

Lebanon, Maine
SELECT BOARD MEETING
Town Office Conference Room
Minutes –Meeting
September 11, 2023

 Paul Philbrick – Chairman
Shelli Boucher – Selectwoman
 Michael Walsworth - Vice Chair
 Richard Harlow III – Selectman
 Kevin Edwards – Selectman

Mary-Ellen Harper – Dynamix
Stuart McCutcheon – Dynamix
Chief Stefano - arrived at 2:58
Matt Harrington -ME Senate
Chief Hooper – York County
Richard McCarthy -State Fire Marshall
Rick Petrie – EMS Reg. Director
Rep. Jeff Adams - arrived at 5:22

For complete meeting minutes please view the meeting in full at <https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofLebanon>

2:33 Introduction of Mary-Ellen Harper and Stuart McCutcheon of Dynamix Consultant. They have spent the day with Selectman Harlow scouting the town for information on best location for a fire station. Mr. McCutcheon stated that they get as much information as possible to provide a couple of options for the voters. There will be a review process. Selectman Harlow stated that he reached out to a property owner on Long Swamp to ask if they would be interested in selling some acreage. Selectman Harlow told the person that he is acting on his own as he did not discuss this with the Board. Selectman Harlow explained that he was inquiring so that he could speak with the Board. The owner would entertain selling. There is also a potential to build on Merchant Row. They also looked at Indian Lake Shore, this is not a good option.

The representatives advised that you should be able to enter the building from both sides with the trucks. This is to lessen the possibility of accidents from backing out. Fire Fighters live here for up to 48 hours. The department would need 2-3 acres. The staff needs sleeping quarters, exercise, shower etc. The current situation needs to be rectified immediately. The office trailer has mold and no running water, they can not live there any longer.

The representatives stated that the employees must have a short-term living accommodation. Mary-Ellen Harper asked where the voters stand on this. Selectman Edwards stated that the location is generally identified as 202. Discussed the recent Town Meeting. Stuart McCutcheon stated we cannot continue with the conditions as they are now.

The data shows that 68% of calls are EMS. The representative asked the Board what kind of feedback does the department get for service. Selectman Edwards and Harlow started that they get good feedback on the service and call times. Chief Stefano arrived at 2:58. There was discussion about the response time may lengthen

during temporary solution. They need living arrangements which may increase respond times. A solution may be that they get called from their own homes. Mr. McCutcheon stated the staff cannot live in the current conditions, even if that means shutting down the Fire & EMS Department.

Dynamic Consultants stated that 1 Fire Station would most likely be what the Town needs. The consultants will present 3 options for the voters to see. The hope is to have them present the options on 10/26/23 at the school. There will NOT be a vote at this meeting. This is an opportunity for the public to get educated. However, the consultants remind the Board the current situation should be rectified TODAY! At 3:32 pm they left the meeting.

Chair Philbrick asked the Board what they would like to do. There was discussion of renting space, air B&B other alternative housing. The Town could go back to a call force, they would respond from home, go to the station to get vehicles and then to the call. The board discussed paying them as they are now. Chair Philbrick stated that isn't how it worked previously. Chief Stefano said that the force is beyond that now. There may not be day to day business. The Chief stated that the Fire Marshall and others should be here at 4pm.

3:43 Vice Chair Walsworth motioned to enter into Executive Session for Personnel Matters pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6) (A). Selectman Edwards seconded. Vote taken; vote carried.

4:04 Vice Chair Walsworth motioned to exit executive session. Selectman Edwards seconded. Vote taken; vote carried.

4:05 Discussion on Wednesday night Selectboard/Fire Meetings.

4:10 Chair Philbrick motioned to recess until 4:20pm. Vice Chair Walsworth seconded. Vote taken; vote carried. Selectwoman Boucher won't be back for this meeting.

4:31 Vice Chair Walsworth presented the slide presentation that was going to be shown at the Special Town Meeting. This included station 1 & 2 and provides history. Selectman Harlow relayed that Dynamix Consultants were here and did a review. Their recommendation is that we need an immediate solution to the living situation. Senator Matt Harrington stated that the Fire & EMS staff need clean, safe accommodations. A temporary solution is not the best option. Senator Harrington stated that the National Guard may be able to provide something by loan, something for a garage. Selectman Harlow stated that the vehicles don't need to be moved at this time. The staff needs living quarters. Senator Harrington asked if the question from the Special Town Meeting could be reconsidered. The board advised that it cannot.

