

Town of Marlow and Town of Lempster

Joint Meeting of Select Boards and Administrators

- Date & Time: 2025-04-02 7:15 PM
- Location: Marlow Town Office
- Attendees: John Luke, Bob Allen, Sandy Pierre, Mark Lightner, Daryl Simino, Everett Thurber, Jacqui Fay, Julie Atkins, and Robin Cantara

Meeting Notes

1. Ambulance and Fire Department Services Challenges and Collaboration

- **Introduction of Board Members**
Board members introduced themselves, including John Luke, Bob Allen, Sandy Pierre, Mark Lightner, Daryl Simino, and Everett Thurber. Town administrators and assistants Jacqui Fay, Julie Atkins, and Robin Cantara also introduced themselves.
- **Ambulance Coverage Challenges**
Discussion on the challenges faced with ambulance coverage, including delays and lack of response from Golden Cross, and the need for better coverage.
- **Potential Collaboration for Ambulance Services**
Exploration of a potential shared arrangement for ambulance services between towns to improve coverage and manage costs.
- **Historical Context of Ambulance Services**
Discussion on past arrangements and financial contributions for ambulance services, including a joint venture with Lempster and Gilsum.
- **Current Ambulance Service Costs and Billing**
Discussion on the current costs associated with ambulance services, including a budget item of \$77,000 and the use of billing to offset taxpayer costs.
- **Call Volume and Types**
Discussion on the number of calls received, with 189 calls last year in Lempster and 118 calls last year in Marlow, and the types of calls, including mutual aid and municipal calls.
- **Fire Department Collaboration Challenges**
Discussion on the challenges of collaboration between fire departments, including pride of ownership and lack of information sharing.

- **Recruitment and Staffing Issues**
Discussion on recruitment challenges and staffing levels for EMTs and other personnel in the fire department.

2. Ambulance service management and collaboration

- **Paramedic and EMT Staffing**
The discussion focused on the availability and scheduling of paramedics and EMTs, highlighting the challenges of coverage during daytime hours and the potential for collaboration with nearby towns like Gilsum or Alstead.
- **Billing and Financial Management**
The meeting covered the billing process for ambulance services, including challenges with insurance payments, the role of Comstar in handling billing, and the financial outcomes from last year, such as bringing in revenue to Marlow of just under \$30,000 in 2024.
- **Collaboration with Nearby Towns**
There was a discussion about potential collaboration with nearby towns for ambulance services, inspired by the successful joint venture between Troy and Fitzwilliam.
- **Challenges with Mutual Aid and Resource Sharing**
The conversation touched on the challenges of mutual aid agreements, especially when one town lacks its own ambulance service, and the need for equitable resource sharing.
- **Joint Ventures and Staffing Models**
The meeting explored the idea of joint ventures for ambulance services, using the example of Troy and Fitzwilliam's successful collaboration to provide 24/7 coverage.

3. Improving communication and collaboration between select boards, fire departments, and EMS across communities.

- **Communication Improvement**
Discussion on improving communication between the select board and fire departments
- **Fire Department Equipment and Inventory**
Discussion on the responsibility and ownership of equipment, with an annual inventory to ensure accountability.
- **Community Relationships**
Discussion on fostering better relationships between different departments and communities, with examples from Walpole and Lempster.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships**
Discussion on forming partnerships and collaborative conversations with neighboring communities like Troy, Fitzwilliam, Stoddard, and Gilsum.

- **Fire and EMS Department Meetings**

Discussion on the importance of meetings between fire and EMS departments and the need for clear communication.

4. Ambulance services and community collaboration

- **Ambulance Acquisition and Mutual Aid**

The discussion focused on Marlow's acquisition of a new ambulance from Keene when the town sold their old ambulance to Alstead, and the importance of mutual aid in the community. The need for improved communication and collaboration with neighboring fire departments was emphasized.

- **Ambulance Billing and Cost Sharing**

The conversation covered the financial aspects of ambulance services, including billing, cost sharing, and the impact on taxpayers. The potential revenue from increased calls and the challenges of insurance reimbursements were discussed.

- **Future Planning and Equipment Maintenance**

The need for long-term planning and proper maintenance of equipment was discussed. The potential for acquiring additional ambulances and the importance of maintaining current equipment were highlighted.

- **Data Collection and Analysis**

The need for accurate data on ambulance calls and mutual aid was discussed. The importance of obtaining data from dispatch centers to make informed decisions was emphasized.

- **Community Collaboration and Volunteer Challenges**

The discussion highlighted the challenges of reduced volunteer numbers and the need for communities to collaborate. The potential impact of reduced federal funding on small towns was also mentioned.

Next Arrangements

- Bob Allen will update Southwest Mutual Aid regarding this meeting and seek advice regarding moving forward with collaboration.
- Continue to reach out to neighboring communities like Stoddard, Gilsum and Alstead to discuss agreements and collaborations.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting on April 16th with fire departments to discuss further collaboration.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Meeting notes generated via Plaud recording device and edited for accuracy, correction of grammar, and correction of spelling