

Select Board  
Martin Memorial Hall  
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT  
Wednesday February 27, 2019 6:30 – 8:30 PM  
SPECIAL INFORMATION MEETING - Municipal Fire Department

Select Board Members Present:

Kelly Murphy  
Peter Cole  
Dan Boyer  
Tom Leach

Town Manager - Town Manager, Ed Morris

Select Board Members Absent:

John Arrison

Others Present:

Tim Austin, FloAnn Dango, Sharon Brown, Colby Hodgdon, Derek Gurney, Jeff Epsten, NaToshya Dauphin, Cheryl Watson, Richard Watson, Mychael Spaulding, Travis Compo, Chief Dauphin, Paul Tillman, David Picknell, Pat Howe, Dusty Hodgdon, Josh Compo, Dave Fuller, Mike Todd, Nancy Nutile-McMenemy, Valerie Davidson, Apryl Blake, Tracy Dauphin, Karey Waters, Ben Waters, Robert Knight, Nancy Knight, Nancy Meyer, Chief Spaulding, Stephen Brown, Mark Girard, Joseph Renaud, Fran Renaud, Beth Renaud

Call to Order:

Kelly Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

First order of business is to reappoint Ed Morris as the Health Officer. Per the State of VT, Town Manager, Ed Morris's appointment is ending 2/28/19.

Kelly – "Can I please have a motion to approve?"

Motion to approve Ed as the Town Health Officer

Made by: Dan Boyer, Second Tom Leach

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Kelly Murphy thanked everyone for attending this meeting. It was the largest group in attendance since the meetings to discuss the Municipal Fire Department started. She thanked the community members for the great questions that they brought, the fire fighters for showing up to all of these meetings since October.

She recognized the West Weathersfield Fire Department meeting that was held on Saturday, February 23, 2019.

Kelly Murphy noted that the taxpayers received the flyer that West Weathersfield put together and had been asked to have some of these at the Town Meeting on Saturday March 3, 2019 for those who did not receive one or had not seen it. She also clarified the postage permit # on the flyers are the same # as the Town's postage permit, but this does not mean that the Town paid for the mailing. The permit is shared by the Town's mailing house, West Weathersfield paid for the postage for these flyers.

Discussion of Ascutney Volunteer Fire Association Option B proposal:

#### AVFA Option B Proposal

1.) Chief, President, and 1 member at large from AVFA be part of hiring committee.

- See Hiring Procedure – Ascutney agreed to 2 members from each department.

Mark Girard “Originally the fire department asked for 2 members and they wanted to shoot for 3, but it wasn't a sticking point. Ed ask for it to be brought up on another vote to clarify and they voted last night (Tuesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019) to two members from the Department to make schedules easier for the committee.”

Peter Cole “For people who may not be aware you may want to tell them what the make

Ed Morris “When we went through the hiring process and procedures, we worked with the two fire departments to come up with that. We spent one whole meeting figuring that out with the Officers. What we've come down to, now that they have agreed to, we are looking at putting together a hiring panel that would consist of 2 members of each (fire) departments, 2 citizens at large and 1 Select Board member to do the initial screenings and the initial interviews to work through that. From there they will make recommendations to move some people on. At that point I will join the process and I will work, probably with another Select Board member, and 2 Fire Chiefs from around the area to screen those final applicants that get passed on. From there we will make a decision that will go before the Select Board before any hiring process.”

Kelly Murphy “I'm going to read the component and the response and then if AVFA or the Select Board or if anybody wants to ask a question or put more information in, just raise your hand and we will stop on that one.”

Dave Fuller “In a very broad stroke, and maybe I'm the only one that here that doesn't know it, I mean I've learned somethings, but when you started talking about this Option B. Is there somebody here that can just say as an overview rather than going into the detailed thing about what Option B is, why there is an Option B. Is there an Option A?

Kelly Murphy: “There is Option A and Option B, Option B is what we are going to go through.”

Mark Girard recapped Option A and Option B:

“Option A – AVFA put in a \$95,000 all inclusive bid for us to cover all of our expenses and release the Town of any liability and also provided worker’s comp insurance for the self-employed fire fighters. That was voted down by the Select Board.”

“At the same time, we put in Option B, anticipating that Option A would be voted down. Option B was a compromise as we did not see the Municipal format, they were pushing suitable for our organization. We wanted to retain all of our assets that we have fundraised and had donated and contracted through the years. They have a lot of significance for the members and would still be used for the community through this set up. We are allowing the Town to use the equipment. In exchange, they would have to maintain the equipment, we are allowing them to use the station with limitations to not use the upstairs offices, those are the associations desks to do paperwork and pay bills. The Town will have the downstairs office, meeting room, base. In exchange they pay all household bills and then they would also have to maintain the station as if it was their own.”

2.) Agree to Municipal with restrictions to part-time chief and be open to any and all qualified personnel.

- AVFA Pulled this Stipulation

3.) AVFA elect officers for first year

- See Officer Plan – Members from each side at the 1-17- 2019 meeting asked that a similar hiring procedure as fire chief be used for selecting officers. My thought is 3 members from each department work with myself to determine the officers after a nomination or application process. I do feel it is important to have equal representation during the transition process.

Ed Morris "The officer structure for a Municipal Fire Department would have 1 Fire Chief, 2 Deputy Chiefs, 2 Captains, 2 Lieutenants. One thing that we did do on purpose is we are not having Station Captains. They are going to be operationally based. They are going to be over a function of the Department, not an actual station.”

“What my idea was, and we will work through this, none of this is set in stone, but we will have a Deputy Chief of Operations making sure operations are safe and equipment is maintained, and then maybe a Deputy Chief of training to help the Chief coordinate training and make sure things are going right.”

Beth Renaud “Are all of these positions supposed to be paid positions?”

Ed Morris– “No they are not. They will be similar to the line officers that are in place now. The one thing that we are working towards, that the Departments have been asking for is working towards some sort of paid on-call stipend.”

\*\* See "Mutually Agreed Upon Fire Officer Structure" handout \*\*

No further questions or discussions on this during the meeting.

4.) AVFA sells its portion of Engine 1 and Engine 4 for value of depreciated portion to Town of Weathersfield.

- AVFA may maintain their ownership share in any apparatus kept by the Town. If and when these apparatuses are sold, AVFA will receive an amount, equal to the percentage of their portion of the purchase price, from the proceeds of the sale. (Agreed)

No further questions or discussions on this during the meeting.

5.) AVFA maintain ownership of all other assets this includes the station, everything on the trucks and in the station, and only association and/or executive board has approval for items to leave station or to be sold, besides normal fire call usage and training. AVFA will allow municipal fire dept the use of as much or little of AVFA fire equipment and assets it needs.

- We will work to determine what items have been purchased with tax payer money and what items are owned by AVFD. All items purchased by AVFD will stay under the control of AVFD as outlined above. (Agreed)

No further questions or discussions on this during the meeting.

