

1 **Minutes 11/02/2015**

2 **Jericho Fire Services Task Force Meeting**

3 **November 02, 2015 7:00 PM**

4 **Underhill Jericho Fire Department, 420 Vermont Route 15**

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6 **Members Present:** Chris Corbin, Frank Fisler, Chuck Lacy, Matt Thomson, William Bresee

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8 **Others Present:** (9) UJFD Members

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10 The meeting was called to order by Matt Thomson at 7:00 PM

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12 **1. Public Comment**

13 No comments from the public.

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15 **2. Minutes.**

16 The minutes of 10/19 were approved without exception.

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18 **3. Meeting Goals**

19 The task force met with the UJFD Fire Chief, First Assistant Chief, Second Assistant Chief, and
20 Honorary Chief to receive a presentation of the current budget, the budgeting process, and the
21 financial status of the UJFD.

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23 **4. Panel Input**

24 The following points, which were presented in regards to the budget, are important to note as
25 part of the Task Force investigation:

- 26 - The fiscal year for the department is July 1 to June 30
- 27 - The previous year's actual's are used to develop the budgetary needs including incidents, time
28 of incidents, etc.
- 29 - Grants that may be applied for are not budgeted for
- 30 - Essex Rescue rent: \$100 per month for electric covering the Ambulance being plugged in, costs
31 for living facilities renovated, wear and tear from their use
- 32 - Volunteer stipend compensation based upon 40 members: \$20 per training and the 7 meetings
33 per year, \$10 per hour per incident; no pay for meetings such as committee meetings, etc.
- 34 - Career Salaries line is all-inclusive, however the Committee agrees this should be separated for
35 a more accurate understanding. The FTE are FFI/EMT trained, compensation is competitive.
- 36 - The Board meets as a group with respective issues such as insurance, etc.
- 37 - Workers Comp line is for FTE and volunteers
- 38 - Investigation should be conducted to review insurance benefits or lack there of due to the
39 department being a private versus public entity
- 40 - Insurance coverage is not depreciated for equipment on the apparatus
- 41 - Utilities listed in the budget are for both Stations; Jericho station is \$4,700
- 42 - The Jericho station costs \$10k per year for the structure, minus apparatus costs
- 43 - Vehicle maintenance: Apparatus is maintained at Clark's, Small vehicles depend on needed
44 work. Clark's pricing is not different from Charlebois when looking at routine maintenance, it is
45 local and convenient, saving time and money, keeping personnel and apparatus within the
46 response area. If a specialty is needed, that specialty shop is used. Both service centers have
47 been looked at for cost comparisons
- 48 - Fire Education covers tuition only. No class time or travel covered. The Committee agrees that

49 this line item should be separated from fire prevention / public education
50 - Station maintenance: Plowing salting/sanding done by UJFD, the Towns do not want to
51 participate / assist
52 - Fire fighter safety equipment loan payment: Every 5 years a loan is taken to pay for 10 sets of
53 structural firefighting personal protective equipment. The loan is used because the loan
54 payment is more cost effective than the actual cost of the equipment, approximately \$5k per
55 set.
56 - Emergency Communications: Dispatch accounts for about \$2500 per year through VSP, EMS
57 incidents are not dispatched through VSP. UJFD is self-sufficient once dispatched by using in-
58 house volunteer dispatchers.
59 - Loan to modify station for Essex Rescue has been paid off
60 - Loan for building construction due to be paid off in 2017
61 - Building reserve would be an amount of money to fund the capital plan for building loan down
62 payment
63 - Truck loan payment - currently paying on (2) pieces of apparatus
64 - Transfers to reserve funds = budgeted funds not spent at the end of the year moved to the
65 next year's reserve (\$126k in current reserve fund)
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67 5. Discussion

