



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 September 15, 2020 13:00 Sutton Police Station

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

District 7 Control Point Dispatching Updates: Chief Normandin explained the status of Southbridge Dispatch. The combined dispatch at the police department is now in use and training on the district procedures. Chief Normandin can send out activations from his cell phone and can also monitor the county radio on his phone. He urged all towns to be sure to call District 7 Control over the county radio for requests and he will be monitoring to be sure it gets handled properly. There should be no difference in radio reception as everything is linked back to the fire station. He cautioned that the dispatchers have very little fire experience so he asked that you be patient and work with them. Chairman Belsito asked if there was anything new with a backup control point. Chief Hamilton and Chief Normandin confirmed there are not at this time. Further discussion took place regarding the purposes and use of the county radio, the orange system and the proposed 800 MHz talk group being proposed by the radio committee.

District Moving Forward: Discussion took place on what the district should do at this time regarding meetings during the pandemic. It was noted the present state guidelines have an inside gathering restriction of 25. There were questions if the Auburn Elks is open at this time or when they might open. Is there room enough to distance in the lower level or could we use the upper level? It was agreed by all that we should go back to in person meetings. We will need to limit the attendance to one per town. The feeling was a fire station would be a good choice, in an apparatus bay. After some discussion it was decided to meet October 8th in Dudley and December 3rd at a location to be determined. A more central location would be preferred to avoid some of the further out towns from having to travel a great distance.

Plans Regarding COVID-19 Mutual Aid and Station Coverage: Discussion took place regarding whether crews should be allowed inside fire stations at this point when providing coverage. Chief Hickey felt with the colder weather coming on, it wasn't right to leave a truck outside idling with the crew inside it for station coverage. He noted the same members would be working up close with the mutual aid crews if they were dispatched to the scene. The board felt we know more about COVID now than when the original decisions were made to not allow crews inside. A survey will be sent out to determine what restrictions are in place for various towns right now. Extensive discussion on how a town in need of EMS assistance can get district help, whether on an immediate basis or when the department has lost many EMTs and Medics to sickness or quarantine. The questions of being appointed to that community, OEMS regulations, a COO (Continuation Of Operations) Plan, making a master agreement, making an agreement with private companies, using a strike team and working as a per diem group were all discussed. This may be something the District 7 EMS Committee could look at. Some research will be done and possibly discussed at another E-Board meeting before the next general meeting.

Radio Committee / Communications Committee: Chairman Belsito had several people inquire about why there was two separate committees and if it would be better to combined them. Discussion followed on the functions of each group and if there could be a benefit to combining them. The question was discussed about how many members of the communications team are active and if there are applications that haven't been processed for new members. The Chairman will check on how often the committee meets and the status of the team. The Radio Committee has been very active and meeting regularly. The Chairman will look at have a meeting of both groups to see what the thoughts are on merging the two.

Foam Trailer: The foam trailer has been moved from Worcester to Charlton.

District Financial Update: Chief Kessler brought up for discussion the finances of the district and the dues. At this time, we have more than \$100,000 in the bank. He wondered if we should talk about reducing dues or are there projects that we should be taking on and earmarking funds towards. A couple ideas were a fit tester for each strike team area, and installing VHF radios for the orange system in each dispatch. The general consensus was that we should not reduce dues because once reduced and taken out of a town's budget they may not be able to get it back. Chief Kessler suggested a tiered dues system. This was discussed in the past and voted down. It may be brought back up to help out the smaller towns. It was determined the district has projects that can be done, some that had been put aside. This will be discussed further at the next general meeting.

Safe Trailer Repairs: Chief Wilson informed the board he had an estimate on repairs to the SAFE trailer for \$4,201.93 from Breezy Bend RV in Leicester. Chief Kessler noted there is some funds put aside for that type of repair. Motion: Chief Parsons seconded by Chief Normandin to fund the repairs: Unanimous.

Motion to adjourn by Chief Parsons and seconded by Chief Wilson: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned 14:20