

**TOWN OF CHARLEMONT**  
**Select Board Meeting about Municipal Space and Emergency Services**

Monday, September 15, 2014

Charlemont Fire Department

Attendees: Vaughn Tower (Chair) and Beth Bandy, Select Board; Doug Annear (Chief) and Kevin Crowningshield, Fire Department; Michael Walsh, Emergency Management Director.

Mr. Tower called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and gave an overview of the Town's municipal space planning process so far.

Mr. Annear noted that space in the fire house is not adequate for holding meetings, but he can hold these events at the elementary school. The bigger concern is the need for maintenance at the building. He currently is looking for quotes for these repairs. It is possible they could cost approximately \$5,000 - \$6,000, but these figures are just a guess at this point.

Mr. Walsh stated it would be helpful to have two locations in Charlemont for emergency services – one in town and another in East Charlemont on the corner of Avery Brook Road and Rt. 2. He and Mr. Annear discussed the possibility of using the Avery Brook Road property for storage purposes. Mr. Annear stated he believes the core of the Fire Department should remain in the center of town, with Fire and Ambulance sharing one space. An additional, semi-heated storage facility in East Charlemont might be a good idea, however. Mr. Walsh said he believes that having a Fire Department located on higher ground would be important in the event of threats such as storms larger than Irene or multiple dam failure.

Mr. Annear stated that the Town needs to decide exactly what kind of Fire Department it wants to have. Ms. Bandy stated it would be helpful to have estimates for renovation and new building projects for this discussion. Based on the Town's preference, the Fire Department would create related policies and procedures to act upon those wishes.

Mr. Annear said the Town needs to start grooming another Fire Chief. He stated the Town may need to hire a full-time fire chief to oversee all of the administrative work required to save the Town from liability. (He said, as a point of reference, the New Salem fire chief is making \$40,000 overseeing a volunteer fire department.) He said this full-time position should have paramedic credentials and should also be managing Fire and Ambulance for the four towns (Charlemont, Hawley, Heath, and Rowe).

Mr. Tower asked them how the Fire Department would like to proceed on municipal space issues. Mr. Annear stated he thought it would be a waste of Town money to build a new building for the Fire Department. He preferred the less expensive option of expanding on the current facility, even though it is located in the flood plain. He said he would pull out existing plans for a proposed expansion on this on the current facility.

Mr. Tower said he would take those plans to the Planning Board and Conservation Commission for an initial review. If the plans appear viable after those meetings, the next steps will be to send out RFPs for construction and bring the issue up for a vote at Annual Town Meeting in May 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.