6.) If equipment is damaged it is to be fixed or replaced by municipal fire dept.

- The Town will maintain and treat equipment as its own. Equipment that the Town determines may not be worth major repairs will be discussed with AVFD and there will be a determination and agreement will be made between the two entities before usage. (Agreed)

No further questions or discussions on this during the meeting.

7.) Town to continue maintaining and insure all AVFA motorized assets to include but not limited to, small motorized equipment, Ladder, Forestry, and Hazmat trailer.

- The Town will continue to insure and maintain motorized vehicles it plans to use based on the same stipulations as above. (Agreed)

Colby Hodgdon "It should say, because it has the word trailer in there, it should say non-motorized as well."

8.) Municipal chief shall not be part of AVFA but can bring requests forward on equipment they would like to use, discontinue use, or would like AVFA to look at purchasing

- The Chief will not be a member of either 501c3 and will work with both 501c3's on future purchases. Any future equipment purchases that the Town will be expected to maintain or insure will be approved by the Chief, Town Manager and/or the Select Board. (Agreed)

Josh Compo "I think that is limiting you, because you might have talent in one house now and to make them remove themselves from the 501c3, I think the word "not" and replaced with "should not be."

Ed Morris “I am going to have to disagree, the Fire Chief should not be a member of either one.”

Kelly Murphy “They should not be an active member of either department. You could have a lifetime member of one the organizations, which is a recognition piece. I think that needs to be a little bit flexible, if you have someone applying that has a lifetime membership status to one of those departments, I don’t want to see them loose that standing, but they shouldn’t be and active member.”

9.) AVFA is not responsible for providing any equipment that it does not own or replacing any equipment it does not wish to replace.

- Agreed

No further questions or discussions on this during the meeting.

10.) AVFA will continue fundraising money to support its mission of providing equipment and fire service to the town of Weathersfield as it sees fit.

- Agreed

No further questions or discussions on this during the meeting.

11.) Any future purchases of AVFA are to remain AVFA assets, if the town would like use of items purchased the town shall maintain them appropriately or replace them if broken.

- Purchasing of equipment, ~~ownership~~, and other stipulations will be determined before any future purchases are made. (Agreed)

Mark Girard “The purchasing of equipment if bought by the association, the assets are the association’s, it’s not turned over to the Town. I don’t fully agree with that. I agree with working with the Town to make sure it’s something that is needed, but is to be maintained an Association asset on either side.”

Ed Morris “I think that is what it’s saying there.”

Mark Girard “I would cross out the word ownership.”

Tom Leach “I think ownership needs to be defined. We’re dealing with that right now. I think if you want to keep that asset as your own, I think that ownership needs to be declared, that it’s Ascutney’s or it’s not.”

Kelly Murphy “That’s what you’re determining. You’re determining the purchase of equipment, the ownership and other stipulations before the purchases are made.”

It was agreed to remove the word “ownership” out of the statement above.

Tim Austin “Maybe I’m a little confused, I thought this whole thing was to go to a Municipal Fire Department that’s owned by the Town. It sounds like it’s going to a Municipal Department that’s owned by the Town and if Ascutney Department wants to buy something they can go ahead and go out and buy it and still own it.”

Peter Cole “I think the key here is that the Town will be running the department with a hired Fire Chief that oversees the operation of the whole thing. I guess the feeling was if Ascutney Fire feels strongly about the ownership, and I understand why they do, but we still have full use of that equipment just replace and treat it as our own, it is a compromise, but serves the purpose.”

12.) Any assets the Town does not wish to use will be removed from apparatus and put into storage.

- Any asset, owned by AVFA, the Town does not wish to use will be removed from apparatus and returned to AVFA. (Agreed)

No further questions or discussions on this during the meeting.

13.) Town maintain insurance on building and land.

- Agreed

Mark Girard "I just want to bring up under that, currently anything that is on the land itself is not covered by insurance. That would be above and beyond the VLTC coverage, which wouldn't be much. The sign, the sewer, the septic.”

Ed Morris “It’s the same as all Town buildings.”

Peter Cole “Just for clarification for everyone, the land is owned by the State of VT and AVFD has a long-term lease on that property and they own the building.”

Val Davidson “I just want to clarify, you want the Town to pay for the taxes of the building?”

Colby Hodgdon “501c3 doesn't have taxes.”

Ed Morris “That goes on the ballot every 5 years and the Town has always voted that that parcel will not be taxed.”

Val Davidson “Are we going to maintain anything of that fire station?”

Mark Girard “As the Town, you will have free use of the downstairs as long as the Town maintains the station as its own.”

Val Davidson “So me as a taxpayer, you want me to pay for that, but you get to keep all of your assets? Am I understanding that correctly?”

Peter Cole “Yes in return for the use of it.”

Mark Girard “It was either allow use or charge a rental fee. So, there's no money switching hands this way. All household bills will go to the Town, the Town will pay the bills. If something happens, they're responsible for it as their fire fighters will be the ones using the equipment, the station so it's part of the Town running a Municipal Fire Department. It would be no different if than if they owned the building.”

Tom Leach “The ware and tare on the building is going to the result of fulfilling fire protection services.”

14.) The town municipal fire dept will have use of the fire station with the exception to the 3 rooms upstairs, in return the town will be responsible for paying all household and utility bills, along with any maintenance that needs to be done which is to be coordinated with AVFA building and grounds chair and municipal chief.

- Agree (with the exception of a similar statement as will be written into WWVFD for major structural issues outside the control of the Town unless the Town agrees to repair it). (Agreed)

Ed Morris “A little of that comes from the concern I’ve heard from citizens on the West Weathersfield station. Most people know there is a crack in there, it hasn’t been getting bigger for the past 10 – 12 years, it’s stayed the same. The thought there is if that building continues to fall into the swamp behind it, the Town is not going to build a new station. We will work with West Weathersfield if there is a fix we can do to keep things together, then of course we will work on that. I will just put the same type of stipulation in. Ascutney’s building is a lot newer, there is no major defects right now, but if something catastrophic happened and the building just fell over, we wouldn’t just build a new station right there. We would have some decisions to make.”

Kelly Murphy “So those are all of the stipulations in the Proposal B. As I said in the beginning, the Town Manager has talked with Mark to get to these points of this agreement. The Select Board hasn’t officially voted on anything or even other than tonight, had a discussion on it so, Select Board members is there any additional information that you would like or comments.”

Peter Cole “I would make a motion that we accept the so-called Option B as presented by Ascutney Fire as a basis for moving forward with a Municipal Fire Department.”

Dan Boyer – seconded motion

Kelly Murphy “For the discussion I am going to open it up to discussion from anybody if you have any additional comments you’d like to make.”

Joseph Renaud “I have a big question. Where did this municipal vote go to the people?”

Kelly Murphy “Right now I have a motion on the table that I need to address before we can get to that question. So is there any questions from anyone on this motion?”

