

Approved February 28, 2023

Select Board Meeting
February 2, 2023, 10:15 am
Conference Room, Town Hall

Present: Select Board: Chair, Diana Szynal and Edmund Jaworski.

Also in attendance: Fire Chief Bob Flaherty, Town Administrator Marlene Michonski and Municipal Resources, Inc. Consultant David Houghton.

Chair Szynal opened the meeting at 10:15 am, welcoming Mr. Houghton for the purpose of discussing the scope of services and process for an assessment of operations. Chair Szynal provided an overview of the town's struggles with covering calls. Recognizing Chief Flaherty's excellent work, Chair Szynal explained that this has become more about not just hiring additional personnel but to look at the entire picture.

Mr. Houghton explained that the analysis will look at strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, including looking at other models and options.

Mr. Jaworski expressed interest in having services in town and understands the funds necessary for services and ability to justify it, adding that he would like to see the study show pros and cons. Citing that she wants to go into this study with a completely open mind, Chair Szynal added with not assuming a wait time that will cause panic. Chair Szynal suggested if the study could include a five year projection.

Mr. Houghton, referring to a contract if the town were to outsource its services, would expect to see a bullet tight contract and recommended that a ten-year contract is not something the town would want to do. Mr. Houghton has looked at data posted on the HFD website and suggested that he look at dual (fire and EMS) calls and dual roles.

Chief Flaherty offered the department's response time is improving and during the month of January, Northampton was called twice, one of which our ambulance was already out. Discussed calls for Interstate 91 and vehicles coming through Hatfield is about 10,000 people.

Regarding the department's facilities, Mr. Houghton feels it is important to look at, also, with response time. Referencing the 10,000 people coming to Hatfield, Chair Szynal would like to know how we get to that, suggesting looking at the average number of vehicle accidents along that stretch of I-91 and Rt. 5/10.

Responding to projections, Mr. Houghton can look at 3 to 5 years and would do 5 years. Beyond that is difficult to do.

Requesting a presentation to the town, Chair Szynal asked that this include graphics and see list of options.

Chief Flaherty explained current staffing coverage. Three employees are not cross trained.

It was believed that the study could take up to six months to complete. Mr. Houghton foresees the assessment taking less than 6 months, estimating 4 months. Referring to potential options, Mr. Houghton referenced a "rollout" option where you don't increase staff all at once.

Recognizing that the safety of all residents is a priority, Chair Szynal sees this study as an opportunity for the town to make an informed decision.

Mr. Houghton's assessment will include talking to staff, including a listening session with fire and EMS personnel.

Location of presentation to town will be at Smith Academy or the Elementary School.

With no further business, a motion was made by Chair Szynal to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Jaworski second the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 11:13 am.

Respectfully,
Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator