

## 2016 Hallowell Fire Services Committee

**DRAFT Minutes:** March 1, 2016 5:15 p.m. Hallowell City Hall

**Members:** Bob Duplessie, Chair; Dawn Gallagher, Dan Davis, Mark Sullivan, Mike Grant, Sophie Gabrion, Sandy Stubbs, Stefan Pakulski

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**Members Present:** Bob Duplessie, Dawn Gallagher, Dan Davis, Sandy Stubbs, Stefan Pakulski

### **2016 Hallowell Fire Services Committee Mission Statement**

*To provide input and make recommendations that the City Council and citizens of Hallowell may use to establish municipal policies, including codes and ordinance, to retain and direct municipal personnel and to make public investments in training, equipment and buildings needed to deliver essential fire protection services most cost effectively. Our highest priorities are to prevent fires and other threats to public safety and to safeguard the lives and the public safety of Hallowell citizens and visitors to our viceHallowell taxpayers. Toward these goals we will also explore opportunities for contracting with other communities to provide selected fire services to Hallowell or deliver services jointly with Hallowell.*

### **Meeting Minutes:**

The Committee approved the minutes of the February 9, 2016 meeting.

#### **1. Fire Service Calls**

Bob reported that Hallowell already has an ordinance that permits the City to charge fees for “false alarms.” For example, someone reports a fire and the fire department responds, and no fire/smoke/emergency existed. These calls are different than fire service calls made when there is smoke/fire/emergency but when the fire department gets there, no assistance is needed. For example, someone reports smelling smoke and when the fire department gets there, they discover that a neighbor’s toast had burned. The Committee agreed to refer the issue of how to best handle/try to reduce or educate the public on these issues to to the City for its Public Safety (police/fire) committee to take action.

Stefan reported on the Committee’s request to have Mike provide dates, times, locations, and number of firefighters responding for fire service calls. Stefan indicated that Mike said he can provide hard copies of the fire runs, but that there is “no computable data in the format requested.”

- **Action:** Stefan will follow up with Mike to confirm that he meant that no electronic information exists and how the annual fire marshal report was done without a database or spreadsheet. Also, check to determine if the fire department has a computer.
- **Action:** The Committee agreed to refer the issue of how to best handle/try to reduce or educate the public on these issues to the City for its Public Safety (police/fire) committee to take action.

## 2. Grants Opportunity

Sophie was unable to attend the Committee meeting.

- **Action:** Sophie will contact Carolyn Manson about Row House, and then Bob Stubbs and Earle Shuttleworth on other grants submitted.

## 3. Water Street Improvements

- **Action:** Sophie to report to the Committee on the 2/22 highway committee meeting and that the new water main will have a positive impact on ISO ratings and improve fire service for downtown.
- **Action:** Sandy indicated that she left word for Dennis McKinney to join us at our meeting. Stefan will contact him to attend the next meeting.
- **Update:** After the meeting, Mayor Walker requested that Dennis Kinney be asked and attend the Committee's next meeting to discuss ISO and water system and capacity. **Chair Bob D. will contact Dennis.**

## 4. Fire House Insurance

Stefan reported that the current insurance coverage includes the building and contents. He met with Marcus Ballou who is the underwriter for MMA who indicated that the City may want to consider increasing the coverage and suggested that the City should get riders for the more noteworthy artifacts. Stefan gave Marcus the inventory and Marcus took photos and will work up a new policy for us for the 7/1/16 beginning fiscal year.

Based on the 2012 report and follow up with city officials, the Committee confirmed its understanding that the Fire Association had **voted** that the City owned the artifacts, including the second floor items, tiger and weather vane. Our final report will note this conclusion.

- **Action:** Stefan and Dawn will get individual pieces appraised from professional appraiser (James Julia), including the tiger and weather vane. Dawn will advise Sandy S. who would like to participate in the review and who also suggested that Jane Radcliffe be invited.

#### **5. Request to Meet from Gardiner**

The Gardiner mayor, city manager, and fire chief requested a meeting on March 24th with Mayor Walker, Stefan, and Mike G. to discuss having Gardiner provide fire services for Hallowell. The Committee discussed the 1 ½ mile ISO standard and questions whether the Gardiner station meets that standard. The Committee also thought it would take at least 15 minutes or more for Gardiner to respond to an alarm on the west side of 95.

- **Action:** Stefan will advise Mayor Walker of the issues raised about distance and the amount of time it could take to have Gardiner respond. The Committee also thought it would be a good idea for Bob D. to attend the meeting as a “neutral” representative of the Committee.

#### **6. Fire Service Needs at a High Level**

The Committee believes that the current facilities are no longer adequate for fire services. The building needs significant renovation, but even then, it cannot house regular sized fire trucks, and it is becoming more difficult to find smaller trucks which must be specially ordered and are much more costly. Larger trucks and engines from other communities, which provide mutual aid to Hallowell, do not have space to park at the fire station and must block City streets, further increasing safety risks. Thus, the City will need to consider options including building a new fire station or a substation (should the City contract for fire services with another community).