Dave Fuller “I heard early, Tim Austin say, it really is a package of 3 to 4 of these items that qualify for his question which was “Is this really a branch of the tree”. Ascutney has said they will keep their assets, they own them. You have to replace them if they break or if they wear out. In that document, does it say that the Town shall have exclusive use to this or with it being an asset being owned by Ascutney, can they use their own assets as shared.”

Kelly Murphy “So this is not, by any means, a legal document. This is the language Mark sent to Ed, Ed responded. This has not been massaged into anything. This is basically concepts between them.”

Dave Fuller “Then I would say, as a former board member, I have dealt with a whole bunch of different things with the Town that has been gifted, including the building that

we are sitting in. This would be a really hard decision for me sitting up there because the Town has accepted things with too many strings and this is not a knock against the Ascutney Association, I like them all. I like the West side, but this has to be all in or all out. I don't know which side everyone is on, but to have this be vague makes it worse than it is now. By having somebody come through the doors, you can't use the upstairs, etc. I couldn't in good conscience, on behalf of the Town, walk into that agreement."

Tom Leach "Dave brings up a valid point that as Tenants, as far as protecting the interest of the Town. If there was a fundraising event or something, of some type of meeting about personal business or something like that with the meeting rooms upstairs. If someone slips and falls downstairs exiting, is this going to be a Town issue. I would hope we would be able to draft some type of lease agreement in which it would be if that person is not on fire business, that's related to Town operations then that would be on Ascutney if they are going to keep that. Understanding that it's not necessarily their building, but if they are going to keep separate operating program with the top 3 offices. How does it address fundraising if they have a dinner in there? Is it going to be a Town problem or is it going to be an Ascutney problem?"

Chief Spaulding "We can't have a dinner there according to the zoning."

Dave Fuller "I'm talking about machinery, I think that is a very small thing to have a meeting. I'm talking about the overall operations. It's the sharing of the assets that are owned by another entity. Does that entity still get to use that asset? Don't you think there will still be some friction? If the Town wants to go down that road has voted to do that..."

Tom Leach "I think that the Chief is going to have control over all of the apparatus."

Ed Morris "I think this is where it comes to the legal contract. It's a very good point to make sure that stuff is firmed up"

Tim Austin "I'm just thinking about this, one of the things that we discussed in many, many meetings, fundraising was one of the things we were trying to eliminate because of the liabilities that go with it and everything else. Why are we even discussing somebody doing fundraising?"

Peter Cole "The Town would be running the department as it sees fit and have their own equipment as they see fit, but if AVFD or WWVFD wants to, as a separate organization, wants to donate equipment, that would be totally up to them. There is absolutely no requirement."

Tim Austin "I can see an auxiliary to the Municipal Fire Department that wants to raise some of the funds to help buy something, but it still sounds like Ascutney Fire Department is still staying as a separate entity. I thought the whole desire of this thing was to make one department. "

Peter Cole "Operationally, yes that would certainly be the case. Each organization is going to retain their 501c3 status and will still serve as an organization that supports the Fire Department, but not actually taking part in the operation of it."

Mark Girard “So some clarification about the Association fundraising money. Pretty much all municipal fire departments have an Association that fundraises money. They use that to still purchase equipment that taxpayers do not fund. Claremont Fire Association fundraised and saved up money, applied for grants and bought an entire graphic response set up for the RIT (?) team. That equipment is not owned by the municipal fire department as the fire department did not budget for it, but it's owned by the Association and maintained by the Municipal Fire Department. It's not an uncommon set up.”

Pat Howe “What happens when you fundraise for it and you buy it, or in the process of buying it, and the Chief, whoever that may be, says I don't think we need it? What happens then?”

Mark Girard “If the Chief doesn't want it then A.) The Association doesn't buy it or B.) If for some reason they did continue to buy it, the Chief has every right to say they don't want to use it and then it would be put away in storage.”

Pat Howe “So you'd buy something and put in storage or if it got used and broken, the Town is liable to fix it?”

Mark Girard “I wouldn't, but if the Town isn't using it then they would not be liable to maintain it or fix it.”

Ed Morris “That was the discussion in there that we have had that this would be something where the Association says “Hey I think we need this” and they would work with the Chief and/or the Town to decide if that is a piece of equipment that the Town would use. Then they would go fundraise for that piece of equipment.”

Chief Dauphin “Mark, you had stated that the auxiliary maintains ownership, if an auxiliary is going to take and purchase an item that the department needs, the 1<sup>st</sup> step would be the communication between the Auxiliary and the Fire Chief and 2.) would resolve just buying the equipment and not needing it and putting it in storage and 3.) I'm trying to figure out why the auxiliary would want to maintain ownership for the use of a municipal department.

Tom Leach “Mark it wouldn't always be an equipment thing. Obviously if there was something lacking and there was communication between the Chief and the members of the municipal department, they can elect to go forward with a certain project in mind, but also I would hope that whatever equipment that the Town would be able to budget for and the 501c3 could focus on softer items such as those related to fire training, morale and so on, rather than hardened equipment that should be clearly defined by the Chief and the administration.”

Mark Girard “The Association would use the money for the same things we do now, buy uniforms for people to attend funerals, we send flowers for funerals, we pay for trainings, do get together, buy shirts.”

Chief Dauphin “If there is a demand that is high enough that the fire fighters truly absolutely need, I would assume that would come back to the Fire Chief and you as a municipal department to look at that need and realize there is an area that needs to be

figured out and not be put back onto the Associations to take in. Now to continue to do fundraising because this is important item that people think we need. That's kind of why we are going down this road, to lessen that."

Kelly Murphy "My thought, I agree with Tim and Dave, this is not an ideal situation. When you make a move like this you want to have all of the parties on board. That is not the case. I think that this piece of paper and the things that we have gone through are moving a step in the right direction from both entities. I would not vote in favor of this if this was any kind of a contract because I do believe firmly in what Dave said, there are many issues in all of this that need to be massaged out. I think that as a preliminary, this is what Ascutney Fire is coming forward to the Select Boar and saying these are our issues. I'm ok with voting yes for this knowing that this is the first draft, the first concept of the issues that are important to them. For me it is more of the municipal and trying to get the two parties to become one. I am ok with voting, but this is not a contract. I would not be voting if this was a contract."

Tom Leach "It's more of a good faith agreement, right? So that we can move forward and do those fine adjustments that you are talking about."

Josh Compo "We may want to urge Peter to amend his motion, I believe that the motion was to accept as presented because truly as a first draft there should be some wording in there as such."

Peter Cole amended his motion to "Accepting Option B as the concept of the agreement between the Town as a Municipal Fire Department and Ascutney Fire."

Dan Boyer amended his second to the motion.

Mark Girard "Being as you guys have basically counter offered our counter proposal with the Officer plan, can you provide me with the Officer plan so I can bring it back to the membership?" – A copy was provided.

No other questions regarding this.

Kelly Murphy "All in favor of the motion Select Board signify by saying "aye"  
Vote: Unanimous in favor

Kelly Murphy briefly discussed the presentation for the Town Meeting. The Select Board will present the Fire Discussion out of order of the Articles as this will be a "hot topic". The Select Board will be there to answer questions, but as a 2<sup>nd</sup>. She encouraged the fire fighters to continue to answer community questions and give their input.

One of the questions that has come up in prior meetings as an example, "No fire fighter is going to want to serve next to a paid Chief" That is not a question that the Select Board should really be answering.

Kelly Murphy opened the floor to Q&A for the attendees of the meeting.

Joseph Renaud "When did the idea of a Municipal Department come before the Town?"

Kelly Murphy “This has been a topic that has long come before me as far as the banter back and forth about and Municipal Department.”

Joseph Renaud “But when was there a vote?”

Kelly Murphy “The VT State Statute (24 VSA 1951) that gives the Select Board the authorization to create a Municipal Fire Department. For the creation of a department when a Municipal department does not exist. The State of VT, through the legislature has given the Town authorization to do that. That is where that came from.”

Joseph Renaud “Aren’t you supposed to bring that before the people?”

Kelly Murphy “No, according to the State Statute, the Select Board has the authorization to put that in place. Before that, WWVFD came to the Select Board and asked them what that would look like. That’s where that conversation originated from most recently.

Peter Cole “The public, that’s the whole point of this meeting and the Town Meeting coming up. That is the public’s opportunity to vote on this.”

Joseph Renaud “I looked at the ballot and it only talks about the money, not if we should have one or not”

Peter Cole “The money is the driver, without the money it can’t happen.”

Colby Hodgdon “I noticed on the website that you are looking for the Chief to have and maintain an EMT certification? I know in order to keep the license active the person has to have “x” amount of hours per year, per month, per week. Would this require the Chief to have a part time job as an EMT?”

Ed Morris “We have a Police Chief right now that maintain and EMT, they just have to be working, they will have to work through Golden Cross, which I have talked with him a little bit and we will just have to work through that process and maintain some training. It was one of the items that was brought up to help make sure there was increased Emergency Medical Response through this process. It was a big reason to do that to make sure we had a trained provider responding.”

Colby Hodgdon “Would the licensing have to change as far as operating fire and not medical?”

Ed Morris “No the EMS license wouldn’t change.”

Colby Hodgdon “My concern is that in order to have your EMT you have to maintain a certain number of hours per year. My question was if this would require the Chief to have a part time job as an EMT?”

Kelly Murphy “No because they have an affiliation. Its no different than some of the volunteers that are on the Fire Department that are EMTs and their affiliation is through Golden Cross and that allows them, that’s the connection for your license.”

Colby Hodgdon “So if the Chief responds to a strictly medical response, would GCA be covering insurance and payment or would the Town be covering insurance and pay?”

Ed Morris “It is no different than what you guys are doing now. You’re responding to medical calls. You might not hold that level of certification, all that means is you can’t perform medical services up to that level of certification. There won’t be any difference in insurance.”

Kelly Murphy “If the Fire Chief happens to come on and they’ve got a Paramedic’s license, they’re not going to be, the Town is not going to say now you can perform up to your scope of service as a Paramedic whenever you go on scene. It’s still Golden Cross, when they come on scene, they are the medical provider. It’s their scene.”

Chief Spaulding “So following up on Colby’s question, has anyone even checked in with our Attorney or VT EMT, that sense you are going Municipal that you’ll still be able to be on Golden Cross, because as Dale has said in the past that we’re volunteer and he’ll help us out, but going municipal changes things. Do you have anything in writing? Before we all just jump in and say this is what is going to happen... ”

Ed Morris “It doesn’t change anything it’s the same as our police officers are doing. Because you are a municipal fire department doesn’t change, really much of anything.”

Mark Girard “You said the Fire Chief would have an affiliation with Golden Cross, but the Select Board or the Town Manager, don’t quote me, has been putting out bids from Windsor and Springfield to provide EMS Services.”

Ed Morris “No we haven’t. That’s a lie.”

Mark Girard “So if the EMS service is another provider, would they have to change affiliation to the other provider?”

Ed Morris “If you did that, they would not necessarily have to, but they could. Any licensed medical provider can give you affiliation if they want to. What you are actually doing then is working under their license.”

Kelly Murphy “And we are not putting out feelers.”

Chief Spaulding “Windsor Chief told me that he gave a quote to the Town of Weathersfield for \$90,000 for ambulance coverage.”

Ed Morris “Nobody has given a quote since I’ve been here.”

Chief Dauphin “So this whole thing with the EMT and if the Chief’s going to be an EMT or not, again the whole purpose of why we are doing this is to make a better service than what we have now. So if that means we can get someone with experience, training that can go to all the call and with the hopes of recruitment and retention that we keep talking about as these meetings keep going on, the idea would hopefully be we could get people that are EMT certified, that live in town, that we might be able to take and form a Fast Squad. That could very well be a possibility.”

Kelly Murphy “Not right now though. One step at a time.”

Dave Fuller “You just voted on accepting a concept. Did that vote you just took change your presentation to the Town? (No) Then how is a question going to come from the floor saying have you made a deal or not a deal. The answer is no deal. The answer is we may get to a deal, yet we are voting on Tuesday. So I’m not sure if you can ask the voters to vote on a concept. You have an article that says vote yes or no. What you’re asking is that we’re going to get to the goal line eventually, but you don’t know when, but suppose you don’t. Has the Town done any research to say that if this doesn’t materialize, have you thought about that.”

Kelly Murphy “Article 9 that everyone will be voting on is an article that is tied specifically to money so the taxpayers will be voting whether or not they want to allocate \$265, 070 to this. If that gets defeated we will have to go back to the drawing board, have another Town Meeting after the Select Board comes up with an alternative number, have another Town Meeting and have another official vote to put that number in front of the taxpayers.”

Dave Fuller “But the article is specific.”

Kelly Murphy “The article is specific to the dollar value of the budget.”

Dave Fuller “and to form a municipal fire department.”

Ed Morris “It says it, but it’s not a yes or no to form a municipal fire department.”

Dave Fuller “No but it’s hooked to it.”

Ed Morris “That’s what the money is going to be used for.”

Dave Fuller “Read the Article”

Kelly Murphy “Article 9 – Shall the voters of the Town of Weathersfield approve the expenditure of \$265,070 for the support and operation of a new municipal fire department? \$245,070 shall be raised by property taxation, allowing the Select Board to set the appropriate tax rate.” So, the voters are approving the expenditure of that amount of money for the fire department. If that gets defeated, the Select Board will need to come

back to the table, figure out a lesser amount of money, again have the Town Meeting, have the voting and bring that forward.”

Dave Fuller “There was a concept that was just voted on, it was not a deal, to merge the two together.”

Ed Morris “There’s a tentative agreement.”

Tom Leach “It’s not a concept, the concept has been in the works the past 6 months.”

Kelly Murphy “There are parts of this that have to be massaged out. We’re not going to ...this is going to take months and months and months of having a conversation with the idea of getting closer and closer together. In reality...”

