

Draft

Fire Department Regionalization Study Committee Minutes

Feb 15, 2017 @ 7:00 PM

Meeting in Fire Station

Attendees: Chairman Dave DeVoy, Evelyn Auger, Andy Sanborn, Chief Dexter, Steve Ober,
& Roger Grey

We spent the evening crafting a rough draft for our final report. The following comments are being considered for the report:

Mission Statement

To examine the prospects of regionalizing the services provided by the Fire Department with a neighboring town. To study the financial considerations of regionalization and the impact on the fire services provided to the town.

A goal of the committee is to study and examine whether or not consolidation of the Fire Department can provide a more effective service to the residents of Sanbornton.

Sanborn notes for final report 2/15/17

For Sanbornton, In meetings with Franklin, Tilton Northfield, and Belmont fire authorities, it became clear that all were reluctant to enter into any sort of regionalized arrangement with Sanbornton due to inconsistent manpower coverage at Sanbornton. The combination of on call, volunteer and per diem results in occasional shift manpower shortages. Full time coverage will solve this.

There is a strong delineation between local fire departments. Some are volunteer rich with a focus on fire fighting only, relying on private service providers for EMS. Others are cross trained and staffed in support of EMS operations. Sanbornton is fortunate to be in the latter group.

Smaller rural departments including Sanbornton and New Hampton have developed strong relationships with larger neighboring departments: New Hampton, Bristol, Franklin and Tilton-Northfield.

The most likely scenario for the advancement of a regionalized Fire /EMS entity will be due to a cumulative organic growth in cooperative agreements between neighboring towns. At some point in the future a critical mass in local cooperative agreements along with involvement from the Lakes Region Mutual Aid system will trigger an inclusive area wide governmental incorporation.

During conversation with Stewart's Ambulance Service, the owner described a coverage cost for Sanbornton's EMS service as " a poor fit" because Sanbornton has so many cross trained firefighter/EMT's and a solid EMS cadre. He stated that the best fit is with fire companies that only want to fight fires, like Meredith. Stewart's requires a 24/7 contract.

Con- damage to the Sanbornton EMS staff, Sanbornton loses transport service income. Entering into a contract with a non competing service provider should be studied in depth.

Efforts toward cooperation and mutually beneficial service improvements have been occurring regularly due to the ongoing conversations and incidental contacts between Chief Dexter and other local fire chiefs. The possibility for these conversations to develop into cooperative agreements will be enhanced with increased manpower, either subsidized manpower in other towns or in our own.

The benefits of regionalization will come primarily in major asset cost reductions: rolling stock, fire station and substation placement, and other "group purchase" cooperative agreements. Regionalization will have little effect on manpower demands, other than at administrative levels.

Notes for the joint meeting with Belmont 12/5/17

- Chairman Mooney commented that immediately she sees that Belmont has a full time department that is already very busy and Sanbornton doesn't and she sees the burden falling on Belmont because they are full time. She added that she probably would not be agreeable without Sanbornton having full time help.
- Chairman Mooney noted that with the new chief and the arrangement Belmont currently has and the adjustments that have been made there is no need for a substation and she wouldn't support a substation because Belmont doesn't need it.
- Chief Erickson added that a 20 minute response time for Laconia is a long time in critical events.
- Chief Erickson expressed that was a great point because the fire chiefs can't change anything and they really need the political people such as the Selectmen that can make change involved.

Notes from joint meeting with Franklin 12/13/16

- Chief LaChapelle said Franklin would have to add personnel in order to make some type of regionalization commitment with Sanbornton.

Notes from joint meeting with New Hampton 12/15/2016

- Cannot find reference

Notes from joint meeting with Tilton-North Fire & EMS Commissioners

- Commissioner Manning commented he is interested in regionalization. He talked about the restructuring that the Fire District just went through. He questioned Tilton-Northfield going in Sanbornton being a benefit to anybody. He believes it would be costly for all. His vision is doing something closer to a county level.
- Dave Devoy the challenge is the limited hours per diems can work. The State says they cannot work more than 29 hours per week on average or they are considered a full time firefighter.
- Deputy Robinson commented on Winnisquam Fire Department. He is all for regionalization. Look into it but you may not like the results. Once you regionalize, you have a boss. There's going to be a cost for it. Sometimes you lose control. Somebody is going to making that decision for you and handling you a bill.
- Commissioner Manning is for regionalization to alleviate the equipment redundancy. Then you could move you manpower around so we have qualified people going where they need to go. For us, it will cost the District a little more as we already have a full time fire department. The towns it is going to hurt are towns like Sanbornton where you don't have anything in place. It is going to cost a lot for Sanbornton to regionalize. Discussion ensued about the possible cost.
- Deputy Robinson commented that if we were to do a portion of Sanbornton we would have to add staff to do that. The staffing level would be a minimum of two people. Our two people costs are more that what you asked for. If this Board agreed to do it, we have to take it to the people.

Notes from joint meeting with Meredith 12/27/16

- We spent approximately 2 hrs. discussing regionalization and shared services. No decisions were made but it is apparent that Meredith and Sanbornton share many of the same problems with staffing the station during normal duty hours (7am to 5pm) since most of their volunteers/per-diem personnel work full time away from the station.
- Meredith's ambulance service is contracted out to Stewart's at an approximant cost of \$280k per a 3-5 year fixed contract. Stewart's keeps at least one ambulance stationed in Meredith. Since Meredith contracts its ambulance service they do not have any EMTs on staff, only firefighters.
- Meredith doesn't see any immediate way they can share services with Sanbornton other that what the two fire departments are already doing thru Mutual Aid.

Notes from joint meeting with Stewart's Ambulance 12/27/16

- They breakeven on 911 calls
- They would be willing to discuss a 5 year breakeven contract with Sanbornton
- They would be interested only in a 24/7 ambulance agreement
- Sanbornton has a very efficient call system for the way we are structured.

Notes from joint meeting with Laconia 1/24/2017

- Chief Erickson estimates it would take 15-20 minutes for EMS to repond t a call for the east (Winnisquam) side of Sanbornton.

Motion by Chief Dexter seconded by Auger to adjourn at 9:10 PM passed unanimously.

Next meeting February 23, 2017 at 7 PM in the Fire Station

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger J. Grey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roger Grey
Secretary