68 In the course of determining a possible outline for the issues at hand, the following items were
69 discussed:
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- 71 • Increasing the FF number above 33 is not necessary according to the Fire Chief
- 72 • FTE performs the grant work
- 73 • Over the last 15 years, UJFD has received many grants. Since 2002 \$650,000 received in
74 grants. The Committee agrees that the capital plan needs to reflect covering the
75 replacement of these grant-received items.
- 76 • 26 self-contained breathing apparatus units will need replacement in 2017 for
77 approximately \$350,000
- 78 • Rivers Property is separate from the FD budget; FTE costs within FD budget are minimal,
79 however any duties associated with this are no longer the responsibility of the FTE.
- 80 • Capital Planning by the UJFD has occurred for 30 years, Towns involved during the last
81 15 years
 - 82 ○ Future Capital Expenditures
 - 83 ■ Substation in Underhill
 - 84 ■ Repairs / upgrades to HQ station
 - 85 ■ Replacement of Rescue 1 apparatus
 - 86 ■ Potential aerial apparatus
 - 87 ■ Capital planning for Buildings, Apparatus, Radios, SCBA units
 - 88 ■ Painting the future picture with an articulated description would be
89 appropriate to be presented before the actual costs
- 90 • Now that UJFD budget review has been completed, an accurate comparison with other
91 agencies can now be conducted.
- 92 • EMS Services: Richmond Rescue covers 1/3rd of Jericho. Essex Rescue covers the
93 remaining. FTE does respond to any EMS call in Jericho, is a volunteer member of both
94 Essex and Richmond. The current arrangement is being reviewed with Essex Rescue.
95 The staffing of the Ambulance is not always as was agreed upon.

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- Personnel retention: The majority of the members are isolated from contentious issues and a focus is maintained on training. Recruitment through word of mouth is the most effective for the Department.
- Governance changes: A model with a full time chief or outside board members with fire service experience could be looked at.
- Multi-step processes are in place to ensure there are not conflicts of interest during purchasing and policy development.

NOTE: A breakout of the budget items discussed along with notes from the discussion are attached to the end of these minutes for further explanation.

6. Next Meeting

The next Task Force meeting will be held 11/30 at the Jericho Town Hall starting at 7:00 PM.

Item	Amount	Notes
1. Underhill	216,112	40% of town-funded budget; 2.7% increase from 2014/15 budget
2. Jericho	308,150	60% of town-funded budget
3. Interest	0	
4. Property Tax Reserves	0	
5. Essex Rescue Overtime Reimbursement	0	Unbudgeted; direct reimbursement for overtime of UJFD full timers assisting on Essex Rescue calls
6. FEMA & State Reimbursement for Disasters	0	Unbudgeted, retroactive
7. Other	0	
8. Rent Essex Rescue	4,200	\$350 per month – covers expenses of accommodating Essex Rescue on site
9. Donations	0	Unbudgeted – Actuals range from \$2,000 to \$2,333 in recent years
Total Income	544,480	

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Item	Amount	Notes
10. Volunteer Stipend, Salaries & Benefits	77,500	Averages to just below \$2,000 per member (40 members). Median is likely below the mean. Meetings / training are compensated at \$20 per meeting. Seven of the annual meetings are purely business and/or administrative. Committee work (Rivers property, vehicle selection committee, etc.) is not compensated.
11. Career Salaries, Benefits & Safety Equipment	117,000	Combines salary, some of the benefits and turn-out gear for two officers. It might be more intuitive to break this out into multiple line items.

12. FICA & Medicare Career & Volunteer	15,000	Payroll taxes – applies to all employees, volunteer & full-time
13. Legal	300	
14. Accounting Service	6,800	New expense for this year – likely takes the form of a book keeper supervised by a CPA
15. Professional Audit	7,500	Due to #14, above, the cost to audit may go down.
16. Workers Compensation Insurance	10,500	The majority of fire departments in VT use the same insurer; this is apparently the going rate. Significant jumps in 2014/15 (doubled) and 2015/16 (+25%).
17. Insurance Auto	7,500	Covers department vehicles as well as covering the deductible on personally-owned vehicles used to respond to calls. (e.g. to get to and from the fire station)
18. Insurance, Buildings, Equipment, Liability Insurance	19,000	This covers everything but the vehicles. Includes insuring parades on public roadways. Insurance is for replacement value of assets, not depreciated value. \$500 deductible.
19. Insurance Accident / Disability	4,300	Gap coverage for anything else not covered in the previous line items. Overall, insurance amount to just under 10% of the UJFD's total budget
20. Heat / Phone / Internet / Electricity / Water	21,000	The Jericho fire station is just over 22% of this cost, at \$4,700
21. Vehicle Maintenance	24,000	Up from 18,300 in the 2014/15 budget. ¹ The major apparatus are serviced by Clarks, smaller vehicles at other local providers like Autosmith. UJFD solicited quotes from Charlebois in Colchester, and there was not sufficient advantage to going with Charlebois to justify the logistical challenges of bringing vehicles to Colchester for servicing. Major repairs on large apparatus is done out of town by other third parties qualified for chassis and custom truck build work.
22. Vehicle and Equipment Fuel	9,500	Gasoline purchased retail from Jolleys. Diesel is stored and pumped on site. A small quantity of aviation fuel on hand for small equipment such as chainsaws.
23. NFPA Annual Pump Test	1,300	Testing takes place onsite
24. Equipment Maintenance	3,000	