Dave Fuller “I know the reality. The reality is we will only be voting once in 2019, in March and the reality was either do it now or wait for another year. That’s the reality.”

Peter Cole “But that’s not the reality.”

Dave Fuller “I meant to start the thing back in November. Move back your time table. It was to gear up to go to the March vote because it’s the only time you vote. Or not have anything on the ballot and wait for a whole other year. I get that. Except your down to the Wednesday before Saturday’s Town Meeting and it is a little bit more than an idea. I would not rush to say that it’s an agreement because I think that in defense of either party for the reasons I gave earlier, I could not support the agreement on behalf of the Town.”

Kelly Murphy “You have to start somewhere and up until about 2 months ago, 3 months ago, we didn’t even have Ascutney in the room. So the fact that they are here and have had membership meeting and have discussed this. This is a step in the right direction. No we are not going to have a hammered out, attorney approved, contract for Tuesday’s voting. I don’t think we are going to have that any time soon, but you have to move in that direction. And you have to have some good faith in either party moving forward.

Peter Cole “We are not going to have everything laid out in stone. We have several months before the Fiscal Year starts. If we’re not ready to form the Municipal Fire Department at that time because we don’t have all those t’s crossed and I’s dotted, then we won’t do it.”

Mark Girard “Kelly, I want to correct a statement. The fire department has been talking about this since September, late August. We have had at least 1 member has been present at all meetings.”

Tom Leach “ I don’t think she meant to disbar you guys as far as that, its just that we are having an exchange back and forth the last several meetings. I think that is the progress that Kelly is referring to. For this thing to really work we need the input from both current fire departments to be able to merge this successfully into one municipal

department. There are a lot of unknowns out there and there are other towns right now addressing the exact same thing and they are learning as they go, but if we don't have the budget to work with and say that this is what we have to work with for the next year, then we really have nothing to tell either you guys or West Weathersfield as to what we've got to work with and where we're moving forward to. So this junction had to come at some point and you can argue back and forth that there is no lawyer signed agreement at this point but we have a good faith agreement that Ascutney brought to us, that they are on board with, we have an agreement that West Weathersfield brought to us, that they agree with and these are the assets that our town has to work with that when your house goes on fire, or when someone in your family has a life threatening issue, that these are the people that are going to be responding and we owe it to them to move forward on this in a way that they are involved and that we can make the best product possible we can. We aren't going to have everything worked out with the t's crossed and I's dotted, but we're working our way towards that. And if we don't have a budget to present to these folks as to this is what type of operation we are going to be having, then it kind of stops right here. So we've got to be able to move forward."

Nancy Nutile-McMenemy "When I first moved to Town, the very first committee I served on was the budget committee. I've been getting emails and calls from people asking "what is the bottom line?" How much is this going up? How much is this going down? So I did a budget analysis and I'm only looking at operating budget for the "Fire Services in Town" It includes Ascutney Volunteer ,West Weathersfield and the money that has been allocated or budgeted by the Fire Commission. I want to thank Darlene for getting back to me with the audited expenditures although I'm not sure where those are ever seen by us because they are not in the current Town Report and they aren't reported in the previous Town Report."

Nancy Nutile-McMenemy presented her audit of the Town Report for 2016-2017 (FY '18 budget).

**Weathersfield Fire Services Budget Comparison**  
**Nancy Nutile-McMenemy, Fire Commission Chair**

**Budget FY2018 from Town Report 2016-2017 page 76-77 and page 72**

Fire Commission	\$40,186	Audited expenditures= \$47,190
AVFA	\$46,950	Audited expenditures = \$37,919
WWVFD	\$96,775	Audited expenditures =\$93,951
Total	\$183,911	Total expenditures = \$179,060
Total revenue	\$4,851	Total audited Revenues = \$5,471

**Amount to be raised by taxes: \$179,060      Total audited tax need \$173,589**

**Budget FY2019 from Town Report 2016-2017 page 76-77 and page 72**

Fire Commission	\$42,233
AVFA	\$42,250
WWVFD	\$91,430
Total	\$175,913
Total revenue	\$4,666

**Amount to be raised by taxes: \$171,247      This is part of the tax need for fire BUT you also need to add in the \$25,000 of reserve articles, the total tax need is \$196,248.**

**Fire Commission Budget**

(does not include FICA, Workmen's Comp, Insurance, truck bond-those figures were to be added by the town) from Fire Commission Meeting 10/18/2018

Fire Commission	\$43,935
AVFA	\$46,750
WWVFD	\$37,950 (truck bond \$45,800 to be added by town-\$83,750)
Total	\$128,635

**Proposed FY20 from Town Report 2017-2018 page 96-97**

Municipal Fire Department	\$265,070
Revenue	\$20,000

**Amount to be raised by taxes: \$245,070**

**Amount to be raised by taxes for departmental expenses FY19 compared to FY20**

**\$171,247 + \$73,823 = \$245,070      43.1% increase**

If no \$20,00 from projected Hazmat revenue  
**\$171,247 + \$93,823 = \$ 265,070      54.8% increase**

**Amount to be raised by taxes including departmental expenses and \$25,000 of reserve articles from FY19**

**\$196,248 + \$48,822= \$245,070**

Amount to be raised by taxes including \$25,000 of reserve articles. If no \$20,000 from projected Hazmat revenue  
**\$196,248 + \$68,822= \$265,070**

**\*\*Please see notes from Fire Commission meeting dated 10/18/18 for line items for each department.\*\***

Nancy Nutile-McMenemy "My first question is, in our new Town Report, at the bottom of page 97, I'm wondering why there is no budget number for Fiscal Year '19? You have one for the estimated budget, for FY '18, FY '19 is blank and FY '20 is proposed. So I think that's a little bit misleading and difficult for people to actually make an informed decision of what's happening with our budget."

Kelly Murphy “What page is that?”

Nancy Nutile-McMenemy “It’s on page 97 of the current Town Report. So if you look at the current Town Report at the Operating Expense for the fire services, only operating departmental expense. Municipal Fire is now listed at \$265,070, estimated revenue to be taken in is \$20,000. So, the total amount to be raised by taxes of the operating budget would be \$245,070. If you compare the operating departmental expenses for FY ’19 to FY ’20 so it’s \$171,247 - \$245,070 that’s a difference of \$73,823. That’s an increase of 43.1%. If we do not take in the projected \$20,000 in Hazmat reimbursement, that number goes up to \$93,823 increase in operating departmental expense which is an increase of 54.8%. I don’t know what you guys are thinking when you’re saying, I know you’re including the \$25,000 that we voted on in the article to make it \$196,248, but that’s articles, not operating budget that taxpayers are trying to make a decision on.”

