

Rutland County Fire Mutual Aid Association, Inc.
Minutes of the December 30, 2007 Meeting

The meeting was held at the West Pawlet Fire Station and called to order by President Schlachter at 7:00 p.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance, moment of silence for passed members.

SICK AND DISTRESSED:

None reported.

ROLL CALL:

Department Members Present: Benson Fire Department, Clarendon Fire Department, Danby-Mt Tabor, Fair Haven Fire Department, Ira Fire Department, Mt. Holly Fire Department, Pittsford Fire Department, Poultney Fire Department, Rutland City Fire Department, Shrewsbury Fire Department, West Haven Fire Department, West Pawlet Fire Department, West Rutland Fire Department

Officers Present: Chief Robert Schlachter, President; Chief Tom Fucile, Vice-President; Michael Skaza, Secretary/Treasurer

Coordinators Present: Tim Kerber

Other Guests: None

APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2007 meeting. PASSED.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Schlachter reported that he has been attending meetings on the proposed installation of a large biofuel plant that is planned to be located in Whitehall, NY. He is ensuring that the emergency responders of Rutland County are being represented during this process.

President Schlachter thanked those who attended the VT Coalition of Fire and Rescue Services Meeting in Pittsford recently. We were successful in making our position known regarding the relocation of Vermont Fire Academy facilities.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

None.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer's Report was read. The Treasurer reported that invoices will be sent out for State Dispatch Fees and Association Dues within the month. Departments that were present could receive their invoices at the meeting. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report as submitted. PASSED.

STATE DISPATCH:

We recently experienced an outage of the Killington Transmitter. During this period, our back-up plan was put into action and alternative remote stations were staffed for dispatching. Although there were no emergency calls during this outage, the plan was put into action and appeared to have worked quickly to minimize any vulnerability during the outage.

Chief Perry of Ira Fire Department raised concerns that his department has not been getting dispatched to motor vehicle accidents in his jurisdiction, even upon the report of injuries. President Schlachter asked for specific dates and times of these incidents so that they can be brought to the PSAP Administrator's attention for review. It was also noted that these issues are best dealt with immediately after they happen rather than waiting for some time to resolve any issues.

Questions arose as to what frequencies should be used to communicate with the DHART helicopter. DHART has a dedicated frequency that we can use and they have also discussed using one of the VTAC frequencies. Under no circumstances shall the incident commander designate the dispatch frequency for this use. A serious problem could develop if another emergency is taking place while you are trying to communicate with the aircraft on this frequency. More information will be forthcoming on this issue.

All Rutland County Fire Departments were reminded to contact the dispatch center (786-6179) to update your department and town contact information. This is especially important if you have had changes in officers or elected officials since the last update.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chief Flanders of Clarendon Fire Department asked about the status of developing a run card system for dispatching. No action has taken place on this issue since the last discussion.

President Schlachter provided an update regarding the proposed relocation of some of the Vermont Fire Academy facilities to VTC in Randolph. It appears that there is no plan to move forward with this relocation at this time. A motion was made and seconded to authorize the officers of the Association to do a mailing to all Vermont Fire Departments and other elected officials indicating our position to oppose a move or construction of any Vermont Fire Academy facilities at any location other than Pittsford, and for this mailing to detail the reasons for our position. PASSED.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Coalition Legislative Luncheon is upcoming and an important issue is the need for a stable funding source for fire service training.

A discussion took place regarding our concerns over a lack of officer training that is geared to the volunteer service. It was asked if there could be an officership course that was modularized to make its completion more achievable by the volunteer firefighter. Some felt that a look should be given to the lengthy prerequisites for the Officer I program as that is a somewhat unrealistic expectation of many volunteers. The membership present would like to invite the

Division of Fire Safety Director, John Wood, and the Chief of the Vermont Fire Academy, Jim Litevitch to an upcoming meeting to discuss our needs.

Essex County, NY has formally requested our approval to operate on frequency 154.250 as they apply for FCC licensing. President Schlachter and Secretary Skaza have discussed this request with our communications vendor and they have strongly advised us to no support this shared use of the frequency. They have advised us that such frequency sharing within close proximity would undoubtedly result in operational interference with our dispatching frequency. A motion was made and seconded to object to the sharing of frequency 154.250 with Essex County Emergency Services. PASSED.

The Cancer Bill, which passed in 2007 was discussed. Members were reminded that to qualify for cancer benefits, a firefighter must have an approved cancer screening done by their physician by certain dates. A motion was made and seconded to have the Association host a meeting on this issue with Dr. Lovett for the purpose of educating our members on the benefits and requirements of the bill. PASSED.

A motion was made and seconded to authorize the President to send a letter and token of our appreciation to each dispatcher at the Rutland Barracks for their continued support. PASSED.

The next meeting of the Association will be on February 24, 2008 at the Benson Village School.

With no other business at hand, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. PASSED. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael J. Skaza

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Secretary/Treasurer