

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
TRI-TOWN EMS
Wednesday, February 10, 2021
Pembroke Town Hall
311 Pembroke Street
Pembroke, New Hampshire 03275

The February 10, 2021 meeting of the Tri-Town EMS Board of Directors was called to order by Vice Chair Mike O'Meara at 3:32 pm.

Roll Call

Present on the Board: Dave Jodoin, Bob Bourque, Mike O'Meara, Paul Gagnon, Derik Goodine

Present on the Staff: Chris Gamache, Director

Vice Chair O'Meara spoke on behalf of the Board, thanking Harold Paulsen for his service to Tri-Town EMS. Chief Paulsen retired at the end of December 2020 after 58 years of service to the Town of Pembroke. Mr. O'Meara also welcomed Paul Gagnon, the new Pembroke Fire Chief, to the Tri-Town EMS Board of Directors. Chief Gagnon has been with the Pembroke Fire Department since 1974.

Vice Chair O'Meara postponed the election of officers until the March meeting, per the consensus of the Board members, when more members would likely be in attendance.

Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 09, 2020 meeting as written. Mr. Jodoin seconded the motion.

Vice Chair O'Meara called for a roll call vote on the motion.

Bob Bourque – Aye

Derik Goodine – Aye

Dave Jodoin – Aye

Paul Gagnon – Aye

Mike O'Meara – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

Approve Expenditures

Mr. Jodoin stated that all expenditures have been approved electronically. For the record, he presented two accounts payable manifests: February 10, 2021 in the amount of \$9,862.77 and December 31, 2020 in the amount of \$2,796.29. Next, he presented payroll manifests for the following dates: February 11, 2021; January 28, 2021; January 14, 2021; December 31, 2020; December 17, 2020; December 03, 2020; November 19, 2020; November 05, 2020; and October 22, 2020.

Mr. O'Meara made a motion to approve the accounts payable and payroll manifests as read by Mr. Jodoin. Mr. Bourque seconded the motion.

Vice Chair O'Meara called for a roll call vote on the motion.

Bob Bourque – Aye

Derik Goodine – Aye

Dave Jodoin – Aye

Paul Gagnon – Aye

Mike O'Meara – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

None.

New Business

▪ Review of Service Policies and Procedures

Mr. Bourque referred to a section in the Preface stating that this plan is not a contract and no legally enforceable employee rights can be derived from it. He asked Mr. Gamache to expand on this.

Mr. Gamache said that statement was in the plan before his time.

Mr. Jodoin said it means they are 'at will' employees.

Vice Chair O'Meara said they need to find out the intent of that section.

Mr. Bourque said it seems to mean that it cannot be used as defense of something an employee has done, and he said he has an issue with that, and he doesn't think that is correct.

Mr. Gamache said he assumed that verbiage had been checked by an attorney.

Vice Chair O'Meara said they need to know the intent of that statement.

Mr. Bourque said it could be worded better, because it says an employee can't use the Policies & Procedures of the service as a defense for an action, which is not correct.

Mr. Gamache said this item is covered by the Town of Pembroke's Policies & Procedures, and he suggested that the first paragraph be removed. The Town's Policies & Procedures states that the employees are employees 'at will', that the document is not a contract, and there is no intent to create due process protection. He said that the intent of the Policies & Procedures he is working on is to address items specific to the service.

Vice Chair O'Meara suggested that they ask the Town Attorney for a legal interpretation.

Mr. Bourque next referred to page 9, paragraph 22.5, which says that the Board is held to this service policy unless the Board has a different policy. He said he has an issue with the Director deciding which policies this Board goes by.

Mr. Gamache said he would not be deciding anything like that. It means, he said, that no one operates independently. Everyone uses common sense and adheres to ethical standards, instead of having separate standards for the Board.

Vice Chair O'Meara said that 'where applicable' is a nebulous term, and he shares Mr. Bourque's concern about how it is written. He said they could strike it for now.

Mr. Jodoin said they don't want anything left open to interpretation.

Mr. Bourque said a solution would be for the Board to have its own separate rules.

Vice Chair O'Meara said that might be a good idea.

Mr. Bourque continued with his concerns about the proposed document. He said there was a cross reference on page 14, #2. It references 2.19, which is about license upgrades and not related to the item on page 14.

Mr. Gamache conceded that some items might have been shuffled around.

Vice Chair O'Meara asked Mr. Gamache to check his references.

Mr. Gamache referred to page 15, 2.5.12 #2, saying that some of the Town of Pembroke policies are partially applicable to the ambulance service. An example is how holiday pay is handled differently because they are not an office staff. Also, he noted that they cannot follow the COVID guidelines for distancing when treating patients.

Mr. Bourque said he has an issue with picking parts to enforce or not. He asked if the service guidelines supersede those of the town.

Mr. Gamache said no, they cannot, just as State laws must be at least as strict as federal laws, but can be stricter. This section, he said, is a guide to writing policies.

Vice Chair O'Meara said that if the service guidelines differ from the Town of Pembroke's guidelines, which should be noted within the document. He asked Mr. Gamache if he could change the wording to capture what they have been discussing. He said they would begin with page 22 at the next meeting.