Ed Morris “I just want to disagree with the revenue piece. That even the auditors will force that the articles that are in there are an expenditure that we have to report through the audit as a fire expense. So to do that the tax revenue collected last year for fire services was \$196,248 there is still a fairly big difference, but really what is it makes a difference in tax need of \$48,822. Then just like we do in every other budget, every year, we will have big swings in highway, big swings in general fund, the tax payers want to know how does that affect me. When we get all said and done we have to put all of these together, that’s part of what my job is to pick and choose the projects that we need to do each year, present them to the Select Board and they make the final decision on what we are going to do that year. There’s plenty of things we could be doing in every department, but the end goal is to keep that tax rate as low as possible so when we get all said and done we are looking at a \$9.46 increase per year on \$100,000 home. You can go home and look at your tax bill or if you don’t have it, call me, I can get you your tax bill and you can do the math yourself or I can help you. Whatever your evaluation is it’s \$9.46 per year, per \$100,000 evaluation. That’s really what you have to look at the whole picture.”

Josh Compo “There was a number floating around, I think Kelly asked for it a year and half, 2 years back, you did an analysis on total cost for fire services and that was basically what the Fire Commission put forth, correct me if I’m wrong, and the 2 fire departments statements on what their expenditures were? Is that correct?”

Kelly Murphy “Yes, I back a year and a half ago, the Fire Commission was suspended at that point, there were no community members serving. The 2 Chiefs were meeting with the Town Manager and I had come into the meeting to identify for the Select Board what is the total amount of money spent in the Town of Weathersfield on fire services. Regardless of revenue, even if it was 100% federal taxpayer grant given. The focus was still, I wanted to know, I wanted the Select Board to know how much are we paying for Fire Services. So, it was Mark, Darrin, Josh and Mychael, Ed and myself at the table so both organizations went back they brought their reconciled financials for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year. I created a spreadsheet format with line items, tried to pull out and put in them in the right categories, gave them back to both departments to make sure I had

everything where it was supposed to be. They came back with the approval, there was a couple of changes that needed to be done, they came back with the final approval. Then I put all of that together with the line items that the Town does and \$265,960 was how much fire services cost. Now that's again, taking into consideration its one organization, one organization and the Town. It's not revenue, its not where did this money come from, that money come from. It was just looking at expenses."

Tom Leach "Fundraising expenses as well?"

Kelly Murphy "Yes"

Josh Compo "What I want to get to for a point is that part of this process is to reduce the fire departments feeling of obligation to fundraise in order to operate for themselves and make it so they can choose to fundraise for the well being of their organization but not having that obligation to fundraise for operational expenses. That's part of where I think these numbers may differ."

Nancy Nutile-McMenemy "I'm just taking what's in the line items that the taxpayers are giving to both departments to operate properly and the Fire Commission, which covers the insurance."

Kelly Murphy "My numbers have nothing to do with, Nancy is in the Town Report and she's in the town financials. I was looking for more the total fire services of what we were paying in all of the different realms to provide these services to the town."

Josh Compo "Correct, and so part of my point was one of the things we have been discussing for years to reduce the need for fundraising and increase the amount of ownership that the Town is going to take on to support emergency services."

Nancy Nutile-McMenemy "Josh, to that point, in this budget \$111,000 of that \$265,000 is going to the new Fire Chief. It has nothing to do with support actually for the 2 station's operations. It's basically his benefits, his secretarial staff..."

Ed Morris "There is no secretarial staff."

Kelly Murphy "And actually if you took the Fire Chief's salary is \$60,000 the rest of that leading up to whatever it is our over conservative estimates, we are going with a family plan insurance just in case the person has a family. We have workman comp that is more expensive for a Fire Chief than it is a Police Chief, that's a little over \$10,000, all the taxes are worked in there. \$265,000 is duplication, it's running 2 different associations, it's running 2 different buildings, all the equipment and the Fire Chief all in one all for \$960 less than we did it in 2017."

Ed Morris "I was just going along with your comment, you were saying that the Fire Chief reducing some of that duplication, the departments reducing some of that duplication. I just got an email last week from Hartford Dispatch that our dispatch

services are going up to \$12,000 this year, up to over \$15,000 next year and \$19,000 the next year and the reason below that is because we are dispatching 2 departments to a single call instead of just one. So they're doing twice the work at dispatch so because of that they are going to raise the rates. So that's just one example of multiple places the costs are just adding up because we have 2 departments."

Tom Leach "It's very unfair you can't discount that fundraising, how many vehicles have you guys purchased, trailer, everything else out of your own efforts, your fundraising, your dinners, like 2 ½ vehicles (addressing AVFD), your ladder truck, forestry, Hazmat trailer, all these things taxpayer money did not pay for. How many pieces of equipment in your station (addressing WWVFD), brush truck and Argo. Right, so we're trying to say to the volunteers through this municipal project please we want you to be up to standards with NFPA and other obligations, whether it be State or Federal. We want you to be safe, we want you to train more, we're not saying you have to go out and fundraise. If you choose to go out and fundraise that's fine, but we are trying to set a budget that will take care of that need and take care of keeping the proper equipment in our buildings that these firemen need to 1.) do their job safely and serve the Town effectively and it's not fair to come out with those numbers from years past when such huge purchases were made on the backs of the volunteers raising money through flowers sales, yard sales, dinners, BBQs, whatever it might be. You have to take that all in as the big picture and you're right there isn't a lot of good documentation there to show that, but this is the word we need to discuss and the story we need to tell that's what we are attempting to achieve here."

Chief Dauphin "My question was for Nancy if she had incorporated all of this other stuff. It's all fire related just because she pulled it out of the Fire Commission budget and/or what was allocated for both departments and not to factor in a truck payment or a special article. It's all fire related components. There is more to it than what's in the Town Report."

Josh Compo "How do we go to Town Meeting being transparent? That has been the intention of the Board the whole time. There are 2 ways of looking at it. I can appreciate what Nancy is saying, but I also appreciate from the other end. Bottom line we have been spending "x" amount of dollars on emergency services so.. "

Ed Morris "I think we have been saying it all of these open meetings and putting out as much as we can, we aren't trying to hide the fact that the cost of fire services are going up. Whether you want to agree with her (Nancy's) numbers or \$50,000-\$70,000. We are trying to take the number one complaint from the Fire Consultant's report, was there is too much time being spend on fundraising to keep the doors open and going to meetings and this extra stuff the volunteers, we are trying to shift that burden over to the Town through a municipal Fire Department so they don't have to fundraise to keep the doors open. The taxpayers that are providing those services should pay the tax money that is needed to keep the doors open and the fire service and then the fire fighters, like Tom said, can focus on training and focus on responding to different things that they needed to do."

Nancy Nutile-McMenemy “Can you show me where in the Wood Report it says we need a Full Time, paid Fire Chief?”

Ed Morris “It doesn’t say that and we never said it said that. “

Nancy Nutile-McMenemy “That’s where the expense is coming from. I have no problem putting more money into the Fire departments to relieve their fundraising issues because it’s going directly to them. Taking on another FT personnel, with FT benefits, that’s where all your budgets increase. If you look through the Town Reports it’s not buying a copier, the biggest the jump is in personnel.”