¹ We got sidetracked on why Clark's was the principal supplier of maintenance and did not ask why the line item went up by 30%.

25. NFPA Annual Hose Testing	3,500	Hydrostatic pressure tests
26. Fire Education / Prevention / Training	3,000	Does not cover travel expense – tuition only. Also, Firefighter visits to schools.
27. Station Maintenance	14,000	Light bulbs, minor roof repairs, carpet cleaning, etc. Major items like a new roof do not show up here – they would be part of the Capital Plan
28. Firefighter Safety Equipment	9,000	Coats / Boots / Pants – full set of gear costs ~\$3,000 and lasts 5-10 years.
29. Firefighter Safety Equipment Loan Payment	9,556	<p>UJFD's perception is that costs on protective fire clothing goes up at a rate that justifies pre-purchasing gear and amortizing the purchase with a loan.</p> <p>Lines 28 & 29 over the last 3 years and this budget: \$16,900, \$29,300, \$20,000, \$18,500. Average spending is enough for 21-35 sets of gear in a five year period assuming \$3,000 to \$5,000 per set; 42-70 sets of gear in a ten year period under the same assumptions.</p>
30. Emergency Communications	7,000	UJFD handles dispatch internally; reduces cost of dispatch as a service
31. New Equipment and Hose	10,000	In addition to hoses, nozzles and other hose attachments as well as small tools such as chainsaws
32. Dry Hydrant Installation Program	2,000	These funds are applied outside of the state grant, which applies only to property owners
33. Extrication & Hazmat Equipment	4,000	Jaws of life, HAZMAT containment equipment, etc. this line item contains durable and consumable items.
34. Firefighter personal safety	6,750	Gloves, eyewear, medical supplies, immunization
35. Miscellaneous	500	
36. Office Expense	7,000	Office supplies, etc.
37. Capital Improvement Plan	0	Loan for latest station improvements is now paid off
38. Building Loan Payment	41,369	Station construction loan – to be paid off in 2017.
39. Building Reserve	0	Philosophy is that this is a location where funds would be accumulated to make a down payment on a future building loan. Not sure why this item and numbers 41 & 42 are not counted as transfers to reserve funds (items 43-48)
40. Truck Loan Payment	77,087	Payments on Engines 11 & 1 (2014) at present.
41. Truck Replacement Reserve	9,618	Building another down payment; accumulated \$59,000 over last four years
42. Air-pak and portable radio reserve	8,400	Building another down payment; accumulated \$36,500 over last four years

43. Capital Improvements Reserve	0	Accumulated \$1,668 over last four years
44. New Equipment Reserve	0	Accumulated \$28,467 over last four years
45. Volunteer Payroll Reserve	0	Accumulated \$15,000 over last four years
46. Career Salary Reserve	0	Accumulated \$6,186 over last four years
47. Training Center Reserve	0	Accumulated \$1,975 over last four years
48. Firefighter Personal Safety Reserve	0	Nothing over last four years ²

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² Items 39, 41 and 42 are planned transfers into reserves, with the intent of building down payments for known future items. Items 43-48 are leftover amounts due to budget surpluses. In 2012/13 and 2013/14 the surpluses totaled just over \$52,000, in the vicinity of 5% of the budget.