Comstar Billing Report

Mr. Jodoin reported billings in January totaling \$61,206.00; collections of \$34,766.00; and write-offs of \$38,689.00. The uncollected balance at the end of January was \$876,908.56, down a bit from December 2020.

Vice Chair O'Meara asked Mr. Gamache to present a snapshot of collections at the next meeting.

Director's Report

Mr. Gamache reported 117 runs in January, marking the 13th consecutive month with runs over 100. Transports, he said, totaled 66, or 56.4% of the runs. This, he said, is still down from the usual 63% to 65%. Thus far in February, he said they are at 66 2/3%. In January, Allentown had 62 runs and Pembroke had 48, continuing the reversal of the prior trend, when Pembroke was always higher. Mutual aid was given seven (7) times and received 12 times. Mr. Gamache said Ambulance 8 made 104 of the runs in January. Ambulance 3 made one run. Ambulance 8 had a couple of maintenance issues. The tail pipe fell off at the end of November or early December. It took a couple of months to get it fixed. The repair was done by the Public Works department, without getting a new tail pipe from Grappone. A side mirror was broken in late October or early November when another vehicle ran a STOP sign and was mirror to mirror with the ambulance. Mr. Gamache said he reached out today to PL Customs because one rear door needs to be replaced. The sealant is coming out, and the window could fall out. Because the budget was tight at the end of last year, he said, they have put off the repair until now. He added that one of the doors sticks, and he will have them come to fix it. Both ambulances are running well, he said.

Mr. Gamache next reported that both ventilators had preventative maintenance in December. Now they are having trouble with the second ventilator, which is only a year old. The company, Voll, is sending a replacement tomorrow and will find out what is wrong with the other one. Of their two tablets, the one which is four years old is working well, but the newer one, which is a year and a half old, is failing. He said he reached out for a quote on a Toughbook. He said they have constant problems with the keyboards. Next, he said they continue to get plenty of PPE from the State. In fact, they have a huge supply of wipes which are going to expire soon. He asked the Board members if they know anyone who can use them.

Mr. Bourque suggested offering them to people in elderly housing.

Vice Chair O'Meara said that was a good idea.

Mr. Gamache continued, reporting that 16 of his employees are fully vaccinated. Three have plans to be vaccinated soon, and one is declining vaccination. Mr. Gamache is waiting to hear from ten more employees. He said they use all proper protection on every call. No one has been sick on site; two workers got the virus outside of the service.

Mr. Gamache next reported that paramedic Mike Langille has resigned. He said Mr. Langille is a great paramedic and a valued member who will be greatly missed. He was loyal, generally working 24 hours

each week. Regarding employee evaluations, Mr. Gamache said he decided last year to evaluate all per diem employees at once, in the month of April. They will get their merit increases and their COLA's at the same time. Part-time and full-time employees will continue to be evaluated on their anniversary dates. He presented three recent evaluations: Craig Clough's anniversary was February 1st. Mr. Gamache said he recommends a 1.5% merit increase. This is \$0.51/hour, so Mr. Clough would go from \$33.97 to \$34.48 per hour. For Donovan Funk III, Mr. Gamache recommends a 1.5% merit increase, which is \$0.34/hour. Mr. Funk currently earns \$22.42 per hour and his new rate would be \$22.76. For Ryan Hornblower, who was instrumental all last year, Mr. Gamache said he recommends a two percent raise, the highest allowed. An additional \$0.46/hour would take her hourly rate from \$23.07 to \$23.53. Both Mr. Funk and Ms. Hornblower have a March 7th evaluation date.

Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the merit increases for Craig Clough, Donovan Funk III and Ryan Hornblower as recommended by Mr. Gamache. Mr. Goodine seconded the motion.

Vice Chair O'Meara called for a roll call vote on the motion.

Bob Bourque – Aye

Derik Goodine – Aye

Dave Jodoin – Aye

Paul Gagnon – Aye

Mike O'Meara – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gamache asked about the size of the new Optimus facility.

Mr. Goodine said it will have 120 units.

Mr. Gamache asked if it was elderly housing or assisted living.

Mr. Goodine said it was assisted living.

Mr. Gamache asked if they would have a skilled nursing unit – an Alzheimer unit.

Mr. Goodine said yes, I think so.

Mr. Bourque asked where it will be located.

Mr. Goodine said it was on the corner of Route 28 and Chester Turnpike.

Mr. Bourque asked when they expect to be open.

Mr. Goodine said they will start up after the last frost in April and plan to move fast. They may be open by the end of the year, he said.

Adjournment

Mr. Bourque made a motion to adjourn at 4:25 pm. Mr. Jodoin seconded the motion.
Vice Chair O'Meara called for a roll call vote on the motion.

Bob Bourque – Aye

Derik Goodine – Aye

Dave Jodoin – Aye

Paul Gagnon – Aye

Mike O'Meara – Aye

The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED

Michael H. O'Meara 3/16/2021

VICE CHAIR