Kelly Murphy “I can speak for myself and I can assure you that I have had middle of the night conversations with myself, making sure that the vote that I case is going absolutely where I think it should go because I’ve watched both on an internal level, both being on Ascutney and now sitting on this side of the table, knowing the conversations I’ve had all of the guys in this room on both sides of the department. There is no doubt in my mind that this municipal is the absolute, best route for this community.”

Val Richardson “I want to say thank you to all of the fire fighters for everything that you’ve done and all the hard work and I want to support them. If they are over loaded and keep up with that because they have personal lives, grandchildren, they are moms and dads, how would any of you like to do a regular job that they are probably work 50-60 hours a week because they are self employed, and then you have to work for the fire department to help the community another 50-60 hours. Where are you sleeping, what time are you sleeping and then you’re going out on fire calls how alert are you to come rescue us or help us. Its about time that this community stands behind them and gives them what they need. It’s taxes I mean if it’s going to help the people that are saving our lives then who gives a \* about \$2 or \$3 or whatever. These are people saving people’s lives. You can’t put a price on that. It’s about time we come together as a community.”

Beth Renaud “How is one FT fire chief going to do all the jobs all of these great men have been doing so all they have to do is train? They are all doing so much, how can one person take all of that burden and do it in 40 hours?”

“How can you come to us voters asking them to vote on something that doesn’t even exist?”

Chief Spaulding “We had a meeting here, John Arrison and maybe Tom said that’s too much for the paid fire chief to do so he was going to delegate it. So we’re going right back to where we are, having us all do it. If you watch the video, you guys said “That’s too much for the full time fire chief to do so he’ll have to delegate that, but we’re paying him but he’s going to delegate the responsibility.”

Kelly Murphy “He is not going to delegate all of the responsibility. I have no problem standing up there and saying there is no way one person can do all that stuff. Just like there is no way the current 2 fire chiefs can stand up there and do all of that. You have a team that does that and there are pieces of that, that are part of the team working on the

municipal. You're not going to hire somebody and they're going to say those are all my duties but you're going to take them over."

Dave Fuller "Do both Fire departments now feel like they need the fundraising to exist? (members in crowd answered yes) Additional discussion on the salary, benefits for the Chief. You are still going to have to fundraise.

Ed Morris "That's where there is duplication costs, efficiency costs. Right now we pay highway to do a ton of stuff, one thing that I really see as a benefit from a town perspective outside of the fire is the highway running around and testing hydrants and picking up trucks and doing truck work. A lot of that stuff is not going to have to happen anymore. In the last couple years the highway's spent I don't know how many hours looking at fire hydrants, working on fire hydrants, going after a snow storm and shoveling out around a hydrant. Some of those things, a full-time chief can do and it's going to minimize cost. We do bill the fire departments when that happens, that's where a lot of that efficiency will come from..."

Dave Fuller "What is the total amount of fundraising from both departments?"

Tracy Dauphin "With both fire departments, how come only one fiscal report was put in the Town Report and one fire department is missing?"

Kelly Murphy "Do you guys happen to know an average of a year what you do in fundraising?"

Mark Girard "The fundraising amount for Ascutney after the expenses is approximately \$25,000 - \$32,000 a year."

Tom Leach "Would you agree that if there was a certain target or goal, that you kicked up your fundraising activities?"

Mark Girard "A lot of our fundraisers are annual fundraisers. Annual yard sales twice a year, annual flower sales, annual dinners, the golf tournament got started 5 years ago. We are actually looking at ramping up fundraising. We are looking at more options even with all of this going on."

Kelly Murphy "If I could just stop you for a moment, Ascutney is \$25,000-\$32,000 annually, West Weathersfield do you have an average?"

Chief Dauphin "For what we do for fundraising, it's not \$25,000-\$30,000, it's roughly \$8,000."

Dave Fuller "So is the efficiency \$30,000 of the annual operating budget?"

Ed Morris "I would say it might be more than that. I'd have to do some math. The long term efficiencies get even greater. Right now each department has 2 engines. I think as a

private entity you have to do that, but if you make a single department, my recommendation is that we get rid of 2 of those fire engines and get a apparatus that can haul some water so some sort of water tanker with a pump, which will be a little bit more expensive than a basic tanker. Through that these engines are about \$400,000 apiece, you add that math up over 20 years of not replacing \$800,000 worth of equipment. If you read my report you can see the math, it brings the long-term efficiencies or the cost of a fire chief over about 18 years to \$17,000 a year.”

Beth Renaud “How is a municipal department going to fix this?”

Ed Morris “We are going to have a single fire department that works well together.”

Beth Renaud “Aren’t the same people going to be in these fire departments other than the Chief?”

Ed Morris “I would hope so.”

Kelly Murphy “So that we are going to throw back to the fire fighters. So I am going to ask all of you, how is going to a municipal department going to fix the issue?”

Mychael Spaulding “So you’re going to have 1 department, 1 Chief, 1 set of guidelines, 1 set of rules. We are going to do things this way and you might lose people. If they don’t want to do it that way, you’re going to lose people, but right now you have 2 people that like to do different things. It does not work that way. You’re going to have one single solution this is the way we’re going to do it, and if you don’t like then “ok” that’s just the way it’s going to be because everyone needs to do the same thing together. The fire service is like clockwork, it has to be done correctly to get the job done for the community.”

Tom Leach “There would also be accountability.”

Mark Girard “I want to go back to Tracy’s comment about AVFA and not having financials in the Town Report this year. I was never reached out to about financials for the Town Report. I also did not know about the deadline until the day of.”

Chief Spaulding "I want to respond to Ed's comment about efficiencies. Derek and I for the last year and a half have been bringing our fire trucks to the location to be repaired. It's not the highway picking it up. Our trucks have been going to Spurs for repairs. It's not the highway that is repairing the trucks anymore and the cost of maintenance is going up going elsewhere."

Dave Fuller "There is nothing more important than to have those kinds of events at the fire houses because when you have it here, despite the kitchen being downstairs. It's great with the comradery around, but there is nothing more impressive for people than to go to their place of work and to see what they do there. So when you fundraise it's about politics, it's about seeing what the people are doing. Not just coming down here sitting in

a chair and saying "I drive a fire truck". It's much more visually effective to go stand next to the truck and eat a hamburger."

Pat Howe "Many of people in this room and I know all the ones sitting on that bench over there, at one time or another, in fact one individual said "I'm sick and tired of begging." cause we are having many, many fundraisers. Like it or not, this Town of Weathersfield is what supports most of these things. They're the ones that stop in, they're the ones that donate. So I don't understand why we are having such a hard time about, if nothing else, giving the stuff back to the Town, the Town that is supporting them."

Dusty Hodgdon "If they don't have anymore fundraising, everyone up there has already said 100 times they will still have to have fundraisers or the Town has to raise the taxes."

