Select Board/Tri-Town Brimfield Ambulance Minutes
Wales Senior Center
March 6th, 2019 @ 6:30 PM
85 Main Street, Wales MA 01521

Present: Chair: Ernest Fancy; Select Board Member: Bettina Schmidt; Select Board Member: Larry Mandell

Janine C. Drake, Town Administrator;

Others present: Holland Fire Chief: James Gagne; Brimfield BOS Chair: Paul McCarthy; Brimfield BOS Member: Ryan Oszta; Brimfield BOS Member: Paul Vandal; Brimfield BOS Member: Carolyn Haley; Brimfield Fire Chief & Brimfield Ambulance Director: Brendan McCarthy; Brimfield Ambulance Treasurer: Sheila N. Miller; Brimfield Ambulance: Kay; Brimfield Police Chief: Charles Kuss; Brimfield Finance Committee Member: Patrick K.; Brimfield Finance Committee Member: Michael Doyle; Wales BOS Chair: Ed Boyce; Wales BOS Vice Chair: James Whalen; Wales Fire Chief: John Croke; and Wales Finance Committee Chair: Roy Lainson

Wales Executive Secretary: Pamela Leduc

Meeting called to order by Mr. Paul McCarthy at 6:40 PM

Old Business:

Brimfield Ambulance Discussion :

Recap: Mr. McCarthy explained that the Brimfield Ambulance is closing its doors at an unknown time and date. The Town of Brimfield and the Brimfield Fire Department has a proposal to take over the Brimfield Ambulance, once the Safety Complex is complete. The ambulance service will be set up as a separate entity under the Brimfield Fire Department and would be budgeted separately, as well. The Brimfield Ambulance has faced challenges with expiring equipment and equipment failure, a vehicle is out of commission currently, budgetary dilemmas and has had some esoteric issues. Mr. Brendan McCarthy couldn't fill all the vacant shifts needed and was as many shifts as he could. Adequate staffing is also a concern. The Town of Brimfield has put together a 5-year plan. The cost per each of the Tri-Towns will be as low as possible.

Mr. Mandell made a comment that logistically for the Brimfield Fire Department to take over Brimfield Ambulance seems seamless. The Fire Chiefs from the Tri-Towns contacted private ambulance services and their quotes were quite expensive to outsource. One quote was over $300,000, yearly. Another quote was over $400,000 per year. Major components to outsourcing a private service would also need to factor in the distance for response time and availability.

Grant opportunities would be available for the proposed ambulance service as a beneficial asset. Mr. Paul McCarthy contacted Sen. Anne Gobi's office, as well for additional information and support. Mr. Whalen questioned whether funding sources would be long or short term. Mr. McCarthy added that there would be more income and better collections.

Mr. Fancy raised a payroll tax question, FICA, Social Security and unemployment responsibilities. The unemployment tax would be approximately 10%, which is an aggressive number. These projections need to be looked at by an auditor.

Mr. Whalen raised a couple of questions regarding the Tri- Towns contributions for the budget. Assuring no step increase coming in every year, where did the 2 ½% increase arise from? How was it originally set up? At what point prior to the concern to the budget that we should bump this up? How did we get to this point?

Mr. Paul McCarthy responded with some answers. The people who make up the board on the Brimfield Ambulance are tax payers. They didn't want to raise increases for an additional burden. There was also a political issue for no increases. How procedures were originally set up is unknown. The plan was to set up this service as a "mom & pop shop" and there were 2 different business plans.

Mr. Mandell brought up time lines. We are looking at this for next year 2020. PVPC, Eric Weiss will be looking at the agreement and is offering time and services.

Chief Croke stated there are rumors that Brimfield Ambulance is operating day to day and week to week. Are they going to make it to 2020 or do we need a contingency plan? This will put a strain on mutual aid. Or is this short term?

Mr. Whalen added that Norcross could be an option to use, reserves or free cash. He would like a projected plan of what that would look like.

The projected plan proposes that $40 per capita is a safer bet to supporting service as it is now. We would be able to sustain business and improve it. Currently we need $30, plus extra, to get current. There is a money market account and will be accessed if need be.

Motion 03062019-1 Mr. McCarthy made a motion to form a Study Committee, comprised of one representative from each of the Tri-Towns to research information. **2nd** Ms. Haley. So Voted.

Motion 030619-2: Mr. McCarthy made a motion to adjourn. 2nd Mr. Olszta. So voted.

Meeting closed at **7:44 PM**.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janine C. Drake
Town Administrator
Town of Holland