Chief Hooper said this is the second failed request for money for the department. There was a vote in June asking for \$550,000 for an RFP that was voted down. There was the second one on Sept. 9 and it was voted down. There is a question on the November ballot asking for \$65,000 for a study/design plan. Chief Hooper asked about using money from contingency fund. Selectman Harlow advised that some of the money has already been taken.

Chief Hooper stated that you may have to suspend service which means no coverage in the Town. State law requires that you have fire protection. The Town would have to have coverage from another town or form a volunteer association. There is no State law requiring EMS services.

The Fire Marshall stated that sprinklers are not required for housing but are required for commercial. If the Chief's office is in the living quarters, this makes it commercial. Selectman Harlow stated that the reason for the Town Meeting was to have a solution before winter. The trailer would have to be HUD compliant. The engineer reports have been since 2016 – this is no longer an accident it is negligence. The solution could be a HUD trailer with 2 bedrooms and bathroom. The Chiefs office could be in the Steven King trailer.

Chief Hooper said to look into a second-hand mobile home which is HUD approved unless it was prior to 1976. Possibly rent or lease to house the personnel.

Selectman Harlow advised the slab was put in without a site plan review and it violates setbacks. The Town could contact Peter Holmes regarding manufactured homes. Vice Chair Walsworth stated we have an ordinance that requires a slab.

Fire Marshall stated he looked at the building in a walk through and could see it won't pass an inspection. If you provide the report, he will be forced to take action and the Town would have 10 days to fix it.

Mr. Petrie states that the Town of Lebanon has pushed this back for years. The people of Lebanon need to decide if they want a department. If they don't, they will need to contract with another town or go to a volunteer department. This is critical because respond times with a volunteer fire department will be lengthy depending on where the equipment is stored and where the manpower lives.

This is a critical time per the Fire Marshall. The Board advised that that Station 2 is uninsurable at this time due to the roof and other issues.

Senator Harrington stated that he is fiscally prudent, but said that in his opinion this is a no-brainer and this money needs to be spent.

Chief Hooper stated that this conversation happened in 2016. Vice Chair Walsworth stated that this is still a temporary fix. A permanent fix will take years.

There was discussion of temporary and permanent solutions. Selectman Edwards discussed vehicle housing and keeping them heated due to medication requirements. The way these things are stored are heavily regulated and you must be careful with all the drugs, per Chief Hooper.

Vice Chair Walsworth stated that we can call mobile home parks and inquire. Mr. Petrie asked about the possibility of collapse. Mr. Petrie stated that there will need to be a short-term plan until the June meeting. The 3 proposals would be 1) New Station 2) Contract 3) volunteer. Mr. Petrie reiterates it is time to decide if you want emergency services. If so, how will that look? He again stated that home owners' insurance without services will rise drastically. There is no law that another town has to respond to your calls. Chief Hooper stated that mutual aid is a critical part of making things work due to shortage of staff all over the country. The Lebanon Department is a critical part of the mutual aid system. If Lebanon doesn't provide mutual aid, we won't have other towns responding to calls for us.

The Fire Marshall stated that we CAN NOT rebuild. You would have to fix everything in the report and bring it up to code.

Senator Harrington would be available to help make the case for these services. Chief advised that the money is ARPA funds. Selectman Harlow stated that it is taxpayer funds but it is Federal Funds.

Matt Leggett came in and stated that he was the one that shut down the vote. Mr. Leggett was advised that there is no public participation at this meeting.

Chief Stefano stated there was a lot of misinformation on social media and at the meeting.

Mr. Petri stated that you must find a short-term solution – immediately.

Senator Harrington stated that we need a plan – find housing with proper facilities even without equipment. Senator Harrington asked how long before there could be another vote. The board advised they would not do another Town Meeting. The board would have an election where there would be absentee ballots and secret vote. That process would take 60 days.

Representative Adams asked if the whole second floor is uninsurable. The answer is yes, the roof and the second floor are the issues. The roof, septic, squishy floor and then the code regulations would need to be met as well as ADA requirements. Rep. Adams advised he wasn't invited to this meeting. Vice Chair Walsworth thanked Rep. Adams for letting him know he wasn't invited and advised that he could not speak because there is no public participation in this meeting.

6:05 Selectman Harlow motioned to allow Jeff Adams to participate. There was no second.

6:07 Vice Chair Walsworth stated that the Board-Fire Meeting will be cancelled for Wednesday 9-13-23. Beginning next week, the Board-Fire Meeting will be at 4:30 on Thursdays.

6:10 Selectman Edwards motioned to adjourn. Selectman Harlow seconded. Vote taken; vote carried.