Kelly Murphy "At no point did anyone up here say that we still had to fundraise. Both of the departments had said they want to retain their 501c3s with the option if they want to fundraise that they could do that. The whole point of this is to get the fire fighters and the services to a point where they train and they respond to calls. If either department decides that they want to do a fundraiser, they want to come down here and do a dinner or something like that, we're not standing in the way. We are also not saying you have to fundraise, you have to raise \$50,000 a year, this is your requirement. At no point in that conversation did that actually happen. That was the departments saying they want to retain the right to fundraise, but the complaint, one of the complaints one of the many of them is the fundraising and why they want to see this go in a municipal direction."

Fran Renaud "So raising taxes is not fundraising."

Chief Dauphin "If neither department did fundraisers, taxes would have gone up long time ago. So we are now at the point of trying to take the work load off from the fire fighters because everybody has less and less time. As Pat said, nobody likes to fundraise. There could be a few that do enjoy doing it, but the fire service is not to go out and fundraise. The fire service is to provide service to the Town for emergency situations. That's our primary goal that we all should be taking and remembering. Training, teamwork, getting along, working together. So everybody can throw how much stuff they want to throw at it, beat it down, the point why we are trying to do this, and there are people on that table that disagree with me, that's fine. There are people in the back of the room that disagree with me, that's fine. My opinion is, is that doing this will improve the service to the Town of Weathersfield."

Kelly Murphy "The one thing that I want to add, and I'm not going to remember the exact words that Josh said, but on Saturday for the piece that I was there, that presentation, there was a comment made, something to the effect of "How is it fair to put this on the taxpayers for a municipal department?" What this does is as a move to a Municipal department, is it frees up the fire fighters to do what it is that they love to do. At one point Josh (Dauphin) said "How is it fair that we volunteer our time to go respond to calls, go to trainings, and then we have to fundraise to get the things that we need to do the job and serve the community. So we've put the total fire services on the backs of, I'll go high, 35-

40 people in this community serving on the departments. That's high, when you talk about active and how many actually go to the calls that number dwindles. But we are going to put fire services on the backs of those fire fighters with the fundraising and everything else they have to do. Where as we have 1,600 taxpayers that are going to pay \$9.46 per \$100,000 on their house. So, he didn't say all of what I just said, but he turned around at one point and said "How is that fair for us?" and I sat there, it made me stop because it's absolutely right. How is that fair that in this move, we can create these efficiencies and we can reduce the stress and reduce some of the stuff that's going on between the 2 departments in the process for \$9.46 per \$100,000. That's the thing that really struck me."

Joseph Renaud "Here's the big problem. We as volunteers, we volunteered to do this job, no matter what it took to get there, we volunteered, whether we fundraised or what not, we volunteered to do that. So I don't know why we are complaining about this because we volunteered to do it and it's our job. So technically, in any other job you work for something to get stuff. Why is that such a big issue?"

Val Richardson "How much hours is each volunteer fire department putting in?"

Tim Austin "If you take another look at that, If you look at every department, maybe you should look at why they can't recruit people is because they have to spend all that time fundraising and time they don't have anymore. And that's why every department now is scrambling to find people to be on the fire department. You did volunteer, you volunteered to be a fireman, you didn't volunteer to stand on the street with a boot in your hand collecting tax payer money. Any maybe if it ends up that all this fundraising, probably 3/4 of it comes from the Town any how."

Chief Dauphin "Everybody volunteers to join the department and when they join the department, they join, which I would hope to serve your community. That's what probably every fire department in the Country is set up for volunteer. So we are trying to, we've been, and I've already gone over this. We (WWVFD) established in 1967, Ascutney established 1955, I've been Chief for 8 years now come March, Ray Stapleton had been Chief for 5 to 6 years, prior to that Sunny Grover was Chief for 33 years. Darrin has been Chief for 24 years now, I don't know how long his father was Chief, but there's and issue that starts from the top and I am willing to admit right now that I am part of this problem. If anybody else that sits here that is not a member, really doesn't have much to take and talk about unless you plan on joining. And when you join then you will see the issues that are what's wrong with this department, with this Town with both departments. So we are trying to eliminate that and I get it. Some people don't want to do it. Don't want the change. Change could take a while, I'm not saying this Chief is going to be able to accomplish all of this. He might have to delegate some, but it's going to get worked out. More so than what we are doing now. Back to the fire fighters, that we can get because I can tell you right now if either department in the last year gave to the Town, gave to the residents, how many fire fighters went to every single call, you would be astounded that we don't have volunteers. I don't care if each Town Report shows 24 rosters on Ascutney and 18 fire fighters for me for West Weathersfield. That is not who's showing up to your

calls, that is not who is training for the calls. To take and make this system better, this is the route that we have to go. To take and bring up other towns, there's a situation for every town, this is our situation, this has been our situation for over the last 50 years. So you can hate me, you can hate my department because 6 months ago we said "Enough with this". It would have never had change if neither one of fire departments never came to the Select Board. Kelly, at the beginning of the meeting you stated "This is something that the Select Board has kicked around." Unless the Select Board is going to say "Thank You" for both departments, we don't want your services, we are going to do this, but they never did. So we came forth, we had enough, we want a better system. So we presented 6 months ago what this system would look like. Here we are today. It costs \$100,000 more to take and relieve duties for the fire fighters to get people to take and go to the calls, then I hope it would be worth spending overall \$9.53 for this year for taxes. Yup it might go up next year, it might go up the next year, and it might go down, but you don't know. No body knows. We had already brought up recruitment, retention, there is grant money out there that the Chief can apply for. There's grants that he can aggressively go after, not saying that we don't do that now, but there's a lot more grant money that can offset his cost, help get the volunteers that we need, cause we don't have them. Thank you"

Josh Compo "We keep focusing on the money and I'm going to be real here and call out the elephant in the room. It's not about money with people that are fighting against us. Money has been used as a scare tactic in town, it's obvious with the numbers, that's not the case. I would urge those that are the fence, to question why one organization is fully in favor of this and moving forward for the Town and one organization is trying to maintain control and what the motive is."

Kelly Murphy "Alright, and we were going 6:30 - 8:30 pm, it is 8:45 pm. Are there any final comments?"

Dave Fuller "It's too bad Mr. Dauphin isn't here, but I'm offended and I was really tempted to break and in and say point of order. I think it serves no purpose to have something like that just happen and accuse anybody who's in the room who hasn't joined. I was a member of the West side for a short time and I've put my time in for service for this town. And I've also spent my lifetime making food for rest of you. Does that mean somebody like that can just go off the deep end and accuse me of not wanting to support or, I'm not going to put words in his mouth, but I really was offended by that."

Kelly Murphy "It is 8:45 pm, so this is our last lead in to Town Meeting. We will be addressing this topic at Town Meeting. It starts at 12:30 pm, and as I said, Fire will be at the beginning of the Town portion. Thank you everyone."

No motion to adjourn meeting.

Attachments: Mutually Agreed Upon Fire Structure