

Minutes

South Royalton Rescue Study Committee
Royalton, Sharon, and Tunbridge Selectboards

September 17, 2014
South Royalton School

Attending:

So. Royalton Rescue Study Committee: Mary Gavin, Ingrid Steamburg, Phil Gates, David Kimball; Sharon Selectboard: Kevin Blakeman, Paul Haskell; Royalton Selectboard: Phil Gates, Sandy Conrad, Joan Goldstein, Peggy Ainsworth; Tunbridge Selectboard: Ingrid Van Steamburg, Erin Gooch, Gary Mullen.

Others present included, but were not limited to the following: Scott Beavers (Tunbridge), Carol and Jason Flint (Sharon Fire), Rebecca Owens, Corinne Ingraham, David Palmer (South Royalton Rescue); John Durkee (Tunbridge), Jonnie Spaulding (WRV Chamber of Commerce), Margy Becker (Sharon Selectboard Assistant); Rob Wolfe (Valley News, Lebanon), Stuart Levasseur (Herald), Anne Peters (Tunbridge) Brenda Field, Dave Kimball, and Robert Sponable of Tunbridge Emergency Services; Jerry Barcelow (South Royalton), Keith Grimes (South Royalton) William C. Ballou (Royalton), Bob Hull (Royalton), Ellen Bogardus (Tunbridge), Deb Mullen (Tunbridge), Eunice Gavin (Royalton), David Whitney, Lenora Kimble (Tunbridge), David Ainsworth (Royalton), Sarah Buxton (Tunbridge),

Call to Order:

David Kimball called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Presentation by Study Committee:

David Kimball presided over introductions. The Study Committee has completed approximately 11 month's of research.

Ingrid Steamburg presented on behalf of the Study Committee. The Committee recommends a rescue service which is 'owned' by the towns. The tri-town solution could cost approximately \$53.50/per capita in operating costs in FY15, with a projected \$49.15/ per capita for FY16. The plan involves construction of a new building, with living quarters and 2 bays. Towns will develop and approve the operating budgets. The 'ownership' option offers more local control than contracting for services.

The Study Committee is asking the Selectboard of each town to confirm whether the Study Committee is proceeding in the right direction.

It was mentioned the Committee has yet to research how the towns will merge in their efforts – perhaps through inter-local contracts. A budget for legal fees still needs to be established.

The Study Committee's annual operating cost projections have included the \$450,000 cost of a new building amortized over a 20 year mortgage at an interest rate of 4%. The location of the new building will be the Crawford Property, where the Royalton Town Offices are to be built.

Royalton Selectboard member Joan Goldstein inquired as to the benefits of a change in administrative structure versus the status quo. Phil Gates responded the proposed structure would be more efficient. South Royalton Rescue needs to move out of the Fire Station. Spreading costs of operation over a larger area makes the ambulance service more stable.

Study Committee representatives say they envision 3 representatives from each town would preside on the "Board" which oversees the joint operation. This structure is similar to joint oversight of the Bethel-Royalton transfer station.

A resident of North Tunbridge cited some concern over response times to their location, and inquired whether the Study Committee had consulted with First Branch Rescue.

A Tunbridge resident inquired whether Towns have to own the rescue services. Is "control" worth or equal to ownership? And what legal liability goes with ownership?

Sara Buxton, also of Tunbridge, inquired whether the joint rescue service would be eligible for statewide dispatching, which could save up to \$13,000/year. She also inquired whether there would be a choice of hospital partnerships in the future?

David Palmer, current Administrator for South Royalton Rescue, commented there would be no change on hospital partnerships. The costs of dispatch for a tri-town rescue service are not known as of yet.

A South Royalton resident inquired whether the cost to purchase land was included in the budget forecasts? Phil Gates, Royalton Selectmen, indicated a long-term lease was envisioned, not outright purchase. Discussions are presently underway concerning purchase of the ambulance from the Fire District.

An inquiry was made concerning insurance payments.

The Study Committee is hoping Tuck Business School students will make recommendations about the administration of the new rescue service.

Selectboards were asked by the Study Committee to take action in warned meetings and report back to the Study Committee at its October 1st meeting. Paul Haskell, Sharon Selectmen, suggested action should include appropriation of "up to \$1,000" for legal fees. Selectboard members thanked the Study Committee for its hard work.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:05pm.
Submitted by Margy Becker, Sharon Selectboard Assistant