The State, as a whole, has seen many volunteer or on-call/paid fire departments disbanding for financial reasons such as antiquated equipment and buildings, and a real shortage of on-call/paid fire fighters. Many communities have collaborated with other communities to form joint fire services or contracted with adjacent municipalities that have an established full-time fire department. Hallowell has serious issues with inadequate facilities and aging equipment which will need to be replaced in the very near future, and has witnessed a shortage of on-call/paid fire fighters in general. Although all of the Department’s fire fighters respond as quickly as possible, there is a shortage of fire fighters who live in Hallowell. For these reasons,

there is no guarantee that the current on-call/paid fire department will remain viable as time goes on.

The Committee is also mindful of the benefits of mutual aid, where other surrounding communities respond to fire service calls. Mindful of our duty to report all options to the City, the Committee talked about a hybrid system of having a 365/24 presence consisting of a minimum number of fire fighters on-site supplemented with on-call/paid fire fighters and with other fire departments.

The Committee also discussed the notion of contracting with Augusta to provide fire services for Hallowell.

### **7. Discussions with Augusta about Providing Fire Services for Hallowell**

As background, Stefan reported that he did have a conversation with Bill Bridgeo who indicated that Mike Starn did not provide documents that Mike had indicated he would provide by December 2012. Bill said that if he received a written request from Hallowell, he would provide options, with the caveat that Hallowell would be paying much more than the City is paying Augusta now for EMS and other services.

Stefan reported that at the request of Mayor Walker, he has scheduled a meeting of Gardiner, Augusta, and Hallowell mayors and city managers to discuss regionalization efforts. He indicated that Mayor Walker had several ideas in mind but did not know if they included fire services. The Committee suggested that topics such as a joint contract to conduct fire safety in commercial buildings could be a useful topic of this meeting.

The Committee also agreed that a written request for fire services options should be made to Bill B., and that having Stefan and Bob D. meet with Bill (and perhaps others from Augusta) would be beneficial.

- **Action:** Given that the mayors and city managers will be meeting, Stefan will advise the Mayor of our request for a meeting/written request to Bill B. to be held after the mayors' meeting.

For discussion purposes the Committee then had Stefan outline the options that Bill B. had discussed with him on how costs could be allocated if Hallowell contracted with Augusta based on ratios of: 1) Total assessed value; 2) population; and/or 3) fire and EMS service calls. They both agreed it would need to be equitable for both municipalities.

Augusta currently budgets ~\$ 4 million for fire and EMS services.

1. The Committee briefly looked at costs based on assessed values. Total assessment is \$2.2 Billion (\$1.8 b for Augusta and \$400 m for Hallowell). Hallowell represents 18%; and 18% of \$4 million is \$727,000.
2. The Committee did not have numbers for populations but a rough estimate would be about ~10-12% which would be \$400-\$480,000.
3. The Committee believed that the number of calls for Hallowell is significantly less than Augusta and would like to see how those ratios work out.

**NOTE FROM DAWN: The following chart was drafted based on our discussions. These numbers are very rough and please feel free to modify/correct them.**

The Committee agreed that it would need to gather current fire, EMS, operations and building costs to do a comparison of “net” costs. Just as a starting point, the Committee talked about **very rough and draft** costs based on the needs. The very rough and draft costs are shown by:

**Option 1.** Contract with Augusta with columns for capital expenses (building a substation) and annual operating expenses.

**Option 2.** Building a new fire station. Option 2 is further broken down into:

- 2.A. On-call/paid Fire Department with columns for capital expenses (building a new fire station) and annual operating expenses;
- 2.B. Hybrid with columns for capital expenses (building a new fire station) and annual operating expenses which would include costs for a minimum number of full time fire fighters (2 onsite 365/24) supplemented with on-call/paid fire fighters.

<b>DRAFT Needs</b>	<b>DRAFT Option 1 -- Contract with Augusta</b>		<b>DRAFT Option 2</b>	<b>2.A. On-Call Paid</b>	<b>2.B. Hybrid</b>
		<b>Ann. Costs</b>		<b>Ann. Costs</b>	<b>Ann. Costs</b>
<b>New Building</b>	<b>Substation (\$300 K)</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>Fire Station (\$800 K)*</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>
<b>Fire and EMS Services</b>	<b>contract with Augusta</b>	<b>\$400-\$700,000?</b>	<b>On-call/paid w/ mutual aid &amp; EMS</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	
			<b>hybrid/2 full-time w/ on-call/paid **</b>		<b>\$240,000</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Provided by Augusta in contract</b>		<b>buy newer trucks in 2017 &amp; 2020 (\$400 K total)</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>

			Maintenance, Insurance, etc.	\$35,000	\$35,000
	<b>Total Ann. Costs</b>	<b>\$430 K - \$730K</b>	<b>Total Ann. Costs</b>	<b>\$235,000</b>	<b>\$395,000</b>

\* Based on Clinton Costs

\*\* \$40 K x 6 full-time (needed to provide 365/24)

The Agenda for the next meeting will be to continue mapping out the costs and to discuss the results of the Gardiner and Augusta meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25

Next meeting: April 5<sup>th</sup> at City Hall 5:15