



MASSACHUSETTS FIRE DISTRICT 7

Chief Matthew Belsito, Sutton
Chairman
(508) 865-8737

Chief Robert Parsons, Spencer
Vice Chairman
(508) 867-8825

Chief William Kessler, Uxbridge
Treasurer
(508) 278-2787

Chief Richard Hamilton, Millbury
Secretary
(508) 865-5328

District 7 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes January 21, 2021 2:00 pm Zoom Meeting

Present: Chairman: Chief M. Belsito, Vice-Chairman Chief R. Parsons, Treasurer: Chief W. Kessler, Secretary: Chief R. Hamilton; Chief S. Coleman, Chief B. Hickey, Chief D. Kochanowski, Chief P. Normandin, Chief M. DiFronzo

State Mobilization Representative: Chairman Belsito announced Chief Mark DiFronzo has now taken over as the State Mobilization Representative for District 7, after Chief Wilson retired, and is a member of the Board of Directors. Chairman Belsito welcomed him back to the board.

Control Point and Associated Radio Updates: Chief Normandin stated the towns has been doing better calling on the county radio. He monitors that channel closely through his phone. Chief DiFronzo and Chief Hamilton gave an update on the orange system. System tested was done with overall good results. A propagation study was done and it revealed a dead area in the Southbridge / Sturbridge area. The results of the study showed what the radio committee had suspected was an issue. A plan to change the antenna type should solve the issue, as confirmed by the study. They also spoke about a grant to replace some portable radios and a couple of mobile radios in the comm units was processing through and looked good. Chief Hamilton explained the status of changing the county radio system to an 800 MHz talk group on the state's system, the change looks very promising but the timeline was questionable. The availability of 33 MHz radios is dwindling and its our hope the system gets upgraded before we run out of usable county radios and parts.

District Moving Forward; COVID-19 Update District Wide: Discussion took place on the state of COVID in the district. Chief Hamilton has been sending out weekly district updates. Chief Coleman stated Auburn will be doing antibody tests starting in July to see how effective the vaccinations were. Chairman Belsito stated Sutton was looking into buying equipment for rapid testing. Chief Normandin suggested bringing that up to the body for possible bulk purchase.

Specialty Teams: Chief Coleman wanted to discuss some changes with the teams. He heard Nick Lambert was stepping down as the Tech Team Leader and wanted to make sure the position was going to be filled. He also wanted to be sure John Martin was included in the conversation. Chairman Belsito felt John should have the right of first refusal. Chief Coleman stated John would take it if there was no one else to, but John also feels this may be a good chance to get new blood in there. John would assist with the transition with whoever filled the Leader position. A Tech meeting is being set up to discuss that.

Chief Coleman also wanted to address the rosters of the specialty teams. There seems to be a lot more names on the roster than members responding to calls. This came to light with the gear request from the FIU and the number of members. He feels the Team Leaders should reach out to the members who have not been showing up. They should also be recruiting new members instead of waiting for members coming forward to join. Chief Kochanowski stated the FIU team was different, they may only need a few people at activations. The team has started doing some Zoom meetings to get back together, they met in December and are scheduled for February 1st. Chairman Belsito brought back the idea of breaking up into zones. Chief Parson stated we need more members in order to do that. Chief Normandin felt the Comm Team has similar issues.

FIU Request for Gear: Chief Coleman talked with DFS. They received new gear for the HazMat Team and they have over 200 sets of older gear available. Through Marshal Ostroskey he requested 20 sets. After some discussion, the board agreed that the district should purchase the boots and helmet for each active member, to keep the team consistent. Motion: Chief Coleman seconded by Chief Kessler: To purchase boots and a helmet for each member and if the DFS gear doesn't happen then purchase coats and pants for each. The team will need to shop before the purchase, up to \$16,500: Unanimous

Financial Update: Chief Kessler gave an update on the district finances; all towns have paid dues.

District 7 Future Training Update: Chief Kessler updated the board on training. Dates have been set for 2 virtual classes through the Fire Academy, Fire Instructor 1 and Fire Officer 1. There are 76 interested in the instructor's class with a limit of 90. There are 76 interested in the officer's class with a limit of 48. After some discussion, it was decided a 2nd officer's class should be added and some towns may have to prioritize and bring down their numbers to be fair to all other towns. Chief Kessler stated another class would cost \$5,108. Chief Hickey stated it's a good investment. Motion by Chief Hickey and seconded by Chief Kochanowski to add a second officer's class: Unanimous

Unforeseen Business: Chief DiFronzo brought up the idea of getting a remote meeting subscription such as Go Meeting or Zoom, as the district will need to use that for now. The cost isn't really much for it and it would prevent us from having to limit the number of people at a meeting. Discussion followed. Motion: Chief DiFronzo and seconded by Chief Kessler to purchase an annual subscription to a webinar system: Unanimous. Chief Parson offered to take care of it.