

**Enfield Board of Selectmen
Public Works Facility, 74 Lockehaven Road
Enfield, New Hampshire**

NON-PUBLIC MINUTES of January 7, 2019

Board of Selectmen: Meredith C. Smith, John W. Kluge, Katherine D. P. Stewart

Administrative Staff: Ryan Aylesworth, Town Manager; Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager; Roy Holland, Chief of Police

Mr. Kluge moved to enter non-public session at 7:30 PM, RSA 91-A:3 II (c), Ms. Stewart seconded the motion. Mr. Kluge – aye, Mrs. Smith – aye, Ms. Stewart – aye; vote unanimous in favor of the motion (3-0).

Chief Holland spoke to the Selectmen as an official highly involved in public safety with contacts with Fire Departments and Ambulance Departments in both Enfield and neighboring communities and as an individual with a police and military background. He discussed the potential changes to the organization of the Fire Department. He has been approached by numerous firefighters with concerns about the current Fire Department organization and actions within the department, and, as is his duty as an employee of the Town, shared the information with Mr. Aylesworth. Mr. Aylesworth, in turn, felt it would be more beneficial for Chief Holland to speak to the Board of Selectmen directly to ensure that his perspectives were not lost in translation.

Chief Holland shared the concerns expressed to him, stressed the importance and need for training and the lack of accountability under the current structure. He has researched grants which the Town is not eligible for because we don't meet the minimum qualifications.

While some individuals feel the criticism of the department at present is directed at certain officers in the Fire Department, it's a matter of needing greater accountability and an organizational structure that would allow for that to happen. There are a great number of members of the Fire Department who don't meet Level 1 training, including a majority of the senior officers. Level 1 certification requires 240 hours of training, the cost of which is covered by the Town.

Ms. Stewart believes she may have spoken to a number of the same individuals and heard many of the same concerns. She feels it's time to let the people decide and we move on from there. Let the voters know why a change is proposed and let them make the decision. It's ideal to do it this year so speculation doesn't continue another year. Many are concerned about safety. To the extent a change would result in certain members of the department moving on, we want to stay positive and honor their service.

It was suggested leadership within the Department be paid the same, but give people more money if they get certification. A lot of things can be done. We can do it nicely, present it in a professional way and let them decide.

Presentation is key. It should not be a blame game, though some already feel it is. The key is to look beyond that and look at what's best for the Town.

Mr. Kluge said that two weeks ago the Selectmen had a plan.

Ms. Stewart responded that the Board had a discussion, but no vote was taken.

Mr. Aylesworth said it was his perception that the Board had been leaning toward waiting a year to evaluate further and take action, but he did not take away that a final decision had been made at the last meeting.

Mr. Kluge said the Board was going to let them try to reach their goals presented in their strategic plan.

Chief Holland said, in fairness, he brought this issue to Mr. Aylesworth so that he (Mr. Aylesworth) and the Board would better understand how time-sensitive many stakeholders feel this is. These people came to him in the last couple of weeks and he felt it was his duty to inform the Town Manager.

Discussion ensued regarding what has been heard about the behavior of some members of the Fire Department noting that tensions exist between members who are certified and those who are not.

Ms. Stewart would like to see a vote happen.

Mr. Aylesworth noted that the Fire Chief has delegated a lot of day to day operations to his Deputy. There are long, loyal ties to the Fire Chief.

The politics of a decision to move forward with a warrant article was discussed. It was noted that we don't want to lose those members who have training and reliably respond to calls. Mr. Aylesworth and Chief Holland both offered that it was their perception that those that are trained and reliably showing up to calls support changing the organizational structure.

Ms. Stewart feels this needs to be put on the warrant, presented nicely, explained why it's on the warrant. It needs to be decided by the voters.

Mr. Aylesworth informed the Board that he would ideally know tonight if the Board wants this on the warrant given the amount of subsequent planning that is required.

Mr. Kluge stated he is not a fan of this move, that he won't actively resist, but neither will he vote for it. He will abstain.

Ms. Stewart moved to include an article to transition to a municipal Fire Department on the Town Meeting warrant, Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. Ms. Stewart and Mrs. Smith voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Kluge abstained. Motion carried by a vote of 2-0.

Mr. Kluge moved to come out of non-public session at 7:58 PM, Mrs. Smith seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion (3-0).

Meredith C. Smith, Chair

John W. Kluge

Katherine D. P. Stewart
Enfield Board of Selectmen