve probationary member

Offered by Commissioner Allen, second by Commissioner Hernandez

BE IT RESOLVED to approve Cody Neher a probationary member of Co#2.

Vote: 5-0

RESOLUTION #60-2023

Approve active membership

Offered by Commissioner Holland, second by Commissioner Hernandez

BE IT RESOLVED to approve the recommendation for active membership to Ali Keefe in Co#2.

Vote: 5-0

Public be heard

Paramedic Patrick Hayes inquired about the status of an application for employment. This applicant, Darius, has twenty plus years of experience, lives in Kingston, and I would trust him to care for me and my family. The board will follow up on scheduling an interview.

Dawn Neal-Ellsworth advised she received a very good report from her doctor and thanked everybody for their support.

Ted Weidenbacher thanked the board for their support.

Chairman DeLisio thanked everybody for coming out. At 7:50pm, Commissioner Allen moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Commissioner Hernandez, all in favor.

Meeting adjourned.

Judy Peters
Secretary/Treasurer

Appendix 5 - Standard Operating Procedures for Paramedic Responses Outside of the District
Adopted May 11, 2023

The Board of Fire Commissioners has adopted the following Standard Operating Procedure as criteria for response for Fire District Paramedics to localities outside of the Woodstock Fire District Co. No. 5- Rescue Squad primary operating territory. This Operating Procedure is to ensure that employees in this classification have a thorough understanding of what is expected when dispatched to such calls by the Ulster County 911 Communications Center.

Due to the increased frequency of requests to outlying areas of Ulster County for Paramedic response, the Woodstock Board of Fire Commissioners feels this clarification is needed in regards to requests for response to these areas by Woodstock Fire District Paramedic resources secondary to the potential impact it may have on the district.

The Rescue Squad is presently experiencing manpower shortages. This fact, along with the lack of reciprocal resources to the Fire District, and further compounded with extended turn-around times for these calls for service leave citizens and visitors within our operating territory in a dangerously precarious situation.

Secondary to these factors, the district has been advised to restrict responses to non- contiguous territories when it creates undue hazard to the Fire District. Based upon the Fire District's daily staffing, the district shall retain minimum reserve capacity of one Paramedic and one BLS ambulance for all responses within the Woodstock Fire District unless:

1. Requested to an In- County municipality or District contiguous to the Woodstock Fire District (Diaz, Olive, Sawkill, Shandaken, West Hurley);
2. Response to a declared mass casualty incident;
3. Specialty response per pre-arranged agreement.

When calls for service are received by the Ulster County 911 Communications Center that do not meet the above criteria, the Paramedic on duty shall notify the County 911 Center via landline or the district mobile phone at (845) 338-1440 advising that there is no unit available.

Be advised that any employee initiating this call per the above criteria shall be held harmless for any liabilities or disciplinary actions.

Adopted 11/09/2017; Updated 5/11/2023