

**MINUTES OF HAVERHILL FIRE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Monday, September 30, 2013**  
**Draft Subject to Review, Correction and Approval at Following Meeting**

**Members Present:** Rick Ladd, Howard Hatch, Don Hammond, Shawn Bigelow, Richard Morris, Rich Clifford, Dick Guy, Mike Bonanno, Joe Maccini, Mike Lavoie, and Brad Kennedy

**Members Absent:** Deb McDanolds and Chris Demers

**Public Present:** Preston Hatch and Ed Ballam

**Staff Present:** Jo Lacaillade, Administrative Assistant/Finance Officer and Karen Hyde, Clerk

**Call Meeting to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

Rick Ladd stated that there were several things that needed to be addressed: (1) the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve account and how it is managed and set up; (2) how forest fires are paid for; and (3) the building inspection fee schedule. He stated that everyone should have the agreement of the Haverhill Fire Committee dated December 17, 2012 and the spreadsheet created by AA Lacaillade for the forest fire fees. He stated that the first thing they should address is the Fire Equipment/Vehicle Capital Reserve account, which he feels is the most important. On Page 2 of the agreement, under Capital Equipment (Vehicle), there are several items that should be looked at: (a) compatibility with currently owned equipment (town wide); (c) integration and need for equipment in consideration of fire district and town fire mission and safety needs; and (f) purchase schedule and rotation in conjunction and w/consideration given to town wide needs/fire districts. He then asked AA Lacaillade to explain how the \$20,000, which is allocated to each fire district, is handled by the Town. AA Lacaillade stated that it is included in the overall budget and at the end of the year, the Town will pay to each precinct what they have coming to them for equipment. The \$20,000 currently goes to each precinct. Dick Guy and Don Hammond stated that the \$20,000 from each precinct should go into a Town Capital Reserve Fund, so that when they need to buy a truck, they have some money. Rick Ladd stated that that was the question; to see if there should be one Town Capital Reserve Account or three separate capital reserve accounts. Joe Maccini asked if anyone had an outstanding debt where they used that account to pay off the equipment. The intent was to create one Capital Reserve Account, held by the Town, specific to buying fire trucks. Mike Lavoie stated that the Town would pro-rate when precincts needed trucks, so they wouldn't be buying 2 trucks at the same time. Don Hammond stated that he thought Haverhill Corner was next due for a vehicle. He also stated that North Haverhill was good until 2028. Rick Ladd asked if there was a spreadsheet where they could find out when their vehicles were purchased, what is the longevity and where they are on that right now. Don stated that he had a 2008, a 2014 and a 1989-90. Rick Ladd asked if they should look at items (a), (c) and (f) right now or leave it up to the Fire Vehicle/Equipment Advisory Committee where the chiefs are going to have to take that vehicle and decide on it. Rick and Joe Maccini thought that a proposed 10-year plan for each precinct was necessary, maybe even a 12-, 15- or 20-year plan. Howard Hatch asked where the line was going to be drawn regarding Town-purchased vehicles and precinct-purchased vehicles. It is up to the precincts to sell their used trucks and he was inquiring as to where the money would go. Would it be precinct-purchased vehicle funds going to the precincts and Town-purchased vehicle funds going to the Town? Rick Ladd responded that in the agreement on page 3, "Any funds received from sold vehicles goes to the Town (fire vehicle capital reserve fund)." The Committee would again discuss this when the spreadsheet was created from the information provided to AA Lacaillade from the Fire Chiefs regarding longevity, purchase date, and current status.

Rick Ladd asked AA Lacaillade to explain the forest fire spreadsheet that was provided to the members of the Committee. The State reimburses the Town \$10.99/hr to \$14.69/hr, depending on who it is, for fighting forest fires. Rick Ladd stated that they had a request to increase the hourly to \$20/hr and the Town to pay the difference. AA Lacaillade stated that the Selectboard, when approached by the Fire Chiefs about this increase, asked her to create a spreadsheet of the last five (5) years consisting of how many forest fires they have had, how many people responded and the hours. The front sheet of the spreadsheet was a summary of that information. She stated that the Town can raise the rate, but they will only be reimbursed the State rate. She also stated that she had spoken with Steve Sherman, the State Forest Ranger for this area, and he said that there are places south of here that may pay different. He said that in this area, there are no towns that pay different. She asked specifically about Littleton, but they are full-time firefighters; their status is different. Brad Kennedy stated that there was no difference from fighting a forest fire or a structure fire; the firefighters are still going out. Don Hammond stated that the forest fire pay should remain the same. Brad Kennedy stated that it was the principal of the thing. Howard Hatch stated that his issue was the firefighters go to a fire, they get paid and they get paid well for it. He felt that what the Committee did was just a band-aid. Rick Ladd asked Richard Morris about the higher pay scale that they had prior to this one and did Richard have any complaints from his people about getting a lesser pay when they went out to fight a fire on the ground or forest. Richard responded that he had received no complaints. It was decided to leave the pay as is.

The last thing that needed to be discussed was the building inspection fee schedule. Rick Ladd did a brief overview of the compensation to the chiefs for inspections. He asked what kind of fee schedule was being used; it was his understanding that Woodsville had their own fee schedule. The Town had a fee schedule, which was set up when they had a third-party inspector. The concern is that there is no uniformity between precincts. His question is should we be on the same page on this one? AA Lacaillade stated that there have been issues in the past with different fee schedules. Rick then asked how different the Town schedule was from Woodsville's schedule. AA Lacaillade stated that she couldn't tell him because she hadn't received the schedule from Woodsville. Don Hammond stated that he was told by his commissioners two years ago to not charge inspection fees. AA Lacaillade stated that Brad Kennedy charges fees that come into the Town. But, for instance, Don does an inspection for Dollar General and doesn't charge a fee and if the building had gone up in Woodsville, there would have been a fee and that's where the inequities are. Howard Hatch brought up the fire tax and Rick Ladd stated that that couldn't be done. Howard stated that other states have a fire tax. Rick Ladd stated that, by statute, the Town is not given that authority. Joe Maccini suggested getting a legal opinion about the fire tax. Rick Ladd asked AA Lacaillade if she knew whether a legal opinion had been sought and she believed that it was, but she hadn't personally looked at it. Dick Guy asked if the fire tax could be revisited. Rick Ladd stated that they would ask for a legal opinion.

**Adjourn Meeting:** The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM

Minutes transcribed by Karen Hyde